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SOUTH-SOUTH AND TRIANGULAR COOPERATION POLICY

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NOTE TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

This document is submitted to the Executive Board for approval.

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

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

South–South cooperation offers real, concrete solutions to common development challenges. Sharing best practices, funding pilot projects in far-flung locales, providing the capital to scale up successful projects, supplying regional public goods, developing and adapting appropriate technologies – these are the opportunities that the international community needs to better leverage.

BAN Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations (2013)¹

WFP's operations reach approximately 10 percent of the world's hungry and undernourished people. To support progress towards the objectives of the Zero Hunger Challenge and the proposed Sustainable Development Goal on ending hunger, it will be necessary to mobilize additional resources, expertise, skills, capacities and innovations in developing countries.

In line with the WFP Strategic Plan (2014–2017) and its four Strategic Objectives, and the WFP Partnership Strategy, this policy builds on WFP's current support to South–South and triangular cooperation, especially at the country and regional levels. It aims to further expand WFP's engagement mechanisms with developing countries to support progress on the objectives of the Zero Hunger Challenge and the emerging Sustainable Development Goal on ending hunger.

The policy identifies these guiding principles for WFP's engagement in South–South and triangular cooperation:

- focus on the most vulnerable;
- promote local ownership;
- ensure inclusiveness and balance;
- facilitate learning and innovation;
- strengthen country systems and capacities;
- emphasize complementarity;
- add value; and
- build on existing structures.

¹ Statement of United Nations Secretary-General BAN Ki-moon on the 2013 United Nations Day for South–South Cooperation: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=45827>

In line with these principles, WFP will:

- facilitate at the country and regional levels the sharing of experiences, knowledge, skills, information and practices related to ending hunger and improving food security and nutrition;
- encourage innovations, and disseminate lessons on scaling up innovative food security practices;
- enhance WFP's engagement and partnerships with developing countries that have experiences to share;
- partner with regional and sub-regional organizations to enhance cooperation on ending hunger and improving food security and nutrition among developing countries;
- enhance links between WFP and local research institutions and non-governmental organizations to build the evidence base for Zero Hunger activities; and
- integrate and align WFP's work with broader United Nations-wide initiatives for promoting South–South and triangular cooperation, including with the United Nations agencies based in Rome, the United Nations Office on South–South Cooperation and the United Nations system as a whole.

South–South cooperation should be seen as complementary to North–South cooperation, and WFP recognizes that North–South cooperation remains essential for achieving a world without hunger. WFP therefore supports South–South and triangular cooperation as one of a portfolio of mechanisms for enhancing its engagement with countries.

DRAFT DECISION^{*}

The Board approves “South–South and Triangular Cooperation Policy” (WFP/EB.A/2015/5-D).

* This is a draft decision. For the final decision adopted by the Board, please refer to the Decisions and Recommendations document issued at the end of the session.

CONTEXT

1. Through the Millennium Development Goals, the proposed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Zero Hunger Challenge, countries are prioritizing initiatives for ending hunger and improving food security and nutrition. WFP's mandate, policies and operations put it at the forefront of these efforts, whose objectives include establishing dependable access to adequate food and nutrition for all people; eliminating malnutrition; ensuring that food systems are sustainable and resilient; and supporting livelihoods that sustain the poorest and most vulnerable populations.
2. WFP's operations reach approximately 10 percent of the world's undernourished people.² For countries to establish the practices and systems required to achieve a world with Zero Hunger, it will be necessary to mobilize additional resources, expertise, skills, capacities and practices in developing countries.
3. From the perspective of WFP country offices, South–South and triangular cooperation is a form of cooperation with its own characteristics and principles that can provide support to nationally owned efforts in three main areas:
 - *Country capacities.* South–South and triangular cooperation can enable WFP to shift more quickly from providing food aid to supporting country-owned programmes to improve food security and nutrition. By sharing expertise, tools and skills, countries can strengthen their own systems and capacities and increase their ownership of actions for food security.
 - *Resources.* With continuing economic crises around the world and rising demand for food assistance, there is need for new funding sources. South–South cooperation, triangular arrangements and in-kind or cash contributions through twinning are important potential funding sources.
 - *Innovation.* Many innovations that support food security emerge from practices in developing countries. South–South cooperation can facilitate the identification and testing of potential prototype solutions in diverse, real-world conditions.

