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Programme Alimentaire Mondial  
Programa Mundial de Alimentos  
برنامج الأغذية العالمي

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## Annual performance report for 2020

### Draft decision\*

The Board approves the annual performance report for 2020 (WFP/EB.A/2021/4-A), noting that it provides a comprehensive record of WFP performance for the year. In accordance with General Regulation VI.3, and pursuant to its decisions 2000/EB.A/2 and 2004/EB.A/11, to resolution E/2013/L.17 of the United Nations Economic and Social Council and to the decision adopted by the Council of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations at its 148<sup>th</sup> Session in 2013, the Board requests that the annual performance report for 2020 be forwarded to the Economic and Social Council and the Council of the Food and Agriculture Organization, along with the present decision and the Board's decisions and recommendations for 2020.

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\* 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.

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## Foreword by the Executive Director

In April 2020, the World Food Programme raised the alarm to warn that the unprecedented global turmoil unleashed by COVID-19 threatened to set off a second pandemic – a hunger pandemic. Across the world, countless millions of people lost their jobs. Education and livelihoods suffered as nations were forced to close their borders, businesses and schools to halt the spread of the virus. This global economic crisis added to the legions of children, women and men already condemned to hunger due to conflict and climate extremes. In 2020, an estimated 270 million people were acutely food-insecure – double the grim record reached in 2019.

In response, WFP called for urgent action to assist the most vulnerable communities, including those devastated by enduring conflicts in countries such as South Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen; by catastrophes such as the Beirut port blasts; and others affected by major climate-related shocks such as drought in Zimbabwe and hurricanes in Latin America and the Caribbean. Thanks to the global community's swift, coordinated response, we managed to avert famine in 2020. However, our concerns of 2020 have become a reality in 2021. As of mid-March 2021, 34 million people in 41 countries were existing right on the brink of starvation.

This annual performance report describes how WFP acted swiftly and effectively in the most challenging year of the organization's history by adapting its programmes, systems and partnerships to the rapidly evolving situation. In 2020, we directly assisted over 115 million people, our highest annual total ever: 61.6 million women and girls and 53.9 million men and boys. Our ability to support 40 percent more people than in 2016 was made possible by continued support from loyal donors, large increases in funding from private individuals and agreements with international financial institutions. In 2020, WFP received record revenues of USD 8.9 billion.

WFP launched its first ever global Level 3 emergency response in March 2020 to meet the unparalleled need for food and nutrition assistance resulting from COVID-19 while also responding to 16 Level 2 and Level 3 emergencies and sustaining support for existing beneficiaries in 84 countries. While achieving this level of sustained operations, WFP also provided vital common services to governments and partners worldwide, transporting health and humanitarian workers while moving life-saving cargo to remote locations along with shipping test samples and critical medical supplies.

Last year WFP was deeply humbled to be named as the 2020 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, in recognition of our decades-long work to break the vicious cycle of conflict and hunger. This immense honour has galvanized our efforts to mobilize further support to combat hunger and work more strategically across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus so vulnerable communities can "build back better" after the pandemic.

Even as we work to save lives by feeding families and children during crises, we also help families invest in their future by laying a path towards new educational and employment opportunities.

Across the world, the closure of schools highlighted the importance of school feeding as the world's largest safety net for hungry children. In response, WFP nimbly switched from providing food for school meals to providing families with take-home rations, cash transfers and vouchers, thus allowing governments to adapt their school health and nutrition programmes in response to COVID-19. Compared with 2019, cash-based transfers to support schoolchildren's families increased by 46 percent, showing WFP's commitment to maintaining the immediate well-being of vulnerable girls and boys and increasing their chances of re-enrolling when schools reopened.

In the wake of the pandemic, global shortages of nutritious products raised the risks of malnutrition, particularly among children under 5. In response, WFP adapted its delivery mechanisms and redirected available products to the most vulnerable individuals, ensuring that they received continuous treatment despite COVID-19. During the year, new strategies and partnerships to improve the scale and efficiency of nutrition programmes were finalized, including an ambitious agreement with the United Nations Children's Fund on combatting child wasting.

But WFP also recognizes that no single organization can meet the needs of the world's 690 million chronically food-insecure people alone. We ultimately aim to enable governments, partners and people to work towards a hunger-free world. For this reason, WFP supported many governments with food and cash, as well as technical support, as they scaled up their national social protection schemes to act as the first line of defence against the pandemic's economic impacts.

