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MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SUMMARY REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC EVALUATION – FROM FOOD AID TO FOOD ASSISTANCE: WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

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NOTE TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

This document is submitted to the Executive Board for consideration

The Secretariat invites members of the Board who may have questions of a technical nature with regard to this document to contact the WFP staff focal points indicated below, preferably well in advance of the Board's meeting.

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BACKGROUND

1. For WFP, the ultimate aim of partnership is to maximize synergies with a view to optimizing the assistance and protection provided to people vulnerable to food insecurity. WFP appreciates the importance of effective partnerships to achieving its objectives, and places high value on this evaluation's findings and recommendations.
2. In the context of WFP's strategic shift from food aid to food assistance, envisaged in the Strategic Plan (2008–2013), the Secretariat views as somewhat limited the evaluation's findings and recommendations. WFP's partnerships have a broader intent of including a wide spectrum of diverse partnership activities. The evaluation has given rise to observations about the constraints and challenges that WFP currently faces, including comments on existing practices, procedures and lessons learned, and views about future trends and scenarios.
3. The responses and actions summarized in the attached matrix should be considered in a broader context of actions associated with moving from food aid to food assistance, and not in the more limited context presented in the evaluation report.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SUMMARY REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC EVALUATION – FROM FOOD AID TO FOOD ASSISTANCE: WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

Recommendations	Action by	Management response and action taken	Implementation deadline
<p>Recommendation 1: WFP should empower the Executive Management Council, reporting to the Executive Director, to articulate a comprehensive partnership strategy, including a communications strategy. This strategy should address issues raised during the evaluation, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ defining partnership and partnership principles for WFP; ➤ clarifying how WFP's strategic transformation to food assistance relates to partnership; ➤ addressing internal and external communications about partnerships; and ➤ addressing procedures for working in partnership and incentives to support new approaches. 	<p>Operations Department (OD)/Communications, Public Policy and Private Partnerships Division (CP)</p>	<p>Partially agreed.</p> <p>WFP recognizes the importance of improving understanding of its role and shift from a food aid to a food assistance approach. It will continue to enhance its communication strategy in line with the stages of the mid-term review of the current strategic plan and development of the new plan scheduled for 2013.</p> <p>The evaluation does not provide adequate evidence that WFP's approach to partnering would benefit from developing a comprehensive partnership strategy. The diversity and complexity of partnerships across WFP's various functions bring into question the value and cost-effectiveness of such an exercise. Significant investments and efforts are being made to strengthen partnerships with private sector, non-governmental organization (NGO) and United Nations partners under existing mechanisms.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Recommendation 2: WFP should consider additional resources to enhance its capacity in nutrition and health, and build partnership skills, including: increased training for all staff; direct outreach to external partners in order to better engage them in determining what constitutes good partnership; and specific incentives for managers to ensure that they demonstrate leadership in promoting a new partnership strategy. WFP should allocate new resources or redirect existing resources to address capacity gaps in nutrition. In order to build partnering capacity, actions are needed in a broad range of areas, including orientation, managerial leadership and the overall management of change within WFP.</p>	<p>Office of Food Safety, Quality and Nutrition (when established)/Programme Design Service (ODXP)/ Policy, Planning and Strategy Division (PS)</p> <p>ODXP</p>	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>WFP will continue to increase and improve capacity across the organization – including in ODXP, PS, the Office of the Executive Director and the Private Partnerships Branch – to maximize the nutritional impact of food assistance.</p> <p>In 2012, WFP will establish the Office of Food Safety, Quality and Nutrition, which will ensure appropriate food technology and food quality expertise at the country level, develop evidence-based nutrition programming guidance, engage in global nutrition policy dialogues and enhance partnerships.</p> <p>WFP has identified priority countries in which to scale up interventions to address high rates of undernutrition, and has defined the number of staff, and the skills, knowledge, etc. required in different offices for implementing the nutrition strategy.</p>	<p>November 2011</p>



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Recommendations	Action by	Management response and action taken	Implementation deadline
	PS	<p>A new nutrition policy will present WFP's vision, mission and strategy for nutrition, and outline steps for implementation with partners.</p>	February 2012
	PS	<p>PS and ODXP will support regional bureaux and country offices in developing regional nutrition strategies with other stakeholders.</p>	Ongoing
	ODXP/PS	<p>WFP will develop a guidance document for country directors, deputy country directors and nutrition focal points on implementing the nutrition policy, and on harmonization and alignment of the partnership structure at Headquarters.</p> <p>In addition, ODXP will advocate for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - better utilization of existing staff with nutrition backgrounds and skills, and priority to the recruitment of staff with nutrition expertise; - recruitment of staff through an external roster of nutrition experts; - developing programme staff's capacity to design and support nutrition programmes, and developing the knowledge and skills of other functional roles in logistics, procurement, etc.; - designing a capacity development strategy and guidance materials, resources, training courses, e-learning modules and a repository of best practices in nutrition for all staff; and - creating a career development plan for WFP nutrition staff. 	February 2012
			Ongoing
			January 2012
			March 2012
			April 2012
			October 2012