DEFINITIONS AND KEY CONCEPTS

4. WFP's support for South–South and triangular cooperation applies the definitions and directions established by the Secretary-General's 2012 Framework of operational guidelines on United Nations support to South–South and triangular cooperation.³
5. The guidelines define South–South cooperation as:

A process whereby two or more developing countries pursue their individual and/or shared national [...] objectives through exchanges of knowledge, skills, resources and technical know-how, and through regional and inter-regional collective actions, including partnerships involving governments, regional organizations, civil society, academia and the private sector, for their individual and/or mutual benefit within and across regions. South–South cooperation is not a substitute for, but rather a complement to, North–South cooperation.

² According to the current method of counting beneficiaries, which does not include all people reached through WFP's capacity-development measures.

³ http://ssc.undp.org/content/dam/ssc/documents/Key%20Policy%20Documents/SSC%2017_3E.pdf

This definition is based on the Nairobi outcome document, negotiated at the United Nations High-Level Conference on South–South Cooperation and adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2009.⁴

6. The guidelines define triangular cooperation as:

Collaboration in which traditional donor countries and multilateral organizations facilitate South–South initiatives through the provision of funding, training, and management and technological systems as well as other forms of support.

7. While South–South cooperation is a valuable complement to other forms of international cooperation, WFP recognizes that North–South cooperation remains essential to the achievement of Zero Hunger. WFP facilitates South–South and triangular cooperation at the request of developing countries, assisting them in exploring the complementarities and synergies among South–South, North–South and triangular cooperation in food security and nutrition.

POLICY BASIS AND OBJECTIVE

8. The objective of this policy is to expand WFP’s engagement with developing countries to facilitate progress towards the objectives of the Zero Hunger Challenge and the proposed SDGs.
9. WFP recognizes the relevance of South–South and Triangular Cooperation to achieving progress on all four Strategic Objectives of its Strategic Plan 2014–2017. WFP will encourage and explore the integration of South–South and triangular cooperation activities in all four areas, as appropriate.
10. WFP supports the objectives of South–South and triangular cooperation laid out in the Nairobi outcome document:⁴
- a) Support national and regional development efforts;
 - b) Enhance institutional and technical capacities;
 - c) Improve the exchange of experiences and expertise among developing countries;
 - d) Respond to the specific development challenges of developing countries; and
 - e) Increase the impact of international cooperation.
11. WFP support to South–South and triangular cooperation will apply the following principles:
- *Focus on the most vulnerable.* The main beneficiaries of WFP’s engagement in South–South and triangular cooperation should be the most vulnerable people.
 - *Promote local ownership.* WFP welcomes and supports South–South cooperation at the national, sub-national and community levels, led by country demand and ownership at the national and local levels.

⁴ United Nations. 2010. Nairobi outcome document of the High-level United Nations Conference on South–South Cooperation. General Assembly Resolution 64/222.

<http://ssc.undp.org/content/dam/ssc/documents/Key%20Policy%20Documents/Nairobi%20Outcome%20Document.pdf>