Overall, WFP supported 65 governments in introducing new measures, scaling up or adapting existing social protection measures, and assisted nearly three-quarters of these countries in delivering their cash-based responses. In 2020, more people than ever before benefitted from WFP's cash-based support, empowering families to improve their food security while strengthening their local economies and markets by helping governments to build national capacities.

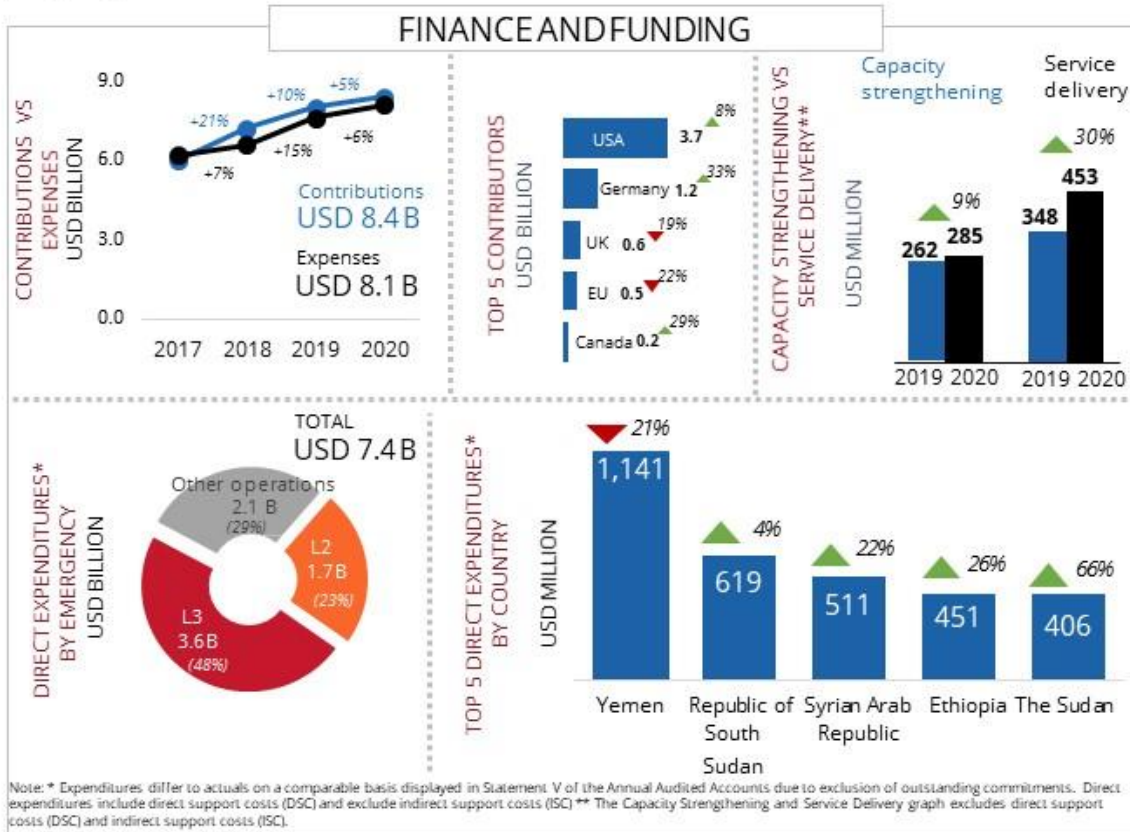
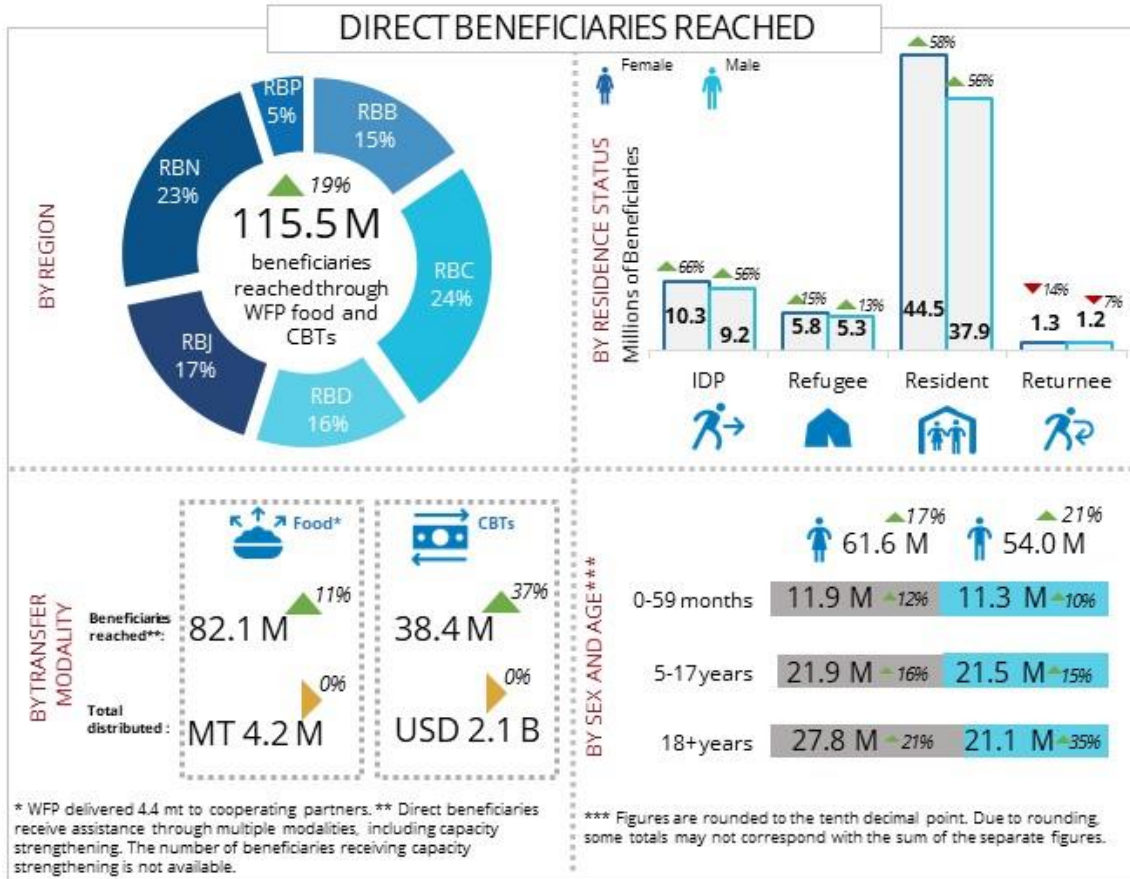
Our success was underpinned by WFP's continued investment in priority areas influencing organizational performance: leadership in emergencies, funding and partnerships, programme excellence, digital transformation, simplification and efficiency and people management. These investments have contributed to efficiency gains in terms of time and money saved, enabling WFP to maximize the number of hungry people reached with every dollar received. Just as important, we continually reviewed our risk and control frameworks to ensure that they were fully robust, including actions for managing third-party risks during emergencies.

