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Evaluation reports

**For consideration**

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## **Management response to the recommendations of the summary evaluation report of the South Sudan country portfolio (2011–2016)**

### **Background**

1. This document presents the management response to the recommendations resulting from the summary evaluation of the South Sudan country portfolio (2011–2016).
2. The Secretariat appreciates the evaluation findings and recommendations, which have informed WFP's interim country strategic plan (ICSP) in South Sudan.
3. Management notes that the evaluation found WFP's work to be highly relevant and coherent with national needs and policies. WFP's leadership of the humanitarian response in South Sudan is recognized, as is its effective operationalization of humanitarian principles. WFP's comparative advantages include logistics capacity and unrivalled ability to go to scale in conjunction with partners; robust processes for negotiating safe access and utilizing analysis to support programme targeting and prioritization, including integration of protection and gender considerations; and a strong deep-field presence through sub-offices and mobile teams. The evaluation noted that the common services provided by WFP were considered key to the success of the overall humanitarian operations in South Sudan. Portfolio outputs were generally effective, while, at the outcome level, relief food assistance and nutrition activities helped to prevent dramatic declines in food security.
4. Management agrees with the evaluation's five recommendations on developing a strategic vision for responding to multi-year acute crises; maximizing humanitarian–development synergies by addressing constraints on cash-based transfers (CBTs), enhancing coordinated nutrition and resilience interventions and partnerships to expand school feeding; further increasing the efficiency of emergency response through a multi-year approach targeting infrastructure improvements, the provision of digital identities to beneficiaries and enhanced pipeline management; innovating to improve programme quality through assessments, monitoring, nutrition-sensitive programming and multi-year partnership agreements; and ensuring appropriate and timely staffing through efforts at the country and WFP-wide levels.
5. The matrix below sets out management's response to each of the recommendations, along with planned actions and timelines for implementing them.

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<b>MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SUMMARY EVALUATION REPORT OF SOUTH SUDAN COUNTRY PORTFOLIO (2011–2016)</b>			
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Action by</b>	<b>Management response and action taken</b>	<b>Implementation deadline</b>
<p><b>Recommendation 2: Humanitarian–development synergies. Whilst recognizing the primacy of life-saving assistance, WFP should position itself to ensure that activities of a short-term emergency nature are carried out in a manner that takes longer-term development and interconnected problems into account.</b></p> <p>WFP should improve Humanitarian–development synergies by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) developing a strategy to address the underlying constraints to the expanded use of CBTs (including strengthening supply chains, advocating for cross-border trade and improved financial and transport infrastructure) that enables timelier, cost-efficient and increased emergency assistance alongside longer-term impacts on strengthened market access and markets for domestic production;</li> <li>b) maintaining the longer-term aim to contribute to the Government Health Sector Development Plan, including capacity development and other support for the roll-out of the community management of acute malnutrition guidelines at national, state and county levels; advocacy and support for the operationalization of the Boma Health Initiative launched in 2015 in close collaboration with the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organization (WHO), and other “nutrition-in-health” partners in South Sudan;</li> <li>c) partnering with other agencies to reinvigorate and refine an inter-agency approach to building resilience that is distinct from food</li> </ul>	<p>Country office, with support from the regional bureau, OSZ, Emergency Preparedness and Support Response Division (OSE), Supply Chain Division (OSC).</p>	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>Management recognizes the importance of leveraging WFP’s significant operational presence and emergency response in South Sudan to address longer-term underlying issues and vulnerabilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) WFP is actively seeking to mitigate the constraints on expanding CBT use, although it recognizes that some are beyond its control. WFP conducted an in-depth market analysis of the relatively secure former Northern Bahr el Ghazal and Warrap states in early 2017 and a CBT supply chain assessment mission in July 2017. These will inform the formulation of a retail engagement strategy in the second half of 2017 to drive movement towards naturally functioning competitive markets and optimized supply chain efficiency to increase supply and reduce prices. To create a more conducive transport environment for small traders, WFP will facilitate their access to WFP-shortlisted contractors and encourage cargo consolidation.</li> <li>b) WFP will continue its close engagement to support the health sector development plan. WFP has a letter of agreement with the Ministry of Health to enhance the capacity of the ministry’s Department of Nutrition at the national and state levels to plan, coordinate and provide technical oversight over nutrition programmes and responses. The letter of agreement includes the secondment of WFP staff members to the Department of Nutrition. A costed work plan to implement the agreement is in place and will be reviewed annually.</li> </ul> <p>Together with UNICEF and the Health Pooled Fund, WFP facilitates the development and roll-out of the national guidelines on community management of acute malnutrition. State-level training of trainers will be completed in 2017, and WFP and UNICEF will continue to provide technical and financial support to the Department of Nutrition and cooperating partners in cascading the training to the county level. WFP will continue its participation in consultations with the nutrition and HIV technical working groups led by the Ministry of Health on the development of a national nutrition policy, the planning and implementation of a national nutrition survey, and the development of the national strategic plan for HIV/AIDS to advocate and support robust frameworks for preventing and treating malnutrition through</p>	<p>December 2017</p> <p>December 2018</p>