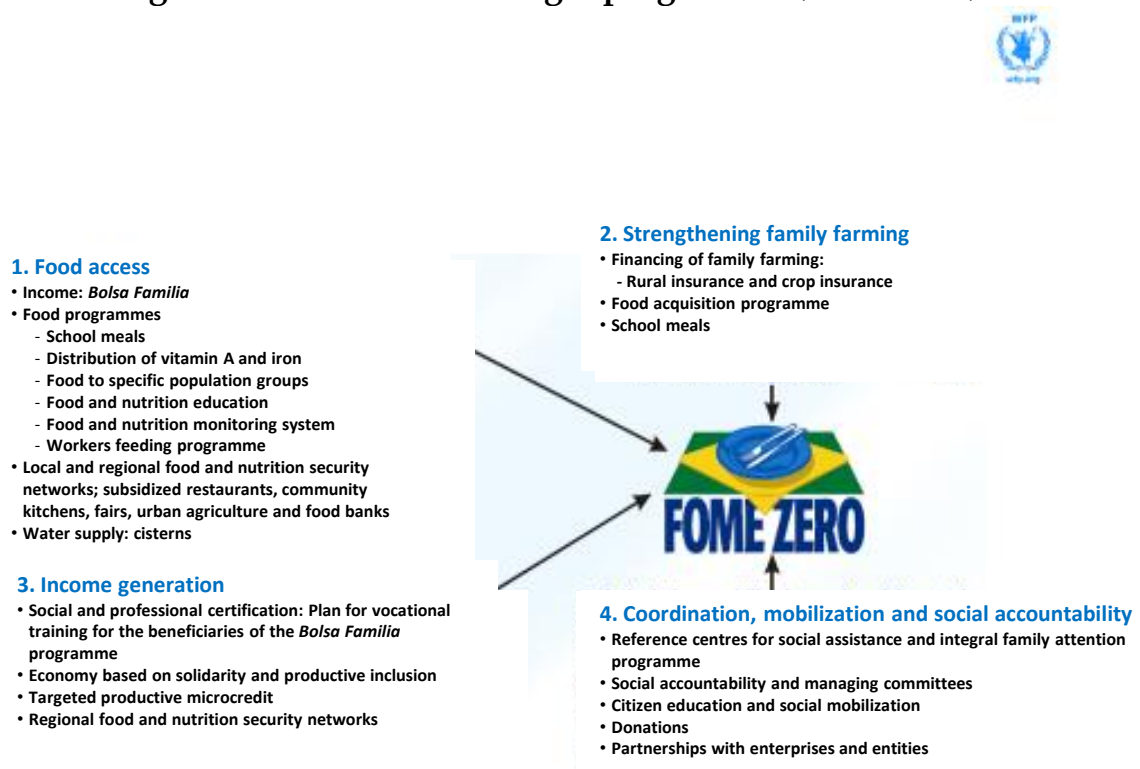
- *Emphasize complementarity.* South–South cooperation complements but does not substitute traditional North–South cooperation. Triangular cooperation combines the advantages of both approaches.
- *Ensure inclusiveness and balance.* South–South cooperation supported by WFP must be inclusive and based on equality. WFP recognizes that all countries – independent of their stage of development – have experiences to share.
- *Facilitate learning and innovation.* WFP supports countries in sharing innovative practices and designing solutions with other countries.
- *Strengthen country systems and capacities.* In facilitating South–South and triangular cooperation, WFP focuses on local systems and institutions to promote the sustainability of food security programmes and local ownership.
- *Focus on adding value.* WFP engages in South–South and triangular cooperation when it can add value through its global network, expertise, cost-effectiveness and implementation capacity.
- *Build on existing structures.* As far as possible, WFP supports South–South and triangular cooperation through existing programmes and structures at the country, regional and global levels.

