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Update on the People Strategy

Executive Summary

In 2014, the Board approved WFP's People Strategy. The strategy presents the blueprint for how WFP intends to reinforce, build, retain and recruit its workforce, creating a more people-centred organization that focuses on developing the capabilities of its employees to provide better assistance to the people it serves. WFP is a pioneer in the development of such a strategy, and other United Nations agencies are now following its example. The four imperatives of the strategy are to: i) reinforce a performance mindset; ii) build WFP's talent; iii) shift the focus to increase attention to national staff; and iv) equip high-impact leaders. Positive impact has already been achieved through implementation of several initiatives.

A more performance-oriented mindset is vital to achieving WFP's mission. An enhanced performance assessment process is reinforcing the overall performance culture. WFP is one of the first United Nations agencies to include consultants, short-term staff and United Nations volunteers in its performance management system.

Initiatives for building capabilities include enhancing the web-based Learning Management System to increase WFP's ability to build skills in its globally dispersed workforce. A new career management framework is helping to position people with the right capabilities to deliver on WFP's mandate globally, while facilitating employees' attainment of their professional aspirations.

As part of the increased attention to national staff, 3,400 locally recruited WFP field staff were transferred from the United Nations Development Programme to the WFP/Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations administrative framework in 2014. With all WFP staff now governed by one set of rules and regulations, staff management has become more streamlined and efficient. In 2015, 8,200 courses were completed by national staff members on the Learning Management System.

Initiatives for equipping leaders with the right tools to achieve a high impact include the Leading for Zero Hunger programme, with content tailored to the specific needs of WFP leaders. More than 310 leaders have participated in the programme, of whom 35 percent were national staff. All participants hold leadership roles with high impact on WFP's operations and the people it serves. The promotion process for leaders – levels P5 and D1 – is also being revamped.

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The achievements outlined in this report confirm the significance of the People Strategy to WFP. Without the Board's endorsement, the impact made in such a short period would not have been possible. Continued support is essential for building on this momentum. Lessons learned to date will be reflected in future initiatives to ensure successful implementation of the People Strategy and to enable WFP to do more, for more people, with less.

Introduction

1. WFP's greatest strength is its dedicated women and men working around the world to address humanitarian needs by providing access to nutritious food and responding to emergencies. As the demand for its services increases, WFP must become more effective and efficient in managing its greatest asset – its workforce. Engaged people with the right skills and in the right roles are fundamental for WFP to continue fulfilling its humanitarian response role while simultaneously building its capabilities to work towards a world with zero hunger.
2. The People Strategy envisions a more people-centred WFP that focuses on the professional development of its employees and on equipping staff to provide increasingly effective assistance to the people it serves. In addition to strengthening human resource processes and systems, the strategy calls for a cultural shift with greater focus on performance to enable well-managed talent and leaders to achieve maximum impact.
3. This update outlines the People Strategy's achievements to date and provides an overview of the way forward and initiatives for full delivery on the strategy's intentions.

Global Staff Survey Indicates Early Impact

4. The Global Staff Survey (GSS) conducted during 2015 assessed staff engagement and performance enablement across WFP. The survey was open to 14,490 staff members and achieved a participation rate of 70 percent – a significant increase from 2012's 44 percent. Feedback indicated improvements in almost all areas: of the 73 questions, 67 registering improvements, with only two items, related to safety and security, registering declines, of 2–3 percentage points.
5. Areas with improved results include involvement and belonging, up by 13 percentage points; standards of conduct, up by 9 percentage points; feedback, performance and promotion up by 8 percentage points; and growth and development, up by 7 percentage points. For example, 92 percent of staff see a clear link between their work and WFP's objectives, exceeding the IBM global norm¹ by 19 percentage points.

2014–2015 Achievements

6. The People Strategy has four imperatives: i) reinforce a performance mindset; ii) build WFP's talent; iii) shift the focus to increase attention to national staff; and iv) equip high-impact leaders.

