



## Annual WFP Partnership Consultations



## Summary Report of the 2014 Annual Partnership Consultation

Photo: WFP/Rein Skullerud

# WFP welcomes partners to HQ

On 29 and 30 October, WFP had the privilege to welcome nearly 60 of its NGO and civil society partners to its Rome headquarters to engage in one and a half days of high-level strategic dialogue.

This year's Annual Partnership Consultation (APC) brought together some 95 partner representatives (28 of which were at the CEO level) and a record number of senior WFP staff, both from HQ and the field, including five Regional Directors and the Regional Emergency Coordinator for Syria. On day two, WFP and its partners were joined by permanent representatives of 33 countries from the membership of the Executive Board.

This year's third reinvigorated consultation was characterised as the 'not to be missed forum' as so many senior humanitarian leaders prioritised the event. WFP and partners alike appreciated the opportunity to openly discuss our collective efforts and to explore

new ways of working together as we move forward in an ever changing world.

The agenda focused on current themes dominating the humanitarian and development debate, reflecting concerns about



Ms. Elisabeth Rasmusson, WFP Assistant Executive Director for Partnership and Governance Services.

increasing instability in our world and our limited capacity to address growing humanitarian needs.

Together we explored: i) Collaboration in Level 3 Emergencies; ii) The Future of Humanitarian Action and; iii) the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals. A variety of themes resonated throughout, with a particular emphasis on our collective engagement in processes such as the World Humanitarian Summit, as well as funding, coordination and local capacity development.

As stated by WFP Executive Director, Ms. Ertharin Cousin, "We must firmly keep our eyes and our work focused on the future. Ultimately this meeting is about generating a more effective and efficient collaboration in achieving outcomes for those that we serve and about achieving outcomes for those that don't get to come to meetings like this and depend upon us to work together to get it right".

### Action Points

- **Coordinated approach to donors**
- **Joint advocacy to National Parliaments**
- **Local capacity development pilot**
- **NGO engagement with the Committee on World Food Security (CFS)**

## What are we delivering and how do we get better

Discussions in plenary highlighted the necessity to recognize what we are doing and why. As a continuation of progress made in previous years' consultations, what is important now is that we ensure we are actually working better together, and the 2014 APC aimed to examine just this—to highlight best practices, identify common challenges and to collectively develop ideas around new programmes and new pilots

to enable us to deliver humanitarian and development assistance in the best way possible. As captured within the framework of WFP's Corporate Partnership Strategy, WFP emphasized its commitment to being the partner of choice, highlighting how essential these conversations are in ensuring an even stronger collaboration, and in turn, even greater achievements.

# Collaboration in level 3 emergencies

“Whatever the crisis – there is no way that WFP can do this alone. It’s not to please the audience, it’s a fact. We need partnerships for our core mandate and business and we of course need partnerships to deploy, to be part of the deployment of humanitarian response, whatever the crisis”. - Giancarlo Cirri, WFP Senior Programme Advisor.

A panel was led by partner representatives and WFP on collaboration in Level 3 emergencies. Experiences were shared related to on-going responses for the **South Sudan Crisis**, the **Syria and Syrian Refugee Crisis** and the **West Africa Ebola Outbreak**.

WFP Regional Director, Ms. Valerie Guarnieri presented views on our collaboration in South Sudan together with Mr. Ken Isaacs, Vice President of Samaritan’s Purse. The history of the crisis was explained as well as the evolving nature of our response over time. In South Sudan, in spite of WFP’s initial struggle to mobilize response, due to a low NGO presence in most affected areas, almost half the 15 rapid response teams which have since been mobilized, are led by NGOs. Funding/resource restraints were discussed together with the call for assisting NGOs with start-up costs.

Mr. Isaacs concurred with the points presented by Ms. Guarnieri and went on to outline various aspects of his experience on the ground. He pointed out a need for strengthening coordination and communication—even through informal channels—amongst our staff to ensure successful food deliveries. Mr. Isaacs touched upon access, emphasising how critical transparency and neutrality were in obtaining access to affected areas.

In Syria, explained WFP’s Regional Emergency Coordinator, Mr. Muhannad Hadi, WFP relies heavily on its partners. Maintaining focus on the target groups, there is a need for improved coordination and information sharing to avoid



Photo: WFP/Rein Skullerud

duplication of efforts between NGOs working cross border and the Damascus based agencies.

Co-panellist for the Syria discussion, Ms. Ingrid McDonald, Director of the Norwegian Refugee Council in Geneva, referring to funding shortfalls, called for WFP to include NGOs in strategic planning. She also highlighted accountability to affected populations; both the operational contribution of NGOs, and the collective accountability of the system, in which the Humanitarian Coordinator has an important role to play.

The next panel discussed our joint efforts in response to the Ebola outbreak; an emergency unlike any other ever faced by the humanitarian community. WFP Senior Programme Advisor Mr. Giancarlo Cirri was joined by Mr. Edouard Rodier, Representative to the European Union of Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), who are currently leading—by default as Mr. Rodier explained—the response on the ground.

WFP explained that the U-turn required to shift back from development to major emergency response was a challenge, requiring WFP and its NGO partners to rapidly rebuild capacity and scale-up. WFP explained how the nature of coordination underwent a big change in the past months, from a situation where the activation of

clusters was politically sensitive, to a new UN approach, with UNMEER in the driving seat.