SOUTH–SOUTH AND TRIANGULAR COOPERATION IN WFP’S CURRENT PROGRAMME OF WORK

12. WFP supports South–South and triangular cooperation in its work at the policy, programming and implementation levels in a wide range of areas, including school meals, nutrition improvement, connecting smallholder farmers to markets through the Purchase for Progress (P4P) initiative, procurement, sustainable agriculture, social protection and safety nets, access to adequate food through markets, climate change services for resilience-building, and development of Zero Hunger strategies.
13. WFP supports South–South cooperation through modalities that include knowledge-sharing, technical cooperation, policy support, joint advocacy, in-kind support and regional initiatives. The following are some examples:
 - *Knowledge-sharing.* WFP contributed to disseminating practices from developing countries by facilitating knowledge-sharing related to Zero Hunger policies and programmes: the WFP Centre of Excellence Against Hunger in Brazil supported Bangladesh in developing a school feeding programme linked to local agriculture. Drawing on Brazil’s Zero Hunger strategy, Bangladesh examined ways of linking school feeding to broader policies and programmes for food and nutrition security. The findings will inform Bangladesh’s decision on whether to include school meals linked to local producers in its long-term vision and transition plans.
 - *Technical cooperation.* In Malawi, WFP built on its experience of P4P to promote food and nutrition security and income-generating opportunities for farmers and vulnerable communities. A Purchase from Africans for Africa initiative involving WFP, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Government of Brazil informed Malawi’s implementation of a national school health and nutrition strategy linked to local production. In addition, WFP’s demand for food can be used to guarantee markets for smallholder farmers.

- *Mobilization of in-kind support.* During the 2011/12 food crisis in the Horn of Africa, WFP facilitated the delivery of in-kind contributions from countries of the Southern African Development Community – Angola, Mozambique, South Africa, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia – along with Cuba, Sri Lanka and the Sudan. Rice, sugar, fish, beans, meat, sorghum, rice oil, peas, coarse salt, soya and maize worth more than USD 13.9 million were distributed in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia.
 - *Policy support.* In partnership with the International Cooperation Agency of Chile, WFP helped improve nutrition in Paraguay. Through triangular cooperation, WFP and the agency supported the restructuring of Paraguay’s national programme on nutrition and influenced health policy and strategies for reducing poverty and inequality. This resulted in the formulation and adoption of a law on the prevention of undernutrition.
14. Countries may seek and/or adopt different approaches and mechanisms for sharing their experiences, based on their particular contexts and objectives. Each country experience is unique and needs to be supported by WFP in a manner that reflects the particular needs and context.
15. For example, the WFP Brazil Centre of Excellence Against Hunger is a partnership between WFP and the Government of Brazil that helps make Brazil’s experience in addressing the Zero Hunger Challenge available to other developing countries for learning, sharing and adaptation through South–South and triangular cooperation. The centre advocates for developing nationally owned, sustainable programmes and policies for school feeding, social protection and nutrition improvement. It has strengthened WFP’s tools and capacities for engaging governments in the design and implementation of national food security and nutrition programmes.

Figure 1: Brazil’s Zero Hunger programme (*Zero Fome*)



16. WFP will work with interested countries to support them in sharing their experiences, taking into account a range of potential approaches and options, and drawing on experience with the WFP Centre of Excellence in Brazil and other partnerships. In this context WFP will seek to encourage the following:
- *Systematic and effective South–South knowledge-sharing.* Institutional arrangements that enable other countries to tap into the expertise of a pioneering country through a structured approach and methodology.
 - *Experiences and expertise relating to implementation of Zero Hunger activities.* Countries can use South–South knowledge-sharing arrangements to become advocates and partners in finding practical ways of achieving Zero Hunger targets – including regionally.
 - *Mutual added value.* By encouraging South–South and triangular knowledge- and experience-sharing, WFP can help expand a country’s access to specialized technical expertise that may not be readily available directly from WFP.