¹ The IBM global norm is a composite of employee responses from organizations worldwide. It provides comparative results that represent the average favourable scores across all organizations in the IBM norm database.

Reinforce a Performance Mindset

Strengthen WFP's performance management culture

7. The Performance and Competency Enhancement (PACE)² system was revised in 2014 to streamline its application and increase its effectiveness, freeing up staff's time for considering additional aspects of performance. These improvements are reflected in a PACE process completion rate of 97 percent in 2015, up from 64 percent in 2011 and one of the highest rates among United Nations agencies.
8. WFP is one of the first United Nations agencies to include consultants, short-term staff and United Nations volunteers in its performance management system, resulting in consistent performance standards for different types of contract, and stronger performance throughout WFP.
9. A fundamental component of performance management is identifying and addressing performance areas that require improvement. To enhance this process, WFP has revised its underperformance framework, which equips managers and staff to identify performance issues early, address them promptly, and ensure that staff receive support for their future professional development.
10. A recently launched online resource centre for performance management provides user guides, targeted toolkits on core elements, video tutorials, articles and other materials. In light of the positive feedback received, WFP will continue to add resources and materials regularly.
11. Indicators from the GSS showed improvements in WFP's performance management culture, with findings exceeding global benchmarks. Based on GSS results, 76 percent of staff understand how performance is evaluated – a 4 percentage point improvement from 2012 and 7 percentage points higher than the IBM global norm; and 83 percent of staff believe that clear performance standards are set in their units to deliver high-quality assistance to beneficiaries, a 3 percentage point increase from 2012 and 8 percentage points higher than the IBM global norm.

Define and embed WFP's common values and behaviours

12. The way in which staff are assessed is being changed to reflect WFP's core values and its four core capability dimensions: i) purpose – align individual purpose to WFP's mission; ii) people – support and equip WFP's workforce to provide the best service to its beneficiaries; iii) partnership – lead across boundaries to deliver the best for WFP's beneficiaries; and iv) performance – deliver practical, sustainable solutions to achieve WFP's mission.
13. To define and embed WFP values and behaviours more systematically throughout the workforce, an employee value proposition³ is being developed to support and strengthen WFP's talent acquisition. Based on broad consultation with numerous stakeholders, the proposition will enhance WFP's competitiveness in the employment market, attracting and retaining top talent. LinkedIn, the largest online professional connection service has been used as an additional platform to identify and attract talent, and the number of WFP followers increased significantly in 2014/15 to reach 47,400.

² The PACE process encourages, increases and improves dialogue between supervisors and staff, and links the outputs and key performance indicators of individual staff members to those of the WFP unit, division or country office. For each staff member, the PACE outlines the competencies and expectations for performance, helps identify areas of development and learning, and provides a mechanism for identifying and resolving performance issues and obstacles.

³ An employee value proposition describes the mix of characteristics, benefits and ways of working in an organization that an employee with the right skills, capabilities and performance can expect to find. The proposition must be sufficiently specific, relevant and compelling to attract, engage and retain talent.

Build WFP's Talent

Build WFP's career frameworks and skills

14. Technical skills and capabilities have been identified for WFP's functional areas, and possible career paths have been articulated in career frameworks to support staff's professional development. Career frameworks inform workforce decisions for staff development, talent deployment, succession and overall workforce planning.⁴ Significant progress in this area is reflected in the 2015 GSS, which indicated that 77 percent of staff know the skills and qualifications needed to progress in their careers at WFP, a 13 percentage point increase since 2012.
15. To increase support to staff in their career development, tools and guidance materials have been developed and communicated to staff – focusing on national staff – through presentations, workshops and targeted sessions in field offices and at Headquarters. A dedicated online career management page has been launched outlining WFP's career principles, frameworks and tools.