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Recommendations	Action by	Management response and action taken	Implementation deadline
<p>Recommendation 4: WFP should amend its global and (if relevant) regional framework agreements with other United Nations organizations to reflect new conditions and to incorporate aspects of good partnering agreements. WFP's agreements should be updated to reflect its current strategic directions, the new directions of its partners, the implications of the shift in development assistance over the past decade and elements of good partnering.</p>	PS/OD	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>WFP has established partnerships with other United Nations organizations, reflecting the contexts in which they operate together. In addition to the MOUs signed with UNDP and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in 2010, WFP signed a new MOU with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in April 2011. Existing MOUs with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and UNICEF were updated in January and April 2011 respectively, to reflect current realities. A joint statement of action was signed with UN-Women in September 2011, for empowering rural women and promoting gender equality. United Nations partners at various levels were consulted for the mid-term review of the Strategic Plan (2008–2013); the results guided preparation of the next strategic plan.</p>	Implemented with ongoing enhancements
<p>Recommendation 5: WFP should consider developing a mechanism to complement the standardized field-level agreements (FLAs) and lay out mutual expectations between WFP and local partners with respect to the mutual exercise of good-partnership practices. WFP should develop a mechanism for use at the country level that enables it and its NGO partners to agree on how the principles of good partnership are put into practice between WFP country offices and NGOs.</p>	ERM/OD	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>In collaboration with NGO partners, WFP is reviewing the standard FLA to reflect the transition to food assistance. An internal FLA working group, with technical representation from WFP stakeholder divisions, is reviewing the process and updating the guidance. A mechanism will be established to guide country offices and ensure shared expectations and partnership practices between WFP and its NGO partners.</p>	September 2012



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Recommendations	Action by	Management response and action taken	Implementation deadline
<p>Recommendation 6: WFP should consider amending its project planning and reporting systems to include specific references to good partnership and partnership-related outcomes, and to promote the longer-term approach needed to sustain partnerships and contribute to capacity development. Existing models should be amended to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation of partnerships, and partnership-related outcomes. It is important to recognize that indicators related to good partnership are needed to encourage managers to adopt recommended behaviours and process changes. Given the limitations of the project-based planning model, WFP should consider amending country-level planning to recognize the continuity necessary for promoting good partnerships and sustainable capacity development, which are core to the strategic transformation. A series of pilots with different types of projects or countries should be used to test and refine indicators for monitoring and evaluating partnerships in WFP's planning and reporting systems.</p>	Programme Division (ODX)	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>WFP's commitment to working with governments and other national partners in "building together" underlies its guidance material for capacity development. Governments and WFP will lead country-based consultation processes with stakeholders to promote national ownership of hunger solutions, as outlined in the recently refined Strategic Results Framework. The Hand-over and Partnerships Branch has incorporated a national capacity index for the planning and implementation of each hunger solution. WFP's new financial framework will provide the resources needed for longer-term support to governments. Cash-funded technical assistance projects will build systems and the capacity of governments and other national partners.</p>	June 2012
<p>Recommendation 7: WFP should expand and formalize the country-level partnership evaluation system based on the principle of mutual accountability; an example to build on was seen in Kenya. WFP should develop an evaluation tool that enables a mutual assessment by partners of their strengths and weaknesses in the partnership. These may range from the contributions of partnership to delivery, quality and timeliness to communications, transparency and other aspects of partnership management and effectiveness.</p>	ERM/ODX	<p>Partially agreed.</p> <p>WFP recognizes the value of the country-led partnership evaluation system in Kenya. However, it also recognizes the importance of a larger consultative process involving other partners in United Nations country teams, led by the Resident Coordinator, and humanitarian country teams, led by the Humanitarian Coordinator. This recommendation will be implemented within the agenda and work undertaken by the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) and the IASC.</p>	Ongoing



ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

CP	Communications, Public Policy and Private Partnerships Division
ERM	Multilateral and NGO Relations Division
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FLA	field-level agreement
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	non-governmental organization
OD	Operations Department
ODX	Programme Division
ODXP	Programme Design Service
PS	Policy, Planning and Strategy Division
SUN	Scaling Up Nutrition
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSCN	United Nations Standing Committee on Nutrition
UN-Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WHO	World Health Organization