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Priorities

17. To enhance WFP’s support to country-led efforts to improve food security and nutrition in line with global and national targets, WFP will undertake the following activities in South–South and triangular cooperation:
- *Put in place an effective information and knowledge-management system to facilitate knowledge-sharing among countries.* The system should provide access to best practices for improving food and nutrition security through South–South and triangular cooperation. WFP will seek to match the needs of developing countries requesting support with the knowledge, skills, information, research and practices of other developing countries. WFP will also encourage its own staff to form a community of practitioners for promoting South–South cooperation and to enhance internal sharing of knowledge and experiences.
 - *Encourage innovation.* WFP will identify South–South and triangular cooperation initiatives embedded in its programmes that could help improve food security and nutrition. WFP will encourage its country offices, particularly planning and programme designers, to consider opportunities and integrate activities for South–South cooperation, in line with country demand. It will help identify ways of linking innovative initiatives to existing funding mechanisms that can support the identification and testing of prototypes for taking to scale.
 - *Establish appropriate and customized institutional mechanisms for sharing country-specific expertise, and capturing country experience.* For example, this may take the form of knowledge-sharing tools and platforms, expert exchange mechanisms or broader partnership arrangements such as the WFP Centre of Excellence in Brazil.
 - *Support regional and sub-regional organizations to enhance cooperation in improving food security and nutrition.* WFP’s support will facilitate the sharing of expertise, information and capacities in resilience-building, emergency preparedness, disaster risk reduction and nutrition. WFP will engage regional and sub-regional organizations in expanding food security and nutrition initiatives, explore opportunities for triangular cooperation in this area, and scale up the development of Zero Hunger strategies by

assisting regional institutions in collating and disseminating lessons from national experiences of working with the WFP Centre of Excellence Against Hunger.

- *Build the evidence base for Zero Hunger activities through enhanced links to local research institutions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in developing countries.* Academic institutions and NGOs can have a valuable role in developing national capacities for food security and vulnerability analysis. Led by national demand and in coordination with governments, WFP will explore opportunities to partner academic institutions and NGOs in developing countries – including through triangular cooperation – to increase food security and vulnerability analysis and to enhance links between research and practical learning and innovation.
- *Integrate and align WFP's work with United Nations initiatives for promoting South–South and triangular cooperation.* WFP will explore opportunities for collaborating with other United Nations agencies supporting South–South and triangular cooperation in food security and nutrition, including FAO and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). WFP will align its own efforts with the broader United Nations system through inter-agency knowledge-sharing in coordination with the United Nations Office for South–South Cooperation (UNOSSC).

Advocating for nutrition investments through the Cost of Hunger in Africa studies

The studies of the Cost of Hunger in Africa initiative explore the social and economic implications of child undernutrition in Africa and provide solid cases for African governments to invest in nutrition. Working with the African Union, the New Partnership for Africa's Development and the Economic Commission for Africa, WFP has provided technical and field-level support for conducting the studies, including by transferring expertise from Latin America through partnership with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Initial results of the studies have enhanced policymakers' awareness of the social and economic impacts of child undernutrition; influenced high-level political platforms; and promoted African countries' integration of shared practices into nutrition programmes.

Main Deliverables

18. Implementation of the policy will require WFP to work in four main areas:

- *Providing regional bureaux and country offices with guidance and support on engaging in and facilitating South–South and triangular cooperation.* More advocacy and guidance are needed on integrating WFP's approaches to South–South and triangular cooperation into its work. WFP regional bureaux and country offices need encouragement and capacity development in considering and supporting South–South activities in country and regional programmes, as appropriate; identifying how best to enhance their engagement in cooperation, including in countries that are interested in sharing knowledge and experience; and locating other sources of experience and expertise in the developing world.
- *Providing and/or linking to a platform for sharing knowledge on food security and nutrition.* Knowledge-sharing is central to cooperation. Governments frequently ask WFP for examples of relevant practices and experiences from other countries. However, WFP lacks an effective system for capturing lessons and best practices from around the world, and will have to enhance its information and knowledge management systems to improve its support to generating and sharing knowledge among countries. To avoid duplication and promote inter-agency collaboration, WFP will review the knowledge

platforms and tools of other United Nations agencies, including the other Rome-based agencies, UNOSSC⁵ and the World Bank.⁶

- *Enhancing WFP's network of expertise by establishing additional mechanisms for tapping into the expertise of developing countries.* WFP will explore options for establishing additional cooperation and experience-sharing mechanisms that complement existing ones and add value. These may include centres of excellence or other partnership arrangements, technical expert rosters, exchange visits, technology transfer, public-private partnerships and advocacy support.
- *Creating incentives for South–South cooperation on food security and nutrition issues in line with WFP's rules, regulations and financial framework.* Mechanisms for WFP to explore include twinning and similar arrangements, linking existing funding mechanisms to innovations in South–South and triangular cooperation, and facilitating bilateral cooperation programmes.