Enhance opportunities for learning and growth

16. The web-based Learning Management System (LMS) is a platform for coordinating, delivering and tracking learning across WFP. It provides easy access to learning for WFP's globally dispersed workforce, and empowers each employee to take charge of his/her learning journey. A new and enhanced LMS launched in 2015 enables the creation of tailored learning plans for staff, including through e-learning, on-the-job learning and classroom-based activities, building on the 70-20-10⁵ principle.
17. From January to October 2015, staff members completed more than 13,000 courses on the LMS. Use of the enhanced global LMS means that parallel local learning systems are no longer required, reducing duplication of effort and enabling a holistic approach to capability development.

Strengthen WFP's workforce planning capability

18. A pipeline for future talent has been created through the talent pool initiative,⁶ with 11,000 applications received by October 2015. Talent pools give managers access to pre-vetted, qualified individuals with the skills and motivation required.
19. A new talent acquisition strategy toolkit is facilitating the hiring of qualified staff for field offices and Headquarters divisions, particularly in challenging areas in the field. The toolkit emphasizes the importance of tailoring talent acquisition to local human resources (HR) practices.
20. Diversity and inclusion is a critical component of the People Strategy as it promotes an inclusive working environment where all WFP staff, regardless of their backgrounds, are valued, engaged and productive. Attention to diversity and inclusion issues enhances WFP's understanding of the diverse needs of the populations it serves, which is critical to success. A diversity and inclusion strategy has been developed and shared with WFP global leaders.
21. Among WFP's initiatives for recruiting more diverse talent and achieving the United Nations goal of gender parity is the requirement that for each vacant mid- to senior-level post, at least one woman candidate is put forward for consideration. As a result, in 2015, women represented the majority – 55 percent – of international professional fixed-term appointments, a notable improvement from 45 percent in 2014. Specialized recruitment agencies are being used to target more mid- to senior-level women candidates for functions that are relatively gender imbalanced.

⁴ Workforce planning involves activities that help an organization to understand the current state of its workforce, forecast and close gaps and plan future needs, enabling it to take corrective actions such as staffing increases or decreases, redeployment and retraining.

⁵ The 70-20-10 principle reflects the contributions to total learning of three channels of learning: 70 percent from on-the-job experience; 20 percent from learning from others; and 10 percent from education – classroom training and e-learning.

⁶ The 12 functional areas covered by the initiative include nutrition, cash-based transfers, vulnerability analysis and mapping, supply chain, monitoring, evaluation and finance.

- WFP continues to address the gender imbalance in logistics, with women accounting for 31 percent of appointments in 2015, against 19 percent of existing logistics positions.
22. WFP's job profiles were fully reviewed for the first time since 2005, to reinforce accountability and facilitate decision-making related to workforce planning and organizational design. New job profiles cover emerging roles, such as nutritionist and commodity specialist. All WFP offices will align existing jobs with the new profiles by the end of 2015.
 23. Guidelines to structure and staffing reviews have been developed to assist Country Directors and Division Directors in increasing the agility of organizational structures in field offices and Headquarters divisions to respond better to funding and programme requirements. The guidelines will be used in adapting to significant shifts in strategic direction, operation requirements and/or available resources.
 24. WFP's ability to deploy staff quickly in emergencies was demonstrated again in 2014/15. For example, to support the Level 3 Ebola crisis, WFP increased its staff in the four affected countries by 147 percent in six months, redeploying personnel from various contract categories and offices. To increase WFP's workforce agility through more rapid staff deployment in emergencies, an emergency response roster was launched in 2014.
 25. Strategic deployment of staff has been enhanced through changes in the reassignment process: strategic decision-making has been strengthened to reflect WFP's priorities better; and the process has been made more transparent and objective.

Shift the Focus

Build skills and capacities of national staff

26. Initiatives to build the skills and capacities of national staff include enhancing the LMS to respond better to staff's learning needs by making learning more accessible, especially for national staff in the deep field. From January to October 2015, national staff members completed 8,200 courses on the LMS. Language learning was identified as a key need among national staff, so an online language tool was piloted in June 2015. In mid-2016, at least 1,000 staff members will be granted language-learning licences.
27. Thirty-five percent of participants in the Leading for Zero Hunger programme were national staff.
28. Career frameworks have been developed to support career management for national staff. In 2015, the GSS recorded a 9 percentage point improvement since 2012, with 70 percent of national staff considering their training to be sufficient for effectively fulfilling their roles.

