

Progress in accelerating global actions for a world without poverty and implementation of the System-wide Plan of Action for the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2018-2027): WFP, May 2020

This report discusses contributions of the World Food Programme to the implementation of the interagency, System-wide Plan of Action for the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2018-2027) in 2019 in five thematic areas.

1. Expanding social protection systems to underpin inclusive poverty-reducing development

- WFP assists 86.7 million people each year. In addition to its direct food assistance, it reaches people through programmes that can be considered social protection, including school feeding, lean season support, malnutrition prevention and cash-based safety nets.
- WFP also provides technical capacity strengthening to national governments' social protection systems, improving access to food for poor and vulnerable persons. This support includes facilitating the development of social protection policy, promoting policy coherence, providing guidance on deploying social protection programmes in fragile and forced displacement contexts, strengthening leadership in shock-responsive social protection, strengthening beneficiary information management systems and improvements in payment and delivery systems, amongst other areas of support.
- The organization assisted governments in establishing and maintaining nationally owned programmes that are part of social protection frameworks contributing to the achievement of many SDGs - particularly SDG 2 on hunger; but also, SDG 1 on poverty, SDG3 on health and nutrition, SDG 4 on education, SDG 5 on gender equality, SDG 17 on partnerships and potentially SDG 16 on peace and justice.
- In stable low- and middle-income countries with emerging government capacities, WFP supports the transition and scaling-up of national programmes in 20 countries, including support in the consolidation of school feeding programmes in 10 additional countries, where the hand-over to national ownership has already occurred. WFP supported 70 countries with technical assistance in school feeding programmes.
- In 2019, WFP continued to ensure inter-ministerial collaboration and leadership in Laos in the handing over of its school lunch programme, with the aim of a full handover to the government by 2021. A major example of progress in transition planning was the Government of Bangladesh adoption of "National School Meals Policy 2019" as part of its shift towards full government ownership, aiming to reach all primary schoolchildren with locally produced meals by 2030 and to gradually shift from providing fortified biscuits to diverse hot meals with technical support from WFP. WFP's support to Bangladesh government is a benchmark for the successful implementation of a sustainability strategy.
- In 2019, WFP's Centres of Excellence helped countries to design and implement 15 national anti-hunger policy documents and mobilized funds to operationalize field-oriented South-South and Triangular Cooperation projects.
- Linking to SWAP policy focus area (g) 'Fighting poverty in fragile and humanitarian contexts', WFP actively contributes to conceptualizing the role of social protection in 'the nexus' and advancing understanding on how appropriate linkages between humanitarian action and social protection can be pursued.

2. Human capability development: addressing the non-income forms of poverty

- Child health, nutrition and learning are critical for boosting human capital development. WFP-supported school feeding programmes are a high-return investment in human capital, a foundational requisite for strengthening countries' competitiveness and prosperity. WFP's new School Feeding Strategy brings together several UN agencies to deliver integrated packages of assistance, and meet the health and nutrition needs of vulnerable schoolchildren around the world. This focus on quality and integration, combined with stronger partnerships, represents a major strategic shift in our approaches and contributes to increasing the UN system's ability to deliver on the SDGs and on human capital investments.
- Through WFP-supported school feeding programmes, 17.3 million schoolchildren were provided with meals, snacks or take-home rations, a 5 percent increase from 2018, which resulted in an average reduction in the drop-out rate across WFP's supported schools.
- Through WFP's Centre of Excellence in Brazil, the Government of Uganda learned about Brazil's multi-sectoral ownership and interest, sustainable funding streams, linkages to smallholder agricultural development and effective community participation. WFP's China CoE helped Ecuadorean farmers and technicians to acquire knowledge on rice production and smallholders' income diversification. In March 2019, the Regional Centre Against Hunger and Malnutrition (CERFAM) was launched by WFP and the

Government of Cote d'Ivoire, complementing the work of WFP's existing centres of excellence in Brazil and China.

