




**World Food
Programme**
2009

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The World Food Programme's 2009 Annual Report uses data, photos and stories from the prior year to chronicle WFP's operations during calendar year 2008.

Children in a flooded, rural area near Myanmar's capital, Yangon

Cover: A WFP beneficiary of a school feeding programme in Sheder Primary School in Eastern Ethiopia, near the Somali border

Preface by the Executive Director

2008 was one of the most challenging — yet most rewarding — in WFP's history. Faced with the triple threat of the food, fuel and financial crises, this extraordinary organization showed once again that nothing gets between WFP and a hungry child. And, with the new Strategic Plan (2008-2011), we were able to design smarter and more targeted responses than ever before.

In addition to the ongoing complex emergencies we handled in countries such as Afghanistan, Somalia and Sudan (Darfur), we witnessed shocks from the financial and commodities markets, extreme climate events and political turmoil, which had a severe impact on the poorest and most vulnerable people. All these factors, combined with diminished purchasing power, reduced remittances and tightened access to credit, resulted in an additional 115 million people added to the ranks of the hungry over the past two years.

But not only did we keep the cup full for many millions dependent on food assistance, we succeeded in scaling up for the global emergency of vulnerable populations hit by soaring food and fuel prices. Thanks to the generosity of our donors, to the innovative work of nations and to our dedicated global staff — both on the front lines of hunger and in headquarters working around the clock to find solutions for a historic hunger emergency — WFP helped prevent a worldwide crisis from turning into a full-scale human tragedy. With food riots erupting in more than 30 nations in the first half of 2008, WFP's assistance helped bring stability to a volatile environment.

Drawing on global best practices, last year we deployed innovative, targeted food safety-net programmes in our Strategic Plan toolbox, like mother-and-child health and nutrition initiatives; targeted cash transfers and food vouchers; local food purchase; and school feeding. In Haiti, for example, where soaring food prices unleashed a nutrition crisis, school feeding



Josette Sheeran in Yangon, where WFP implemented a cash transfer programme as part of its response to Cyclone Nargis

was extended over the summer holiday to as many as 200,000 children and “take-home rations” were supplied to the families of 1.1 million children. WFP launched targeted cash and voucher programmes for populations who are unable to afford food, with the first such programme in Africa launched in February 2009 in Burkina Faso. In response to high food prices, safety net programmes were deployed in Djibouti, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mauritania, Mozambique, Pakistan, Senegal, Tajikistan and Yemen.

Throughout the crisis, WFP moved to help break the cycle of hunger at its root by spending \$1.1 billion purchasing food in developing countries, nearly double the spending of the previous year. Our Purchase for Progress (P4P) initiative, designed to ensure WFP procurement benefits small-scale farmers, is rolling out in 21 countries through the generous advocacy and support of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Howard G. Buffett Foundation and donors such as Belgium, Canada and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Clearly, we were able to deploy a new and more robust toolbox of hunger solutions, informed by the root causes of hunger and shaped by the market conditions on the ground and needs of the population. The Strategic Plan (2008–2011) approved by the Executive Board in June 2008 lays the groundwork for this sustained effort. The aim of the Strategic Plan is to support nations in meeting emergency needs and in identifying longer-term solutions to the hunger challenge. We were able to draw on the five Strategic Objectives of the Plan, framed around WFP's mission and mandate, to reposition WFP from a food aid agency to a food assistance agency.

WFP's operational innovations were matched by internal reforms such as the appointment of a full-time Ethics Officer, the first in any United Nations agency, and the creation of an office of accountability and results-based management. Preparation to launch the International Public Sector Accounting Standards and the upcoming introduction of WINGS II continue to place WFP in the vanguard of UN best practices and reforms.

Despite an unprecedented funding gap in early 2008 due to increased global hunger demands in the face of rising fuel and food costs, more than 85 percent of identified needs was met. Thanks to generous and timely contributions from our donors, total contributions in 2008 reached \$5.1 billion, which enabled WFP to assist more than 102 million beneficiaries in 78 countries. The UN Secretary General launched the High Level Task Force on the food crisis, helping ensure a global, coherent response.

Vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM), one of WFP's core strengths, maximized the impact of the international response to the food crisis and to natural disasters by identifying emerging vulnerable populations in addition to existing food-insecure regions. The number of VAM assessments increased by 80 percent.