The lessons learnt from this model may have an impact on the overall humanitarian architecture.

MSF reminded the floor of the multiple level 3 emergencies among which the Ebola crisis developed and the enormous pressure this brings especially on human resources. The international response still needs to go to scale. Great progress is being made and problems overcome but the increased response is still not keeping pace with the growing crisis and much more is needed, perhaps most urgently the human resources on the ground.

Comments from the floor touched upon a number of issues such as the projected increase of food insecurity and potentially malnutrition and the need to address this looming crisis strategically now, not next year. WFP’s new tool to measure the impact of Ebola on food insecurity will help us prepare better. Calls were made for better coordination, and for not forgetting the non-Ebola related vulnerable groups. Several participants pointed out that the health crisis has turned into a humanitarian crisis.



# Humanitarian challenges & the future of humanitarian action

The session dedicated to the future of humanitarian action welcomed Ambassador Atta Al Manan Bakhit, former Assistant Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs, Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), who delivered a key note speech on 'Humanitarian Challenges: Perspectives from the South and Islamic States'. The objective of this session was to think collectively about our common path—as well as commitment to humanitarian principles—and to identify where reform and innovation could provide better results.

Ambassador Bakhit highlighted the changing humanitarian system and the nature of the disasters we face.

He invited the audience to explore solutions for addressing inadequate capacity of national governments, weak coordination, limited access and donor funding restraints.

Deliberations focused on:

i) capacity development and the need for a knowledge exchange between the international humanitarian actors and the national governments/local organizations to ensure inclusiveness; ii) resourcing and the need to overcome donor fatigue and to develop innovative ways to involve new (even smaller) donors; and iii) coordination between humanitarian response and development programmes and the



Photo: WFP/Rein Skullerud

need to create better linkages in order to build resilience and sustainable solutions.

Mr. Joel Charney, Vice President of InterAction stated "We have a big opportunity right now from the coordination standpoint. We need to embrace our diversity, but based on a focus on affected people, empowering affected people, and adhering to standards and principles".

Participants emphasised the need for new design in humanitarian funding architecture, which ultimately would allow for programmes to cut across sectors of preparedness, response, recovery and resilience. Linkages were made to the World Humanitarian Summit

(WHS) and the opportunity to explore new perspectives and ideals while also acknowledging the increasing diversity of actors.



Photo: WFP/Rein Skullerud

Ambassador Atta Al Manan Bakhit, Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), former Secretary General.

## Honoring a global partner and leader



Photo: WFP/Rein Skullerud

Ms. Ertharin Cousin, WFP Executive Director (L), Mr. Walter Middleton, World Vision Leader for Resilience and Livelihoods (C), Mr. Kevin Jenkins World Vision President and CEO (R).

Mr. Walter Middleton—World Vision International's current Partnership Leader for Resilience and Livelihoods—was presented with a certificate of appreciation as well as a statue, acknowledging his 'lifelong commitment and invaluable contribution' to fighting global hunger. Mr. Middleton has over 40 years of leadership experience in the food security sector and has served as a focal point for the WFP-World Vision partnership for many years. He has actively engaged with WFP on various fronts, demonstrating his commitment and dedication to the importance of working in partnership to end hunger.

# Post–2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)



Photo: WFP/Rein Skullerud

Ms. Christina Bennett, Overseas Development Institute (ODI), Research Fellow.

This session included members of WFP’s Executive Board. Elisabeth Rasmusson, WFP Assistant Executive Director for Partnership and Governance, introduced the session by expressing her gratitude to all the organizations that were engaged in the major achievement of including a specific Sustainable Development Goal dedicated to food security, nutrition and agriculture at this stage in the Post-2015 agenda.

Following this major achievement, we must now together focus on the implementation.

A background paper was developed by Ms. Christina Bennett of the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), who opened the session by posing three questions to the audience: i) How to translate intentions into actions and by whom?; ii) How can WFP and partners add value to the SDG implementation?; and iii) What are the possible implications of closer relationships with governments?

The panellists and the audience alike highlighted the Post-2015 Agenda debate as an opportunity for NGOs to be involved and to influence the context in which we will all be working in the future. WFP emphasised how critical it is for all of us to continue our engagement in both the Post 2015 and the World Humanitarian Summit processes especially since, as witnessed by the same issues emerging in both discussions, the processes are mutually reinforcing.

The need was also reiterated to focus on the inter-linkages with other goals (i.e., poverty, health, education and climate change).

While we have made much progress since we discussed the Post-2015 Agenda at the 2013 APC, together we now need to develop



Photo: WFP/Rein Skullerud

Dr. Mohamed Ashmawey, Islamic Relief Worldwide, CEO.

meaningful, measurable and achievable targets. We must identify our own roles and how we may complement one another throughout this journey.



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## Closing remarks

In her closing remarks, the Executive Director reiterated that partner feedback is essential to ensure that this event continues to be a catalyst for how we move forward together.

Conversations that have begun here will continue as we aim to carry forward the concrete recommendations that have been defined throughout the deliberations, helping to ensure that this meeting results in outcomes.

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