- In 2019, WFP implemented or supported governments in implementing nutrition programmes in 74 countries. WFP's nutrition-specific activities, which included treatment programmes for vulnerable groups suffering from acute malnutrition, including children age 6–59 months, pregnant and lactating women (PLW); acute malnutrition prevention programmes; stunting-prevention programmes; and programmes addressing micronutrient deficiencies, reached 17.2 million beneficiaries, a 9 percent increase from 2018. WFP's nutrition-specific programmes address the direct causes of malnutrition – poor diet and disease – while its nutrition-sensitive programmes address the underlying causes of malnutrition such as a lack of access to nutritious foods or suboptimal child care practices. Social and behavioural change communications activities continued to be integrated into nutrition programmes globally, improving the knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of vulnerable people in 44 countries. WFP continues to operate SCOPE CODA (conditional on-demand assistance), for use in malnutrition treatment programmes. SCOPE CODA enables digital beneficiary registration and tracking and allows for on-demand provision of entitlements.
- In 2019, through Food for Training (FFT) and Human Capital Development programmes that train women and men with employable and entrepreneurial skills, WFP, through partners and national training institutions, provided vocational and service sector skill development to over 80,000 people across 16 countries in Asia, Africa, Middle East, Central Asia, and Central and South America. Example of the skills developed in men, women and youth include: construction, healthcare, tailoring to e-commerce and services. As required, technical skill training programmes are complemented with complementary knowledge-based interventions, such as: literacy and numeracy, business management, access to finance, market linkages and job search services. In addition, WFP integrates social behavioural change communication (SBCC) sessions on health and nutrition good practices or sensitization on gender inequalities to engender women's socioeconomic empowerment and support good household nutrition.

3. The future of food and sustainable agriculture

- Empowered and resilient smallholder farmers hold the key to a world free from hunger. However, despite producing most of the food in the developing world, all too often their livelihoods can only support meagre and unhealthy diets. Their poor incomes are a result of numerous constraints such as lack of profitable markets, low productivity, high post-harvest losses, limited information and poor infrastructure. WFP recognizes that supporting smallholders to increase their productivity and incomes and building stronger food systems through inclusive agricultural and economic development are key to achieving food security.
- In response, WFP has developed models that combine wide partnerships, innovative solutions and context-specific support for smallholders and their national governments, with systemic impact in agricultural value chains and broader food systems. These efforts are more than just traditional hand-outs of “food-aid” but rather an enormous range of projects and platforms that empower the most vulnerable to access nutritious food. They include approaches such as the market access-oriented Smallholder Agricultural Market Support (SAMS) initiatives, Farm to Market Alliance and Virtual Farmers' Market, livelihood-oriented Food Assistance for Assets (FFA), as well as post-harvest loss reduction efforts to strengthen food supply chains.
- In 2019, WFP implemented assets creation, related training and other livelihood-support programmes that benefitted 9.6 million people across 50 countries through cash or food-based transfers to address their immediate food needs, while they rehabilitated assets, such as constructing a road, water related assets, reforestation activities or rehabilitating degraded land, that will improve their livelihoods by creating healthier natural environments, reducing risks and impact of shocks, increasing productivity, and strengthening resilience to natural disasters. Gender-sensitive approaches within Food Assistance for Assets programmes strengthened community resilience to crises by promoting shared power, control of resources, and decision-making between women and men, which in times of crisis, can mitigate disaster risks through more efficient division of labour and time management.
- WFP applied its “3-pronged approach” (3PA) for design, planning and implementation of programmes such as resilience-building in 35 countries around the world and engaged with national partners and academic institutions to build national 3PA capacities in Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe, and in five Universities across the Sahel.
- WFP helped over 93,000 farmers (60 percent women) in seven African countries obtain access to USD 12.2 million worth of micro insurance coverage through the R4 Rural Resilience Initiative in 2019. Over 5,000 of these farmers accessed R4-related insurance products.