None of WFP's achievements in 2020 would have been possible without the dedication and courage of our employees, who stepped up to the challenges of staying and delivering despite extraordinary personal health and safety concerns, movement restrictions and difficult working conditions. As many employees volunteered to serve on the frontline, 20 of them tragically paid the ultimate price with their lives. These losses make us even more determined to support the well-being, health and safety of every single employee. In early 2020, WFP established a department for workplace culture to reaffirm the organization's strong workplace values while taking action to ensure that all employees feel safe and respected and enjoy a workplace free from harassment and discrimination.

All around the world, WFP's frontline teams are working day and night with our partners to get help where it is needed most, bringing a sense of hope to families and communities who are suffering so badly right now. The economic fallout from COVID-19 threatens to rob the next generation of its future, but the global community has the resources, knowledge and expertise to vaccinate every vulnerable person against hunger and help them prosper, now and over the long term.

Amid all the challenges and hardships unleashed by the COVID-19 pandemic, we have an opportunity to rebuild our social, economic and environmental systems so they are stronger, more resilient and more just. This is our chance to create the better world we all want to see. Let us work together in partnership to achieve it.

# WFP 2020 REACH AT A GLANCE





## Executive summary

### Part I: Introduction

In 2020, the 2019 coronavirus disease (COVID-19) unleashed the worst global health emergency of the past century and caused the deepest global recession in generations, reversing decades of progress against poverty, inequality and hunger. WFP responded swiftly to the pandemic by scaling up emergency response and providing its field offices with surge capacity to ensure the continuity of existing humanitarian operations and increased support for national safety net systems.

System-wide advances as part of United Nations reform facilitated holistic pandemic support for governments. WFP expanded its provision of common services to support the entire humanitarian and health community by transporting essential supplies and personnel to the frontlines of the pandemic and conducting medical evacuations (medevacs).<sup>1</sup>

WFP was named the Nobel Peace Prize Laureate in 2020, indicating due recognition of the inexorable link between peace and food security. The prize provided a humbling but energizing boost to WFP's employees as they stayed and delivered in a frequently shifting field of operations affected by COVID-19, conflict and climate change. The naming of WFP as Nobel Peace Prize Laureate has led to a redoubling of its efforts to continue providing principled and high-quality assistance to affected communities and their governments.