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<p>assistance-for-assets activities, that layers multi-annual interventions from different agencies for progressive replication and roll-out as conditions permit, and</p> <p>d) strategically promoting school feeding – within a coordinated inter-agency approach – that contributes to breaking the cycle of war and violence in South Sudan by establishing ‘safe zones’ for protection and provides a platform for multi-sectoral interventions spanning health, nutrition and livelihoods objectives.</p>		<p>nutrition-specific actions, as well as through nutrition-sensitive actions that will soon be rolled out. WFP already supports a network of community nutrition volunteers providing community outreach services across the country and is holding discussions with the Ministry of Health, UNICEF and WHO on supporting the operationalization of the Boma Health Initiative and exploring further opportunities for synergy in community outreach and staffing (through community nutrition volunteers, community health workers and home health promoters) for 2018.</p> <p>In June 2017, WFP held an internal theory of change workshop, which brought together the teams working on the safety nets and resilience portfolio (food/cash assistance-for-assets, school meals and purchase for progress), nutrition, gender, protection and accountability and feeder roads to map the potential for greater synergies within WFP programme areas with a view to helping communities build resilience. Complementarities among these areas of work were identified and the teams will coordinate to operationalize the linkages; this has already been initiated through nutrition-sensitive programme planning. Through the theory of change workshop, opportunities for collaborating with other United Nations, non-governmental organization (NGO) and government partners were identified, recognizing that a multi-sectoral response is integral to resilience. Building on the theory of change and ongoing programmes, WFP will seek to expand its collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), UNICEF, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other United Nations entities to areas beyond current joint activities, in particular in locations supported by multi-year funding, such as in the former Northern Bahr el Ghazal and Warrap states. WFP is in discussions with FAO, UNICEF and UNDP on a shared work plan for 2018 encompassing joint recovery and resilience programming in the former Northern Bahr el Ghazal state, which will serve as a model to guide potential expansion to other parts of the country.</p> <p>Through FFA and purchase for progress (P4P) activities, WFP will continue to collaborate with UN-Women to mainstream gender and include additional training to empower women in WFP activities, including support for women’s financial literacy coupled with the</p>	December 2018

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		<p>provision of cash transfers through the FFA programme. WFP will renew its letter of understanding with UN-Women by the end of 2017. WFP will also continue to co-lead two ICF outcome groups.</p> <p>WFP will work with education and health partners to encourage further efforts to support child protection and to develop minimum standards for on-site school meals. Minimum standards will include food safety and quality in addition to school infrastructure requirements. Through a nutrition-sensitive approach, WFP will develop inter-sectoral linkages among nutrition, protection and livelihoods by working through cluster systems to promote schools as intervention platforms for reaching communities. To enable school feeding to reach greater numbers of children, WFP will increase engagement and collaboration with local education authorities to identify schools that can be incorporated into the school feeding programme and will explore the possibility of using ready-to-eat nutritious snacks, high-energy biscuits and/or family-food (take-home) rations in schools where on-site preparation is not feasible.</p>	
<p><b>Recommendation 3: Efficiency. The context in South Sudan makes relief expensive to deliver, and it is difficult to ensure timely deliveries. The primary underlying challenges are constraints economically transporting food to beneficiaries and managing the food pipeline.</b></p> <p>WFP should further increase cost-efficiency assuming a multi-year approach to emergency response.</p> <p>a) WFP should work with other agencies, including the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), to identify opportunities where targeted investment by donors in transport infrastructure could generate multi-annual cost savings on logistics costs including: cost-benefit analyses of strategic repairs of trunk roads to allow wet season access, investment in improved river transport, and investment in the maintenance of strategic airstrips to allow increased use of fixed wing aircraft.</p>	<p>Country office, with support from the regional bureau, OSZ, OSC.</p>	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>Management is committed to pursuing cost-efficiencies while maintaining capacity to deliver assistance.</p> <p>a) WFP will lead and engage partner agencies, including UNOPS, to coordinate plans for infrastructure projects and to carry out assessments and cost-benefit analyses for strategic repairs on roads and the rehabilitation of airstrips, river passages and ports. Immediate priorities will be funded through regular resources at the agencies' disposal. WFP and partners will, as far as possible, pool resources for greatest effect and WFP has already shared information on potential road construction projects surveyed under its feeder roads special operation to support UNOPS efforts to secure donor funding for road construction in South Sudan.</p> <p>b) As part of the resource mobilization strategy, WFP will work with other United Nations agencies to develop a joint strategy for attracting investment, pursuant to which it will target donors that consistently prioritize key infrastructure development that enhances delivery efficiency, access and trade.</p>	<p>December 2018</p> <p>December 2018</p>