WFP continued to lead the global Logistics Cluster both operationally and strategically. We saw nine WFP-led logistics cluster operations in 2008; in the largest, the response to Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar, a humanitarian air bridge from Bangkok to Yangon delivered 5,000 metric tons of relief goods to flood-affected victims. Globally, the WFP-managed United Nations Humanitarian Air Service transported 361,000 humanitarian aid workers into conflict and disaster zones. WFP is grateful to nations supplying naval escorts to ensure that life-saving food assistance is delivered through dangerous waters off the coast of Somalia, reaching 2.8 million beneficiaries.

The foundation of WFP is our dedicated workforce of almost 12,000 people stationed around the world. WFP holds security paramount but we are nonetheless hit by increasing dangers and tragedy. Four WFP staff members were killed in 2008. Thirteen WFP-contracted staff and two staff of our implementing partners also died while providing services for WFP. Clearly, there are escalating risks involved for those who work to ensure that life-saving assistance reaches the world's most vulnerable — and we are making it our highest priority to minimize those risks.

We began 2009 with even greater challenges, but with the confidence that ending hunger is possible. We will continue to adapt and transform the way we work to meet the immediate needs of the hungry today — as efficiently and effectively as possible — and to be a leader in crafting with governments and partners coherent, long-term hunger solutions for tomorrow.



Josette Sheeran

Executive Director

In 2008, WFP faced a particularly difficult set of challenges, provoked by dramatically rising food and fuel prices and aggravated by widespread turmoil in international financial systems. Steady progress towards reducing global hunger not only ground to a halt but began to slide in the opposite direction. The number of undernourished people in the world increased in 2008 to 963 million, a leap of 115 million over the past two years.

To meet the immediate challenge, WFP launched the new Emergency Market Mitigation Account in March with a special appeal for \$755 million to cover the additional costs generated by higher commodity and fuel prices.

2008 in Review

Donors responded promptly and generously. New contributions surpassed the original target by May and eventually totalled \$1.032 billion, including a \$500 million contribution from Saudi Arabia. By year's end, donors had contributed more than \$5 billion, a record sum that enabled WFP to deliver an unprecedented amount of food — almost four million metric tons — to more than 102 million people in 78 countries.

While tackling the short-term challenge, WFP continued searching for longer term solutions. One historic shift in WFP's overall approach was repositioning the organization from a *food aid* to a *food assistance* agency. A new Strategic Plan for 2008-2011 was launched in June that deepened and broadened our analysis of the root causes of hunger and introduced a variety of tools to address those causes.



In Sudan, after a flood destroyed her mud home, killed 60 of her cattle and covered her crops in water, Teresa Nyagag and her six children were forced to eat dried river weeds until WFP reached her.



Under the new Strategic Plan, we continue to develop innovative ways to deliver needed food assistance — cash and voucher programmes, new nutritious food products to prevent and treat malnutrition, P4P to open new markets for small-scale farmers and encourage them to increase production.

For example, the first cash and voucher programme in Africa was designed for Burkina Faso. By the end of the year, WFP had cash or voucher transfer activities in 24 countries. The first P4P proposal was approved for Mozambique, and then quickly expanded to a total of 21 countries in 2008. New guidelines were prepared to strengthen WFP's assessment procedures in urban and peri-urban areas.

WFP's core business remained emergencies, particularly those involving extreme weather events and natural disasters related to climate change. WFP launched 22 separate relief operations for victims of droughts, floods, earthquakes and various types of windstorms — cyclones, hurricanes and typhoons.



Few were as complex as the emergency response mounted after Cyclone Nargis struck Myanmar in May. WFP provided \$154 million of relief assistance for some 1.2 million cyclone victims. The effort involved deploying flotillas of river craft and a fleet of

2008 in Review

In Myanmar, urgent food supplies are transported to Bogale in the aftermath of Cyclone Nargis.



helicopters and fixed wing aircraft. Some 230 cargo flights carrying relief goods used a humanitarian air bridge that was established between Bangkok and Yangon.

Elsewhere, WFP provided assistance to nearly 15 million hungry people in five countries in the Horn of Africa — close to 12 million in Ethiopia alone — after the region was ravaged by a lethal combination of prolonged drought and dramatic increases in the price of food and fuel. More than 800,000 people were reached in Haiti after three

Georgians required WFP assistance as a result of the brief conflict that engulfed their region of the Caucasus in August. In Zimbabwe, WFP had provided help to around four million people as 2008 drew to a close. And the ongoing conflict in Sudan required WFP's sustained assistance for six million people.

Private sector partnerships were strengthened and are expected to increase in importance. By 2017, WFP envisions \$200 million coming from the private sector through expanded partnerships and

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