Create a supportive and healthy workplace

29. The Staff Wellness Division established in January 2015 comprises staff counselling and medical services. The division's initiatives are guided by a wellness strategy approved by the Board in 2015, with an allocation of USD 10 million to create a Wellness Programme Fund. The strategy has been shared with all staff and targets country offices, with special attention to locally recruited staff. Taking into account prevailing standards within the United Nations system, and the wellness strategy, WFP's new staff accommodation policy introduces measures and administrative good practices for improving and standardizing the quality of WFP accommodation across field operations.

Adapt and implement fit for purpose contractual arrangements for national staff

30. In 2014, WFP harmonized the conditions of service for locally recruited staff in field offices through the Local Staff Transfer Project. As a result, 3,400 national staff members were transferred from the United Nations Development Programme to the WFP/Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) administrative framework. WFP has also updated its HR policies and made them available online to enhance transparency and empowerment.

Equip High-Impact Leaders

Develop leadership and management capabilities

31. A leadership assessment indicated major strengths among leaders while also identifying areas where WFP needs to equip leaders better to deliver on their extensive responsibilities. Based on these findings, the Leading for Zero Hunger programme was launched in 2014 to provide leaders with the tools and behaviours they need to deliver more effectively on WFP's mandate. The scale and speed of the programme's roll-out are unparalleled in the United Nations system. In 12 months, 13 sessions of the four-month programme were conducted for a total of 310 leaders – Country Directors, Division Directors, and heads of units and sub-offices – from 76 country offices. The programme applies best practices in methodology and content, with learning through a combination of face-to-face and virtual training. Leaders provided positive feedback on its quality and benefit. Evaluations indicated an overall rating of 91 percent for both satisfaction with and relevance of the programme.
32. To strengthen the leadership pipeline and accelerate the progression of WFP's women leaders, the INSPIRE women's leadership and career development programme was launched in 2013. By the end of 2015, more than 165 women leaders – both national and international staff – had completed the programme in Rome, Cairo, Dakar and Johannesburg.

Assess and develop leadership talent

33. The international professional promotion exercise for staff at levels P1–P3 has been overhauled to improve the effectiveness and transparency of decision-making processes. The revamped process makes line managers accountable for decisions related to talent management and offers individualized feedback and career discussions for eligible candidates through a multi layered assessment process.
34. To identify leadership potential, the promotion process for international professionals at levels P5–D1 has been redesigned to enhance the consistency, rigour and transparency of staffing decisions for leadership positions. Eligible staff are assessed according to their potential and performance. The first talent review was completed in 2015 and the results will assist the senior staffing committee in creating a pool of staff ready to progress into leadership roles.
35. A talent pool has been launched to integrate Junior Professional Officers (JPOs) into WFP's talent pipeline. More JPOs were recruited in 2015 than in any other year since 2006.

Mobilize senior leaders

36. To help establish a unified system for assessing performance and to promote a culture of open feedback and accountability, a 360-degree review of the Executive Management Group was conducted in 2015. Each member received feedback from subordinates, peers and supervisors and carried out a self-evaluation against WFP's four capability dimensions. The exercise included a tailored coaching session for each individual.

Lessons Learned

37. Implementation of the People Strategy is an iterative process, generating lessons learned to guide future initiatives.

People Management is Everyone's Responsibility – Leaders, HR and Staff

38. Leaders lead both programmes and people. Strong advocacy from leaders is essential for embedding critical changes throughout WFP. For example, management's commitment and sponsorship was essential to the success of the Leading for Zero Hunger programme and the new P5–D1 promotion process.
39. Human resources staff have taken a leading role in developing and implementing many People Strategy initiatives. However, the function now needs to transition into a more supportive role as line managers assume greater responsibilities. A shift in mindset is required, to embrace this transformation in full and to enable successful implementation of the strategy across WFP.
40. The engagement and collaboration of all staff – including national staff – in all locations is critical for embedding changes.