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<p>b) On the basis of the results of the cost-benefit analysis, develop a joint advocacy strategy for donors on limited, strategic investment in infrastructure.</p> <p>c) In collaboration with partners (including the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and UNHCR), develop a strategy for providing all South Sudanese with a digital identity that includes agreement for inter-operability and data-sharing between systems.</p> <p>d) Consider introducing an element of routine cost recovery into the Logistics Cluster to encourage better forward-planning and more efficient use of resources.</p> <p>e) Strengthen the management of the food pipeline through:</p> <p>i) Forming an Integrated Supply Chain Working Group to determine requirements, resources and prioritize operational plans.</p> <p>ii) Reinforcing the staffing of the Budget and Programming Team, in part to increase liaison with donors on food shipments.</p> <p>iii) Given the importance of the Global Commodity Management Facility (GCMF) to South Sudan, opportunities to further strengthen its contribution to the South Sudan response should be investigated.</p>		<p>c) WFP is developing a strategy to expand biometric registration to all beneficiaries. This involves the further roll-out of its SCOPE beneficiary and transfer management platform and the leveraging of other agencies' biometric registration systems to increase coverage rapidly. In this regard, collaboration with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the IOM has been strengthened during 2017. Specifically, IOM and WFP carried out a joint registration in Panyijar county (in the former Unity state) and are planning further joint registration exercises with their respective biometric beneficiary platforms. A data-sharing agreement with UNHCR has been signed by the agencies' country representatives and a similar agreement with IOM is being prepared. Both systems will be tested for inter-operability in 2017.</p>	December 2017
		<p>d) Following the applicable protocol, members of the logistics cluster will review which common services that cluster should continue to provide and assess possible partial cost-recovery measures to prevent abuse and improve cost efficiency. For services no longer provided by the cluster, WFP will offer bilateral agreements on the basis of full cost recovery.</p>	December 2017
		<p>e) i) The country office will continue to strengthen its Supply Chain Working Group, which reports to the deputy country director responsible for operations and meets twice per month to prioritize resources and operational plans and review funds analyses.</p>	December 2017
		<p>ii) In support, the staffing of the budget and programming team has been reinforced to enable it to engage more prominently in country office operational planning and prioritization.</p>	Completed
		<p>iii) With 60 percent of the overall food in WFP's operation in South Sudan (including in-kind contributions) coming through the GCMF, the country office and the regional bureau have redesigned the South Sudan operation pipeline tool so that it identifies shortfalls by corridor to facilitate informed decision-making on sourcing.</p>	Completed