- Over 10 years of successfully connecting smallholders with markets, WFP has demonstrated that when farmers have an assured market for their crops, they can forge stronger livelihoods and become key players in local food systems. Building on the lessons learned under the Purchase for Progress pilot, this now translates into a portfolio of Smallholder Agricultural Market Support initiatives, where smallholders are provided with an entry point into formal markets. WFP uses innovative and context-specific solutions to catalyse investments and partnerships across the value chain and works closely with governments to forge strong linkages between smallholders and private and public sector buyers.
- WFP helped smallholders in more than 40 countries gain an entry point into formal markets, strengthening their income generation opportunities and ultimately building up their livelihoods. Smallholders are encouraged by a growing and predictable demand from WFP and other buyers, increasing agriculture and catalyses investments and service provision by governments, private sector and development actors. Globally, smallholder farmers sold 58,500 metric tonnes of food commodities through WFP-supported aggregation systems, amounting to USD 19.1 million.
- WFP is advancing engagement with International Financial Institutions and Multilateral Development Banks, in an effort to support smallholders and transform rural economies at the national and sub-national levels. Currently, pilots in Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire are being explored in partnership with the governments, the African Development Bank, private sector entities and other partners.

4. Addressing climate change and the intensification of natural hazards

- In 2019, WFP worked with governments and humanitarian partners on the frontline of the global climate crisis, responding to an increasing number of climate-related disasters and taking pre-emptive actions to allow vulnerable communities to be prepared for, respond to and, therefore, limit climate change-related impacts and damage.
- WFP's continuous efforts to mainstream climate risk management into its operations has led to an increasing number of countries expressing interest in and beginning to introduce risk transfer instruments into country programs.
- Over 1.5 million people have received protective coverage through climate insurance products (micro-insurance and sovereign risk insurance) implemented by WFP in nine countries (Mali, Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Malawi, Kenya, Senegal, Zambia, and Zimbabwe). 11,000 vulnerable farmers have received insurance pay-outs of USD 276,000 in total.
- WFP's Forecast-based Financing (FbF) initiative is supporting governments and communities in 14 countries across Africa, Asia and Latin America to develop anticipatory actions that mitigate disaster impacts during the critical window between the forecast and actual onset of extreme climate events. In Bangladesh, WFP has provided cash transfers of around USD 53 each to 4,500 families (25,000 people) three days ahead of an impending flood disaster. In December 2019, in the Philippines, WFP implemented forecast-based anticipatory cash transfers of around USD 45 to 1,000 beneficiaries four days ahead of typhoon Tisoy.

5. Fighting poverty in fragile and humanitarian contexts

- 17.3 million schoolchildren were provided with meals in 59 countries. In fragile contexts, 67 operations supported school children with nutritious meals, snacks or take-home rations to provide an essential safety net for them and their families, and to help restore normalcy, reduce vulnerability to hunger and protect livelihoods.
- 9.6 million people across 50 countries benefitted from assets creation, related training and other livelihood-support programmes.
- Distributing a record USD 2.1 billion in cash by the end of 2019, which helped to stimulate local economies and give beneficiaries greater economic choice, and 4.2 million metric tonnes of food valued at USD 3.5 billion.
- Level 3 and Level 2 emergency responses represented two thirds of WFP's total programme of work in 2019. WFP activated an L3 emergency in Central Sahel, covering Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, and continued supporting the pre-existing L3 emergencies in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan, Syria and Yemen. Other large-scale emergencies included Bangladesh, Iraq, Mozambique and Nigeria. WFP was responding to seven L3 and 11 L2 emergencies in 18 countries as of the end of 2019, the largest number since 2011.
- In total, 1.5 million people received assistance across Central Sahel during the 2019 lean season.
- In Yemen, WFP launched its fastest-ever scale up of food assistance, increasing support by 50 percent, while overcoming complex security, access and supply constraints. This involved doubling food

distributions to the worst-hit areas where conflict and economic collapse had reduced nearly 240,000 people to famine-like conditions.

- In Syria, WFP considerably scaled-up the response to provide life-saving food and nutrition assistance to 6.3 million people across all governorates, many of them for the first time as access was granted. Most of the emergency responses commenced within the first 72 hours thanks to ongoing preparedness and pre-positioning efforts.
- In Mozambique, WFP was among the first on the ground after two of the country's most powerful cyclones, providing immediate food assistance to 20,000 survivors in hard-to-reach areas using helicopters. In the end, the operation reached over 1.8 million people affected by Cyclone Idai and more than 300,000 affected by Cyclone Kenneth.