Increased Demand on Human Resources Function Calls for New Ways of Increasing Efficiency

41. Human Resources Division (HRM) needs to attend to the diversified portfolio of strategic initiatives while maintaining and optimizing its delivery of core HR services. To ensure full delivery of the People Strategy's objectives, the HR function's role has been expanded beyond the process-focused role of managing benefits, rewards and contracts, to include providing leaders at the regional and country level with strategic advice for their most pressing staff issues. Specific knowledge, information and skills are required to enable the HR function staff to fulfil this responsibility.
42. To deliver on the dual responsibilities of the HR function, the identification of possible efficiency gains is critical while building the newly required strategic HR capabilities. This requires optimization and redesign of processes, improved leverage of technological solutions and automation.

Positive Results are Possible but Require Investments

43. Investment in WFP's workforce must be made with a sustainable approach. Activities for implementing the People Strategy require investments, both one-off, such as implementation of a new e-recruitment system and an employee self-service system, and recurring, such as capability development initiatives for all staff.
44. To continue achieving results, investments are needed. For example, implementation of recommendations from the P5–D1 promotion review will require an external party to carry out assessments. To ensure momentum of the People Strategy is maintained and even accelerated, it is vital that long-term costs are predicted and funding is allocated.

Implications for the Human Resources Function

Strengthen the Human Resources Function

Strategy and operating model for the HR function

45. In 2015, through partnering with leaders and staff, an HR functional strategy was developed to define the imperatives for HRM to support successful implementation of the People Strategy. The three HR imperatives are: i) delivering closest to the beneficiary; ii) sourcing, developing and deploying talent; and iii) unleashing purpose through meaningful employee experiences. The strategy was shared with the broader HR team to ensure alignment and to start the implementation process.
46. The HR functional strategy will be underpinned by an operating model enabled by technology to assist implementation of the People Strategy. This operating model will optimize HRM's structure so that it can deliver maximum value to WFP and the people it serves.

The Way Forward

47. Significant results have been delivered during the first phase of the strategy implementation. Continuing efforts include the following.

Reinforce a Performance Mindset

48. WFP will continue to strengthen the links between the promotion exercise for P1–P3 levels and the PACE as well as other talent management processes. For example, integrating promotion recommendations into the PACE process.
49. WFP will provide support to managers and staff in addressing underperformance issues and putting support mechanisms in place to ensure that areas requiring development are improved transparently and objectively.

Build WFP's Talent

50. In order to ensure that the right skills are in place to deliver on its mandate, WFP will *build, buy* and *borrow* talent.
51. **Build:** Numerous new courses in functional and core skills will be made available to all staff on the LMS. These courses will cover supervisory skills, team management, communication,

presentation skills, and diversity and inclusion. A parental coaching programme will support new mothers/fathers and their line managers.

52. **Buy:** The talent acquisition process will be reviewed to help improve WFP's capacity to attract and recruit top talent. Development of a talent acquisition strategy and finalization of the employee value proposition will further enhance WFP's competitiveness on the employment market. To create a cadre of future leaders at WFP, 50 posts at P2 level will be established. Use of an e-recruitment system will optimize the overall recruitment process and enable improved analysis.
53. In addition, WFP will develop a recruiting strategy for diversity that aims to attract more diverse talent and to achieve WFP's gender parity objectives.
54. **Borrow:** Establishment of an external emergency response roster with 300 vetted personnel will allow faster staff deployment.

