



## **WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME (WFP)**

**Contribution to the  
2015 United Nations Economic and Social Council  
(ECOSOC)  
Integration Segment**

## **WFP Inputs to 2015 Integration Segment**

### *To Achieve Decent Work for All and Integration of Sustainable Development Dimensions*

The following discussion is in response to ECOSOC's request for WFP's input to the 2015 Integration Summit on how WFP is working to achieve decent work for all and recommendations on how employment creation and decent work can be used as a tool for the integration of the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

In providing food assistance, WFP contributes to the objectives of the Decent Work Agenda by:

- Working with governments to strengthen and extend social protection, including food-based safety nets. In addition, school feeding activities helps to keep children in school, which may help reduce child labour and could help them to secure more decent employment opportunities.
- Improving food security and nutrition, with a focus on the vulnerable population, children, and women, which is essential for physical and cognitive development necessary for healthy lives to engage in productive work. In particular, WFP seeks to empower women – through activities such as supporting livelihood opportunities and food for assets, nutrition education, and social protection – which improves their own food security and nutrition as well as enhances their capacity to ensure the food security and nutrition of their households.
- Indirectly promoting opportunities for work through its livelihoods activities. This is limited as most of WFP's work has been in rural areas and agricultural support has largely been to support smallholder producers and/or subsistence farmers, not necessarily focused on generating employment.

WFP recognizes the importance of employment creation and decent work to sustainable development. It intersects with, and can contribute to, the improvement of various aspects of sustainable development, including the elimination of hunger and malnutrition. From a food security and nutrition lens, WFP recommends the following for how employment creation and decent work can be used as a tool for the integration of social, economic, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

- Decent work improves an individual and/or household's economic access to adequate food and nutrition.
  - As urbanization increases – and correspondingly, the number of urban poor has increased – decent work is especially critical to an individual and/or household's economic access to adequate food and nutrition since such households are less likely to have direct access to the products of subsistence farming, pastoralist activities and/or other livelihoods. It would also be essential to a household's access to adequate water and sanitation, health care, other basic services, and adequate housing, which are essential for the health and safety of a household. Inclusive growth strategies are, therefore, essential, to promote domestic and foreign investments that create job opportunities.
  - Decent work also improves the rural population's access to food and nutrition, particularly to supplement nutrition needs with access to diverse foods. Decent work could also reduce negative coping strategies, such as the selling of charcoal, which may lead to environmental degradation of land in a way that ultimately reduces a community's ability to produce food.

- Promotion of decent work for women can have an exponential effect on improving the food security and nutrition of an entire household. Women are more likely to spend their incomes on food and children's needs and distribute food within the family in a more equitable way. When the mother controls family expenditure, children have a better chance of surviving and more resources are spent on education and health. Programmes designed to increase the earning potential of women and can improve the chances such resources are spent on food and children's needs. Empowering women through livelihoods, food systems, and social protection schemes thus addresses two systemic issues: the already existing disproportionate burden of malnutrition borne by women and girls (and by extension our offspring), and the appropriate and equitable utilisation of household resources towards more nutritious consumption, better basic services and intergenerational nutrition. Recognising the prominence and importance of women to family welfare also works against the harmful effects of existing societal inequalities and patriarchal attitudes from which women—and by extension societies—suffer.

Social protection policies that include food and nutrition-based safety nets are needed to provide basic food and nutrition needs in the event of inadequate and/or loss of work. Social protection programmes promoted by the Decent Work Agenda should include a food and nutrition-based safety net component. The importance of social protection as a means for promoting resilience and long-term development has become increasingly evident in recent years. Social protection mechanisms, including food-based safety net programmes, provide a means for integrating the various elements of sustainable development into a broader framework to channel investment derived from rising levels of prosperity to support national sustainable development goals. As highlighted by research published in the 2013 Lancet series, the integration of nutrition objectives into safety net programmes has the potential to dramatically accelerate progress in reducing undernutrition and raising economic productivity. Recent findings indicate that children who benefited from a nutritional safety net programme in Guatemala earned nearly 50 percent more as adults.

To effectively realize the emerging Sustainable Development Goals and the Decent Work Agenda, we must ensure that the various social, economic, and environmental dimensions, including the integration of food security and nutrition objectives, are addressed in a comprehensive and sustainable manner.