

Assistant Executive Director, Programme Operations

ABOUT WFP

The World Food Programme is the world's largest humanitarian organization, saving lives in emergencies and using food assistance to build a pathway to peace, stability, and prosperity for people recovering from conflict, disasters, and the impact of climate change.

OVERVIEW OF THE ROLE

The World Food Programme (WFP) is seeking an Assistant Executive Director (United Nations Assistant Secretary-General level) to serve as a core member of its Senior Leadership Group. This role is pivotal in steering WFP's global programme operations, encompassing assessment and analysis, programme and policy development, and supply chain operations. The AED plays a crucial role in ensuring that WFP's actions effectively support people, communities and nations in meeting urgent needs during emergencies, reducing vulnerabilities, and improving food security—while leading efforts to deliver on WFP's dual mandate of saving lives and changing lives through agile, inclusive, and forward-looking operations.

The AED, Programme Operations will champion initiatives to empower women and youth, support refugees and displaced communities, combat malnutrition, and ensure every hungry child benefits from a nutritious school meal. The AED will also play a critical role in advancing WFP's 2026-2029 Strategic Plan, the UN80 reform agenda and ensuring WFP's leadership in innovation, climate resilience, and localization. The role demands strategic foresight, operational excellence, and an unwavering commitment to humanitarian principles and sustainable development.

EXPECTED RESPONSIBILITIES

- Provide strategic and visionary leadership across WFP's Programme Operations Department, ensuring alignment with WFP's mandate and goals, and addressing urgent food security and humanitarian challenges.
- Foster and enhance global partnerships focused on empowering women and youth, supporting refugees and displaced populations, combating malnutrition, and ensuring access to school meals for children.
- Champion WFP's contribution to the UN80 Initiative by championing operational efficiency, mandate alignment, and structural reform, ensuring WFP remains a model of innovation and cost-effectiveness within the UN system.
- Maintain relations with relevant actors, including other United Nations agencies, entities and bodies, with Member States to ensure coordinated, holistic responses to humanitarian and development needs, positioning WFP actions to complement and enhance broader inter-agency efforts.

- Drive the implementation of WFP's Strategic and Management Plans by enhancing emergency response capabilities, supporting national systems, and fostering a culture of innovation and digital transformation.
- Promote a positive and inclusive workplace culture that values diversity, equity, and inclusion, fostering an environment of respect and collaboration across all levels of the organization.
- Engage and represent WFP in high level fora (e.g. United Nations, Governments, Executive Board, Humanitarian and Development Communities, etc.), asserting the organization's position and ensuring that WFP interests are at the forefront of discussions and considerations.
- Lead and foster inter-agency partnerships to enable coordinated and holistic preparedness and response to humanitarian and development needs, ensuring WFP actions complement inter-agency efforts.
- Foster a culture of accountability, transparency, and continuous improvement, setting high standards of integrity and ethical behavior for all staff.
- Undertake additional responsibilities as required to support WFP's mission and the Senior Leadership Group.

CORE REQUIREMENTS

Education:

- Advanced degree (Master's or Doctorate) in International Development, Policy, Business Administration, Supply Chain management, Agriculture, Food Security, Economics, Social Sciences or a related field.

Experience:

- A minimum of 20 years of progressively responsible experience in programme management, policy development, and supply chain operations, preferably in humanitarian or development contexts, with significant leadership experience at the international level.

Knowledge & Skills:

- Proven strategic leadership in managing large-scale operations, particularly in emergencies and development contexts or a complex global portfolio.
- Strong track record in establishing and sustaining global partnerships, with an emphasis on empowering diverse communities and supporting populations in need across various humanitarian and development contexts.
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills, with the ability to influence and engage at the highest levels.

- Demonstrated ability to foster a culture of respect, collaboration, and inclusion, with a strong commitment to diversity and gender equity.
- Successfully managed a significant budget and operating plan, and a multi-disciplinary team of experts across a variety of job functions.
- High level of emotional intelligence, with the ability to navigate complex and challenging situations with empathy and tact.
- Impeccable personal and professional integrity, with a firm commitment to the values and principles of WFP and the United Nations system.
- Demonstrated experience in leading innovation and promoting operational efficiency in complex environments.
- Strong networking and relationship-building skills, supported by a well-established network of international stakeholders and partners.
- Willingness to travel globally, often to challenging and remote environments.

Language:

- Fluency (level C) in English is required.
- Working knowledge of a second official UN language (Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian, Spanish) or Portuguese (a WFP working language) is highly desirable.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- The selected candidate will be employed on a fixed-term contract at the Assistant Secretary-General level, with a probationary period of one year. For this position, the initial appointment shall be for a fixed term of two years with the potential for extension.
- WFP offers an attractive compensation and benefits package, including basic salary, post adjustment, relocation entitlement, travel and shipment allowances, 30 days of annual leave, as well as expatriate entitlements such as home leave, an education grant for dependent children, and compulsory pension plan and medical insurance. For more details, please visit icsc.un.org.