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<p><b>Recommendation 4: Programme quality.</b>  <b>Limitations in data and analysis continue to constrain the ability of the country office to draw evidence-based conclusions on the most efficient and effective programmatic approaches to adopt.</b>  <b>Opportunities to capitalize on internal synergies between activities were identified but largely remained unrealized.</b>  <b>Short-term FLAs with cooperating partners do not facilitate sustained programming with beneficiaries.</b></p> <p>a) WFP should further invest in food and nutrition related assessments and analyses by;</p> <p>i) Further elaboration of the WFP food security and nutrition monitoring system (FSNMS) methodology for regular assessment of nutrition status among key nutrition target groups, including the integration of stunting indicators and triangulation of results with the Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transitions (SMART) surveys system, and other relevant surveillance mechanisms;</p> <p>ii) Surveillance of food security in urban areas.</p> <p>iii) Further investment in analysis of the underlying reasons for undernutrition in South Sudan, in close collaboration/partnership with other agencies on food security and nutrition, with a particular focus on the more stable areas of the country.</p> <p>b) Start up and increase nutrition-sensitive programming in line with the Scaling up Nutrition (SUN) approach within the overall WFP portfolio for South Sudan, through the cash</p>	<p>Country office, in consultation with the regional bureau, OSZ.</p> <p>With regard to recommendation 4 c), the management response is led by the Performance Management and Monitoring Division (RMP) and OSZ (headquarters) with support from the regional bureau and the country office.</p>	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>Management recognizes the importance of pursuing programme quality, enhanced effectiveness and increased synergies among its activities despite the challenging operational context and increasing demands on its emergency-response operation. Continuous improvement in data collection and analysis will provide a robust evidence base for strategic and operational decision-making.</p> <p>a) i) Nutrition indicators are included in the FSNMS, providing state-level results. Data on weight, height, age and mid-upper arm circumference of children is collected, enabling the analysis of stunting when required. In addition, data from these assessments and SMART surveys is triangulated in updating integrated food security phase classification findings and in planning nutrition responses. WFP is seeking to further improve the coordination of FSNMS and SMART surveys and has redesigned the sampling strategy of the FSNMS to provide county-level food security results and has similar plans for nutrition. In addition, the Ministry of Health, WFP, UNICEF, WHO, FAO and the Health Pooled Fund have formed a team to plan the first national nutrition survey in South Sudan.</p> <p>ii) In 2017, WFP conducted urban food security and nutrition assessments in Bor and Juba, with another planned in Wau. WFP will seek to increase the use of mobile data collection as a means of monitoring urban food and nutrition security in a cost-efficient manner.</p> <p>iii) WFP participates in a nutrition information working group that reviews SMART surveys and triangulates all available information to inform appropriate responses. An inter-agency operational research project, entitled “Integrated Food and Nutrition Security Causal Analysis”, was recently conducted in the relatively stable former Warrap and Northern Bahr el Ghazal states, involving WFP, FAO, UNICEF, NGO partners, the Ministry of Health and the National Bureau of Statistics. Discussions are under way on a follow-up study for 2018. Quality nutrition programming in emergencies will be further</p>	<p>December 2018</p> <p>December 2018</p> <p>December 2018</p>

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<p>for assets (CFA) and food assistance for education programmes in particular, but also through general food distributions, e.g. a focus on stunting reduction in tandem with the targeted supplementary feeding programmes and BSFP.</p> <p>c) At corporate level, review indicators used for outcome and impact level monitoring of resilience and special operations.</p> <p>d) Develop multi-year field-level agreements (FLAs) with cooperating partners – these FLAs could specify multi-year strategic frameworks with annual budget agreements.</p>		<p>assured by aligning the response approach with the forthcoming WFP directive and checklist on “nutrition in emergencies”.</p> <p>b) WFP has developed an operational plan to roll out nutrition-sensitive programming across its activities. During 2017, programmes will be adjusted to provide for the mainstreaming of nutrition sensitivity in 2018. CFA, food assistance-for-assets (FFA), school meals and P4P activities have been identified as priority activities for nutrition-sensitive programming. WFP has also enhanced synergies between general food distribution and its nutrition activities in the context of seasonal emergency scale-ups, identifying vulnerable households as candidates for improved household food security by targeting individuals participating in programmes to treat acute malnutrition.</p> <p>c) The June 2017 meeting on lessons learned in respect of the WFP corporate results framework (CRF) resulted in a recommendation that three working groups be established to review the CRF. One group would discuss strategic result 8, germane to common services, and of particular interest for special operations. The recommendation is also addressed to the monitoring unit in headquarters tasked with maintaining the results framework and facilitating the creation of new indicators when necessary, involving technical units concerned. The working group will prepare recommendations for the 2018 first regular session of the Executive Board.</p> <p>Resources permitting, the relevant regional bureaux and headquarters offices will, in keeping with WFP’s resilience policy, review existing corporate resilience outcome and impact indicators, including by comparing them with selected global approaches to monitoring and measuring resilience impacts and outcomes. The findings will be presented in a summary report in early 2019 for discussion at a meeting that year on programming and policy.</p> <p>d) With support from WFP’s NGO Partnerships Unit and Legal Office, the country office will negotiate FLAs and budgets with key partners with the aim of entering into multi-year, multi-project or multi-location agreements to enable sustained, coordinated assistance for improved results. Pilot multi-year FLAs</p>	<p>December 2018</p> <p>December 2019</p> <p>December 2017</p>

