

## **Inputs to the SG Report on Family**

**WFP - May 2022**

This note discusses provides information on the World Food Programme activities in support of the preparations for the thirtieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family and its investment in family-oriented policies and programmes in the following areas:

### **Social protection, including Cash-Based programmes for vulnerable families**

Even before the pandemic, more than half of the world's population – some four billion people - had either inadequate or no access to social protection. This includes two out of every three of the world's children.

Due to the pandemic, the World Bank predicts global recovery deceleration from 5.5 percent in 2021 to 4.1 percent in 2022, as well as an increase in inequality. Rising unemployment, inflation and commodity prices, and freezing of foreign assets are creating the new poor, especially among urban populations and in places that have not been traditional recipients of humanitarian aid.

WFP is uniquely positioned to support the expansion of social protection programmes through its field presence and operational expertise in more than 80 countries, and its ability to help governments to rapidly deliver and scale up social protection programmes in challenging environments.

WFP has two priorities in its social protection work. It wants people to have greatly increased access to national social protection systems that, first, help them meet their food security, nutrition and other essential needs, so the world can move closer to Zero Hunger; and second, help them manage the risks and shocks they face.

WFP stands ready to support governments to strengthen their social protection systems by providing technical advice and guidance, or by designing and implementing elements programmes on their behalf as needed. WFP also strive to ensure that assistance delivered under its own programmes—whether as an emergency or longer-term response—is made with a clear intent to contribute to improved national social protection where possible. WFP focuses on building inclusive, shock-responsive, food security and nutrition sensitive social protection systems, in fragile contexts.

WFP has been supporting social protection programmes since its foundation in the 1960s. In 2020, WFP contributed to strengthening national social protection systems in 78 countries, and supported governments in 65 of these to introduce new, or scale-up or adapt existing social protection measures in response to COVID-19.

With needs greater than ever, stemming from the ongoing pandemic, macroeconomic crises, conflict and civil unrest, climate change, and natural disasters – among many others, humanitarian and governmental responses will continue to lean on Cash-Based Transfers (CBT), as an effective and cost-efficient means of both staving off the pandemic's economic impacts and allowing people to address their needs, in their local markets.

In 2021, WFP has transferred US\$2.3 billion to vulnerable people and communities across 69 WFP country offices, 64 percent of which was for emergency response operations. This is an increase of US\$ 194 million compared with the same period in 2020. In line with these increasing needs, has also been a significant increase in CBT workforce field support, with 85 experts deployed to 57 countries.

### **Integrated School-based programmes, including school feeding programmes**

Child health, nutrition and learning are critical for boosting human capital development. Learning poverty could potentially reach 70 percent in low and middle-income countries, putting children at risk of losing US\$ 17 trillion in future lifetime earnings. While some school systems have started to open, 66 million children continue to miss out on school meals. These losses threaten outstanding progress in school feeding during the past decade: as of 2020, it was estimated that 388 million children were receiving school feeding around the world, more than in any other time in history.

In this context, WFP has mobilized to support children and their families by working with partners and governments in an integrated response, not only to support pandemic recovery but to reach the children who were left behind even before that. In 2021, WFP implemented school feeding and other school health and nutrition activities in 75 countries.

WFP's target for school feeding provision has been on the rise since 2020 and went from 17.7 million children targeted to 21.9 million in 2022, a 24 percent increase. WFP's financial operational requirements have followed the same pattern, rising from US\$ 737 million in 2020 to over US\$ 1 billion in 2022.

WFP-supported school feeding programmes are a high-return investment in human capital, a foundational requisite for strengthening countries' competitiveness and prosperity. WFP's 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.

Learning requires more than a quality education and there is growing evidence that a child's condition is one of the most powerful determinants of learning outcomes. To put it simply, healthy, well-nourished children learn better and have a greater opportunity to thrive, leading to the development of human capital that drives economies. School systems serve as effective platforms for governments to deliver integrated health and nutrition systems, including school meals, but also deworming and vision screening, among other critical interventions.

Therefore, WFP advocates for ensuring that school meals programmes – given their role in anchoring these wider health and nutrition interventions – are positioned as a central initiative that can accelerate progress in education and recovery from COVID-19. When they are done right, they are cost-effective interventions that not only support education but also health, nutrition, social protection, sustainable agriculture and local economies, given their increased reliance on

local farmers and catering businesses, of which women are often the central actors. Schools offer a protective environment, including against child, early and forced marriage. Recent data demonstrates returns of up to \$9 for every \$1 invested in school meals programmes.

The School Meals Coalition, launched at 2021 UN Food Systems Summit and now supported by 66 governments who have signed its Declaration of Commitment in addition to almost 70 other organizations who have signed on in support, is gaining momentum. As a demonstration of the strong political will behind this issue, many governments have already begun to implement commitments to increase their domestic spending to expand reach and quality of programmes. This support was reinforced by recent declarations from the African Union on the 7<sup>th</sup> African Day of School Feeding and from the IX School Feeding Regional Forum in Latin America and the Caribbean.

In addition to restoring programmes to their levels before COVID-19 and improving quality based on increasing knowledge of what works, the Coalition is specifically focused on reaching the 73 million children not reached prior to COVID-19, in line with the HLPF's focus on ensuring that no one is left behind by actions that contribute to accelerating education outcomes.

### **Integrated resilience building and adaptation to climate change**

While specific climate-related disasters may lead to migration and displacement, climate change is a long-term driver of economic migration, within countries and across borders. Without large-scale efforts to build resilience and support adaptation to climate change, greater levels of food insecurity and reduced viability of livelihoods in the areas most affected by climate change are expected to increase migration.

In addition, the impacts of climate change affect women and men, boys and girls differently, often exacerbating gender inequalities. While ensuring food security is a shared responsibility, men and women often have different roles in households and communities, with men preparing the fields and women growing and preparing most of the food consumed, such as vegetables and small livestock. Furthermore, in a situation of climatic shock, a strategy commonly used, mainly by men, consists in seasonal exodus from affected villages to urban areas in the country or less affected neighboring countries, with the aim of earning income and supporting women and children left behind.

Women and girls are essential agents in ensuring household food security and nutrition. They also, contribute to building climate resilience within their families and communities, and they must be further empowered as major actors through gender transformative approaches.

By scaling up its support to improving the capacities of the most vulnerable and food-insecure countries and communities, WFP builds climate resilience in a way that enables governments and the most vulnerable food-insecure people to address the impacts of climate change on their food and nutrition security in the long term.

WFP programmes focus on actions to manage priority climate risks that have the greatest impact on food security and nutrition. When considering these priority climate risks, WFP will take into account slow onset climate changes to facilitate longer-term sustainability. WFP activities are

guided by analysis of how adaptation options increase the resilience of livelihoods to growing climate risks or help people diversify from climate-sensitive livelihoods and ecosystems. WFP works with partners to identify adaptation activities that both reduce current and future risks and improve short-term livelihoods, incomes and access to food in ways that promote increases in both food availability and the sustainability of local food systems. This approach ensures effective use of resources despite uncertainties associated with climate change.

They thus allow men to stay in their lands, invest in strengthening their resilience and participate in family dynamics, all year round.