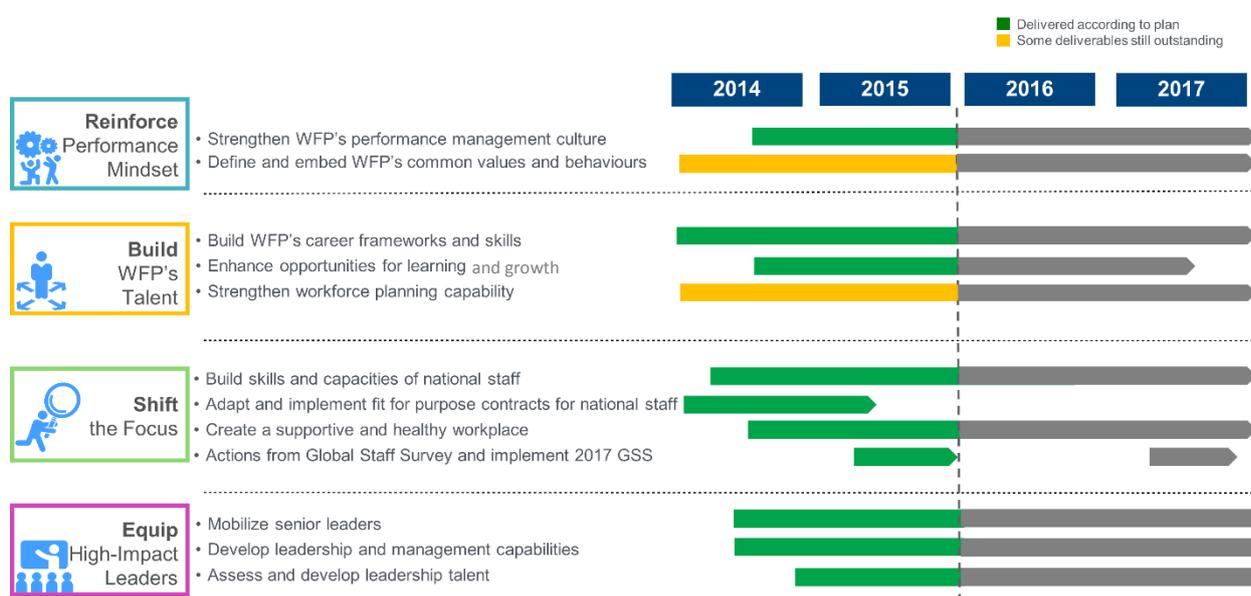
Shift the Focus

55. During 2016, enhancing the functional skills of national staff will be a priority. The objective is to have 3,000 national staff members complete targeted learning interventions by the end of 2016.
56. A career framework for the programme function will be established to enhance the skills and capacities of all staff, including national staff.
57. Medical and counselling services to address the physiological and psychological stresses associated with work will be enhanced to ensure a supportive and healthy workplace.
58. An employee self-service system will be established to increase efficiency, transparency and empowerment of staff members. Through the system, employees will take ownership of their own data and transactions, increasing the transparency and accuracy of data, while reducing the load on HRM and freeing up capacity for more value-adding activities.

Equip High-Impact Leaders

59. In 2016, an external career development centre will be established, building on the new promotion process for P5 and D1 levels. The centre will identify staff with the highest levels of performance and potential and will inform the senior staffing committee's decisions on who to include in the leadership pool.
60. To equip leaders to deliver on WFP's mandate, there will be continued focus on the delivery of the Leading for Zero Hunger and INSPIRE programmes in 2016.

Figure 1: People Strategy high-level roadmap: 2014–2017



Conclusion

61. The aims of the People Strategy are ambitious, but so is WFP's vision of a world with zero hunger, which can be achieved only if the workforce is fully equipped to deliver. The pace of the required changes must match the 2030 target outlined in the Zero Hunger vision while respecting and adapting to the organization's absorption capacity.
62. Achievements so far confirm the Board's support of the strategy and encourage continued support for building on the momentum gained, implementing the strategy at all levels of WFP and ensuring effective management of WFP's greatest asset – its workforce. WFP will continue to pursue the application of the strategy across its four imperatives, bearing in mind the early lessons learned as it seeks to do more, for more people, with less.

Acronyms Used in the Document

GSS	Global Staff Survey
HR	human resources
HRM	Human Resources Division
JPO	Junior Professional Officer
LMS	Learning Management System
PACE	Performance and Competency Enhancement [system]