CONTEXT-SPECIFIC SUPPORT TO SOUTH–SOUTH AND TRIANGULAR COOPERATION

19. WFP recognizes that all countries – independent of their stage of development or income level – can have innovative experiences, practices and technologies to share. WFP needs to ensure that its own facilitating mechanisms are sufficiently flexible to adapt to diverse contexts around the world. Not all practices are suitable for replication or scaling up; before facilitating a South–South exchange, WFP can assist countries in assessing their own contexts and conditions and the adaptability of potential approaches.
20. WFP recognizes that some countries are rapidly increasing their influence at the regional level. A growing number of developing countries with stronger macroeconomic indicators are becoming active partners in development cooperation and humanitarian assistance. Some of these countries have established their own international cooperation agencies. Nonetheless, there may be ways in which WFP – if requested – can continue to support these countries in addressing ongoing food security and nutrition issues, including through technical cooperation, capacity development and facilitating South–South and triangular cooperation linkages.

RESOURCE CONSIDERATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

21. To implement this policy, WFP will build on its expertise, capacities and structures at the country, regional, inter-regional and global levels. WFP will continue to enhance its support to regional bureaux and country offices, taking into account the relevance of South–South cooperation in all four areas of WFP's Strategic Objectives. The links between South–South cooperation, capacity development and technical assistance – and their relevance to functions such as knowledge management, planning and programme management, partnerships and advocacy, and resource mobilization – require WFP to work across its divisions, technical areas and working levels when implementing this policy.

⁵ Such as the South–South Global Assets and Technology Exchange Platform (SS-GATE), a clearing-house for trilateral cooperation and South–South exchange.

⁶ Such as *The Art of Knowledge Exchange* publication and the World Bank's work on “knowledge hubs”.

22. Implementation of this policy will require inter-agency coordination and collaboration. WFP will increase its collaboration in South–South and triangular cooperation with other United Nations agencies, particularly FAO, IFAD and UNOSSC. WFP can also build on ongoing initiatives of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG), such as the UNDG Task Team on South–South and Triangular Cooperation, to which WFP is contributes in coordination with other Rome-based agencies.

CONCLUSIONS

23. WFP recognizes the importance and potential of South–South cooperation in improving food security and nutrition, especially through enhanced country capacities and nationally owned efforts and innovations.
24. The process to develop the Post-2015 Development Agenda and the SDGs is making it increasingly clear that many developing countries possess solutions that support the achievement of Zero Hunger. WFP can add value by facilitating South–South and triangular cooperation to make these solutions more widely available.
25. In implementing this policy, WFP will focus on facilitating the sharing of country-level experiences, knowledge and skills related to ending hunger and improving food security and nutrition; encouraging programme and other innovations; exploring and providing countries with options and support for establishing mechanisms that capture and share their country experiences; fostering partnerships with regional and sub-regional organizations to enhance cooperation among developing countries; building the evidence base for Zero Hunger activities in cooperation with local research institutions and NGOs; and integrating and aligning its work with broader United Nations-wide initiatives.
26. WFP recognizes that all developing countries have experiences to share and that South–South cooperation is valuable and complementary to North–South cooperation. WFP supports South–South and triangular cooperation as one of a portfolio of mechanisms for enhancing its engagement with developing countries. WFP will allow sufficient flexibility in implementing this policy to meet the context-specific needs of individual countries.

ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
NGO	non-governmental organization
P4P	Purchase for Progress
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNOSSC	United Nations Office for South–South Cooperation