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		have already been put in place in selected locations. Future multi-year FLAs will be entered into based on financial feasibility, partner performance review and a thorough risk review to ensure high quality partnerships.	
<p><b>Recommendation 5: Human Resources. Persistent delays in the recruitment of key staff has undermined the capacity of the country office, including the capacity for strategic planning. WFP relied disproportionately on personnel recruited on short-term contracts.</b></p> <p>a) The WFP country office should commission and publish a staffing review, based on the staff needed to deliver against the new country strategic plan.</p> <p>b) The capacity of the country office human resources team should be augmented to provide the necessary capacity to support the timely appointment of suitably qualified and experienced staff – including proactively identifying and encouraging suitable staff to apply for key positions on reassignment.</p> <p>c) WFP Headquarters should consider recruiting floating emergency staff who would be available for immediate deployment through the L3 roster.</p> <p>d) While recognizing the measures taken by WFP HQ to improve the reassignment process, the relevant HQ department should consider further changes to the reassignment process to ensure that all staff serve in hardship postings.</p>	<p>Country office, with support from the regional bureau, Human Resource Division (HRM), OSE.</p> <p>With regard to recommendation 5 c) and d) the management responses are led by HRM Headquarters with support from the regional bureau and the country office.</p>	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>Management will prioritize improved human resources processes to ensure qualified staff are in place to deliver the ICSP.</p> <p>a) A staffing structure review, commissioned in 2016 but delayed by the outbreak of crisis in July 2016, is nearing completion and is expected to inform staffing decisions by identifying core staff to support the implementation of the ICSP, including wherever possible through the replacement of short-term national staff positions with fixed-term positions. During the last quarter of 2017, WFP will also be expected to complete an organizational readiness exercise to identify gaps and key staff skillsets required to successfully implement the ICSP.</p> <p>b) In collaboration with the regional bureau, the country office reviewed its human resources function in June 2017, producing recommendations currently being implemented, including increasing staffing for the country office human resources team and adding surge capacity by allocating temporary consultants to support the recruitment team during the peak hiring period. With this strengthened team, the country office will adopt a proactive approach for the 2018 mid-year reassignment, actively seeking qualified candidates to apply for positions in South Sudan.</p> <p>c) The Human Resources Division of WFP is revising the emergency response roster with a view to filling gaps in critical functional areas and attracting experienced international professional officers. The selection process will be reinforced to ensure that staff have sufficient experience and appropriate profiles. The Emergency Preparedness and Support Response Division is working with the Human Resources Division to enhance WFP's surge capacity. By the end of 2018 (subject to the availability of funding), the Emergency Preparedness and Support Response Division will have contracted staff dedicated to surge support in respect of new or</p>	<p>December 2017</p> <p>December 2017</p> <p>December 2018</p>

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		<p>evolving emergencies. The Division also continues to organize and enhance the Functional and Support Training for Emergency Response simulation exercise to equip staff with technical and soft skills required for deployment in emergencies.</p> <p>d) Changes to the reassignment process introduced in the 2016/2017 mid-year reassignment will be enhanced in the 2017/2018 reassignment. Priority will be given to Level 3 emergencies (including in South Sudan). Positions that cannot be filled by internal candidates will be opened to external recruitment. The measures below will be reinforced in future reassignments</p> <p>i) staff members long-stationed at H/A duty stations will be required to apply to C/D/E duty stations; and</p> <p>ii) information about staff members who have been in A, H or B duty stations for six years or more will be provided to the staffing committee to facilitate decision-making.</p> <p>While there is an expectation that most international professional staff members will serve in hardship duty stations during their careers, WFP recognizes that not every WFP staff member has a profile suitable for service in such a duty station. The principle of placing the right staff in the right positions – i.e. finding the best match between the needs of the operation and the skillsets of staff due to be reassigned – is, therefore, also a determining factor in the reassignment exercise.</p> <p>Notwithstanding, the Human Resources Division will continue to encourage staff to serve in a variety of duty stations across WFP and to prioritize the staffing of L3 and most-critical operations.</p>	December 2018

## Acronyms used in the Document

CBT	cash-based transfer
CFA	cash for assets
CRF	corporate results framework
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FFA	food assistance-for-assets
FLA	field-level agreement
FSNMS	food security and nutrition monitoring system
GCMF	Global Commodity Management Facility
ICF	interim cooperation framework
ICSP	interim country strategic plan
IOM	international organization for migration
NGO	non-governmental organization
OSC	Supply Chain Division
OSE	Emergency Preparedness and Response Support Division
OSZ	Policy and Programme Division
P4P	purchase for progress
PGG	Government Partnerships Division
RMP	Performance Management and Monitoring Division
SMART	Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transitions
SUN	Scaling up Nutrition
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
WHO	World Health Organization