### Part II: Programme performance

WFP and its partners provided direct assistance to a record 115.5 million beneficiaries in 2020 – of whom 61.6 million were women and girls and 53.9 million were men and boys. Distributing 4.2 million mt of food and USD 2.1 billion in cash-based transfers (CBTs), WFP reached 11 percent more beneficiaries through food assistance and 37 percent more through CBTs than in 2019. The increase in the number of beneficiaries was not matched by an increase in the total amount of food or CBT distributed in 2020 compared with 2019, because of a variety of reasons: reduction in ration sizes in some countries related to insufficient funding; problems with access or pipeline breaks; changes in modalities from food to CBT as COVID-19-related restrictions made it more difficult to distribute in-kind food; and the impact of fluctuations in exchange rates.

By 2020, all WFP country offices were operating through a Board-approved country strategic plan (CSP) or interim country strategic plan (ICSP). Through these CSPs, WFP ensured the continuity of ongoing humanitarian operations and swiftly adapted in response to COVID-19. Leveraging its extensive field presence and proven leadership in supply chains and digital technologies, WFP pre-positioned food stocks and increased local purchases to sustain ongoing operations, while scaling up assistance to reach new beneficiaries affected by the pandemic, particularly in urban areas. Governments and humanitarian partners were provided with vital technical assistance and logistics support, which enabled effective local responses to COVID-19. The following paragraphs give a synopsis of achievements towards each strategic objective.

**Strategic Objective 1 – End hunger by protecting access to food:** Most of WFP's operations – representing 78 percent of total expenditures – were implemented under Strategic Objective 1, which accounted for 95 percent of food delivered and 87 percent of CBTs distributed. While responding to the first global Level 3 emergency (COVID-19), WFP also covered 16 other Level 3 and Level 2 emergencies, working to ensure that beneficiaries had access to food despite the challenges created by COVID-19, conflict and climate-related crises. Food and CBT distributions increased substantially in Bangladesh, Burkina Faso and the Sudan, while in Yemen, in contrast,

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<sup>1</sup> Additional information can be found in part III of this document.

they were reduced owing to access and funding constraints. Important challenges remain, such as the need to improve people's consumption of iron, protein and vitamin A.

**Strategic Objective 2 – Improve nutrition:** WFP's contributions to improving the nutrition of targeted people yielded strong results, especially through programmes for the treatment of moderate acute malnutrition. The significant results can be partly attributed to WFP prioritizing distribution of scarce specialized nutritious food for malnutrition programming for the people most at risk.

**Strategic Objective 3 – Achieve food security and Strategic Objective 4 – Support Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) implementation:** Results under these two objectives are strong. Success in improving farmers' access to markets and strengthening food systems is partly reflected in the value and volume of smallholders' sales through WFP-supported aggregation systems. Similarly, support for national governments, particularly in strengthening capacities, shows strong results in the national nutrition and other policies and programmes that have been enhanced as a result of WFP capacity strengthening activities, including through South–South and triangular cooperation.

**Strategic Objective 5 – Partner for SDG results:** WFP was successful in partnering for SDG results. Strong performance in the indicator measuring partners' satisfaction with WFP's coordination and supply chain support reflected the organization's ability to leverage its extensive operational footprint and expertise to support the health and humanitarian community in responding to COVID-19. Nevertheless, CBT distributions under this strategic objective saw an important reduction of 72 percent compared with 2019, due primarily to the handover of the large-scale emergency social safety net (ESSN) programme implemented through the Turkey country office.

WFP deepens this review of performance by analysing results in its main programmes areas:

- **Unconditional resource transfers:** 83 million beneficiaries were reached, an increase of 36 percent compared with 2019, reflecting a scale-up of operations in response to increasing needs exacerbated by COVID-19. Food and CBTs distributed remained similar to their 2019 levels; CBT levels through unconditional resource transfers show an increase of 22 percent when the handover of the ESSN is omitted from the 2020 analysis.
- **Nutrition:** 17.3 million beneficiaries were assisted, primarily children and pregnant and lactating women and girls. Owing to a global reduction in the production of specialized nutritious foods, WFP delivered 1 percent less of these commodities than in 2019, prioritizing their use for the treatment and prevention of malnutrition in the most vulnerable people.

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