



# Annual WFP Partnership Consultations

25 November 2015

**Partners attending the 2015 APC** were drawn from a group of key International NGO partners and national NGOs recommended by WFP's regional bureaux. The main purpose of the meeting was to seek feedback from partners on WFP's current NGO engagement strategy, built in part on recommendations from an ODI study commissioned specifically for this purpose. Key elements of the engagement strategy include revised guidelines for Country Office management of NGO partnerships, and an Emergency FLA Protocol for expedited response to sudden-onset emergencies. Discussions were informal, between colleagues at the level of director of policy, programme and/or operations.

Although this engagement by WFP was largely welcomed in discussions throughout the day, it was observed that the **NGO experience of WFP as a partner at country level** was often uneven, and that it would be important that WFP country offices complied with any new guidance. WFP explained that the guidance will be accompanied by a roll-out plan, to ensure that its corporate strategy to NGO partnerships be applied in all country offices.

**Opportunities for joint advocacy** were a recurring theme, with consensus emerging around the importance of using the World Humanitarian Summit for a proactive approach to address the humanitarian/development divide. Although it was accepted among those present that the divide no longer makes sense, many key donors continue to maintain a twin-track approach to their funding. Further, how could advocacy be used to encourage some resistant host governments to be more receptive to cash programming?

## **L3 Emergencies - where do we go from here?**

WFP Assistant Executive Director for Operations Services, Ramiro Lopes da Silva explained that recent evaluations, lessons learned activities, etc. have highlighted the following areas for improvement for WFP, particularly in terms of emergency preparedness:

- Need to strengthen engagement with national NGOs/Community-based Organizations in order to better understand context.
- Explore ways to expedite the FLA/agreement process and establishing arrangements with NGOs prior to a crisis unfolding.
- Identify partners – who may not work with us in all on-going operations – but that may be key in emergency response.

NGO consortia were encouraged to remain vocal in efforts to revisit the current L3 classification, in particular with a view to agreeing a clearer differentiation between sustained large-scale response and surge capacity.

The need for greater coherence between humanitarian and development assistance was highlighted throughout the discussion. In this area, not only donor governments needed to reform their approach, but also our own organizations.

Much discussion focused on financing. WFP was asked what a strategic partnership with an NGO would look like when the maximum grant in many cases is for six months. WFP acknowledged this was a challenge to good partnership and explained its funding streams and the restrictions/limitations that come with donations, noting that 92 percent of its funding comes from the 'humanitarian stream', and 90 percent of funds received are earmarked down to activity level.

## Cash-based Transfers

In 2014, WFP transferred a value of approximately USD 850 million (in cash and/or vouchers) to 9 million beneficiaries in 55 countries.

WVI remembered how they encouraged WFP to get more into cash several years previously but noted that when 'WFP was confronting change within itself, it almost forgot about its partners.' WVI – similar to many NGOs– strengthened capacity from within and with support from CaLP. However, it was noted that WFP had the correct approach to cash – not emotional, but objective and based on appropriateness of response.

Concern noted that if cash is meant to close the hunger gap, then that is what we should be trying to measure, not broader outcomes. WFP indicated that there is opportunity to collaborate around a better understanding of and approaches to multi-purpose cash.

There are also opportunities to collaborate around capacity building including some country-level joint trainings beyond the WFP-specific trainings rolled out over 2015.

DRC highlighted that a pragmatic research agenda would allow all partners to understand better where needs remain, as well as to build evidence around the limits of cash through evaluation, pooled research and a joint learning agenda.

WFP also invited partners to hold the organization to account and engage in a collaborative discussion around how we move forward together on CBTs. WFP also noted again the issues around revenue recognition as an important shared challenge that continues to need attention.

## Field Security

The presentation and discussion addressed the need to share information intelligently across organizations. It was suggested that WFP, with 'a foot in both camps', was well placed to represent NGO interests within the broader UN security community.

Partners operating in highly insecure areas said that security cost elements were often not funded by WFP in FLA negotiations. WFP encouraged partners to include costs in budget template (which accommodates these needs) and to negotiate based on a common understanding of context and needs. WFP Security indicated they would be reaching out to NGO security counterparts post the APC.

## Capacity Strengthening

National NGO partners welcomed investments in capacity strengthening, indicating that furthering this work would lead to improved donor compliance, evidence-based programming, more innovative solutions, and sustainability.

Areas where all partners could work better together have been identified by the global Food Security Cluster, and include –

- Needs Assessments – particularly where a national partner has a better understanding of the local context
- Analysis of Needs Assessments
- Choice of methodology for programme implementation, particularly the appropriate use of cash
- Cluster Coordinator training, and the identification of standby partners and other people for rapid deployment for emergencies
- Information management training – currently rolled out in 8 countries in Asia with national partners

Although work is already being done in many of these areas, the main challenge identified was a lack of resources.

Save the Children highlighted their Humanitarian Leadership Academy to support capacity strengthening of national actors, which is open to NGOs, CBOs and government counterparts. They proposed sharing experiences and funding to expand these efforts.

Discussion emphasised that capacity strengthening does not translate simply to 'training', but involves investment in skills, structures and systems to develop multi-sectoral programming. However, in some specific cases, training remains essential, as was highlighted by the Sudanese Red Crescent. Participants also raised the need to develop standardised tools and a common language to enhance coordination.

WFP Syria elaborated on how major investments – both in terms of equipment and training – had been made in national partners in order to enhance delivery capacity in a complex conflict environment. This model is now being used in other similar scenarios, including Yemen.

## APC 2015 Action Plan

Thematic Area	Issue	Action
Emergency Response	In the context of discussions around L3 Emergencies, a number of NGO partners raised the possibility/viability of standby or readiness agreements with WFP, including capacity development where required, to expedite response in quick-onset scenarios.	WFP will examine further the appropriateness of these and other agreements to identify best practice(s) for response.
Cash-based Transfers	NGO partners expressed a concern that WFP had very quickly scaled up cash-based interventions but in doing so had left some partners behind, creating significant capacity gaps.	WFP and partners to work closer together to address gaps and strengthen capacity with the aim of building a common approach to the delivery of CBTs. WFP to give further attention to issue of revenue recognition.
Capacity Strengthening	Several national NGO expressed their need for ongoing or new support to strengthen capacity in key areas, in the context of broader efforts to 'speak the same language', and equitable partnership.	ODI research on this issue inform strategic investments in capacity strengthening by WFP, both directly and through INGO partners.
Information Sharing	Consistent interest for better routine and strategic information sharing between WFP and partners (especially but not exclusively from VAM) was expressed by NGO partners.	WFP will create an online platform dedicated to NGO partners through which relevant information, publications and other materials can be shared with and among members.
Joint Advocacy	The group recommended that WFP and its NGO partners examine common ground on advocacy to ensure strong messages were developed ahead of the WHS in particular.	WFP shared Advocacy Framework and WHS position paper with partners. Initial suggestions focused on addressing the issues of the humanitarian/development divide. WFP encourages suggestions and proposals from partners in this area.
Security	WFP's Security Team outlined new approach focusing on access and safety – at global, regional and country levels, inviting NGO partners to engage and collaborate more closely in field security matters through networking and information sharing.	Contact list of NGO partners shared with WFP Security to allow them to take forward their discussions and networking with direct counterparts at all levels.

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