



World Food Programme  
Programme Alimentaire Mondial  
Programa Mundial de Alimentos  
برنامج الأغذية العالمي

## Executive Board

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## Annual performance report for 2021

### Draft decision\*

The Board approves the annual performance report for 2021 (WFP/EB.A/2022/4-A/Rev.1), 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 the decision adopted by the Council of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations at its 148th Session in 2013, the Board requests that the annual performance report for 2021 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 2021.

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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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# Table of contents

- Draft decision\*** ..... 1
- Foreword by the Executive Director** ..... 4
- Executive summary** ..... 7
- 1. Part I – Introduction** ..... 12
  - 1.1. Global context in 2021: COVID-19, conflict, climate shocks and rising hunger ..... 12
  - 1.2. WFP and the United Nations development system reform ..... 14
- 2. Part II – Programme performance**..... 16
  - 2.1. WFP’s reach: beneficiaries and transfers..... 16
  - 2.2. WFP’s progress against the strategic plan..... 17
  - 2.3. WFP’s Level 3 and Level 2 emergency responses ..... 21
  - 2.4. Cross-cutting results ..... 22
  - 2.5. Performance by strategic objective..... 25
  - 2.6. Performance by programme area..... 30
  - 2.7. Support for national priorities ..... 41
  - 2.8. Advances in the humanitarian–development–peace nexus approach..... 44
  - 2.9. Support for the wider humanitarian community ..... 44
- 3. Part III – Management performance** ..... 47
  - 3.1. Key performance indicators..... 47
  - 3.2. Regional bureau and headquarters services – performance by pillar ..... 49
  - 3.3. Performance against senior management priorities, category II indicators..... 58
  - 3.4. Critical corporate initiatives ..... 61
  - 3.5. Efficiency gains ..... 62
  - 3.6. Cost per beneficiary analysis ..... 63
- 4. Part IV – Financial resources and funding** ..... 65
  - 4.1. Overview of financial position ..... 65
  - 4.2. WFP’s direct expenditures in 2021 and growth under the strategic plan ..... 71
- 5. Part V – Conclusion** ..... 75
- Acronyms** ..... 78

## Annexes

Annex I: 2021 Key figures

Annex II-A: Results against programmatic output and KPI targets

Annex II-B: Methodology for beneficiary counting and reporting

Annex II-C: Methodology for assessing outcome and output performance

Annex II-D: Outcome analysis against strategic objectives and cross-cutting results

Annex II-E: Outcome analysis by programme area

Annex II-F: Output performance

Annex III-A: Detailed analysis of corporate key performance indicators

Annex III-B: Reporting on critical corporate initiatives

Annex III-C: Supplemental reporting on top ten efficiency gains in 2021

Annex III-D: Comprehensive action plan for the implementation of the recommendations of the joint Board/management working group on harassment, sexual harassment, abuse of power and discrimination (JWG report)

Annex III-E: Cost per beneficiary analysis

Annex IV-A: Total confirmed contributions in 2021

Annex IV-B: Funding by donor 2020–2021

Annex IV-C: Direct expenditures by country, region and focus area

Annex IV-D: Direct expenditures by country, special status category and region 2019–2021

Annex V: WFP employees as at 31.12.2021

Annex VI: The Gender and Age Marker

Annex VII: WFP food procurement in 2021

Annex VIII: Lessons learned from evaluations in 2021

Annex IX: 2021 Collaboration with non-governmental organizations and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

Annex X: UN SWAP

Annex XI: Implementation of General Assembly resolution 75/233 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system

## Foreword by the Executive Director

In 2021, the threat of a global hunger pandemic intensified as the economic ripple effects of the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic caused many of the world's poorest people to lose their jobs, incomes and livelihoods, and food and fuel prices surged. At the same time, unrelenting conflict and violence – which cost global society USD 15 trillion every year – and climate-related crises wreaked havoc on communities' fragile livelihoods and fuelled record levels of displacement and migration.

Together, these conditions unleashed a “perfect storm” that left 283 million people globally facing acute hunger by the end of the year – an increase of almost 90 percent compared with pre-pandemic levels. Even worse, an unimaginable 45 million people were facing starvation in 43 countries around the world. Sadly, from the Sahel to South Sudan and Ethiopia, from Yemen to Afghanistan and onwards to Haiti and Central America, people around the world are poorer, more divided, more vulnerable to climate change and hungrier than ever. Tragically, the conflict in Ukraine has ensured that global rates of hunger and malnutrition are likely to reach new heights in 2022: the food security of millions more people is in jeopardy as food commodity supplies are cut off and prices rocket to unprecedented levels.

This annual performance report sets out how WFP responded to the deepening crisis in 2021, once again demonstrating the effectiveness of our operations, programmes and partnerships. As needs grew exponentially, WFP and its partners responded by assisting a record 128.2 million people facing dangerous levels of food deprivation. Despite the immense challenges and rapidly changing conditions brought about by the pandemic and rising global instability, WFP stayed and delivered vital assistance to save and change the lives of nearly 68 million women and girls and more than 60 million men and boys in greatest need.

Thanks to innovative fundraising efforts, continued strong support from donors and firm partnerships with international financial institutions, WFP received record contributions of USD 9.6 billion, including a surge in private sector funding. However, the growing gap between needs and funding sometimes forced the organization to make difficult decisions about which hungry children, women and men would be prioritized for assistance. This is why I have challenged the billionaires of the world to provide the funding we need to save lives now and to help identify game-changing solutions to revolutionize global food systems and ensure that they are capable of feeding everyone on the planet.

In 2021, WFP provided a lifeline to millions of people by implementing 19 Level 2 and Level 3 emergency operations, which helped to avert the risk of famine in Madagascar and stabilize conditions in many other countries. Evidence from countries such as the Syrian Arab Republic shows that it is far more cost-effective to feed hungry people at home, rather than waiting until they are forced to migrate and rely on assistance as refugees. Meanwhile, WFP worked tirelessly to improve the conditions for peace through resilience building programmes that helped lay the foundations for greater social cohesion and stability.

WFP's provision of essential common logistics services, such as air transport and the pre-positioning and rapid dispatch of supplies, underpinned the wider humanitarian response and raised our global profile as a service provider of choice for the humanitarian community. In 2021, more than 325,000 passengers were transported and more than 41,000 m<sup>3</sup> of relief items were dispatched through the common air transport and response depots managed by WFP.

WFP worked closely with governments and communities to reverse the damage done by the pandemic to children's education worldwide. When school closures were in effect, we provided families with food or cash-based transfers as a powerful incentive to keep their children in school. During the year, we ensured that 7.6 million schoolgirls and 7.9 million schoolboys

received nourishing meals, school snacks or take-home rations. By helping to launch the Global School Meals Coalition, a ground-breaking partnership involving nearly 60 governments and other organizations, we plan to extend the vital social and economic benefits of school feeding programmes to 73 million most vulnerable schoolchildren through targeted investments and research.

Increasingly, WFP has integrated its life-saving assistance for vulnerable families and communities with development efforts that help those families and communities to avoid losing all their assets when the next food security shock occurs. Over the past three years, communities participating in the integrated resilience project in five Sahelian countries rehabilitated 109,000 hectares of land, improving the livelihoods of 2.5 million people while helping to manage the impact of climate change by removing carbon from the atmosphere. Many other examples of cost-effective investments, which ultimately save the need for future food assistance, are featured in this annual performance report.

WFP maintained its status as a leader throughout the United Nations system in embracing digitization to help beneficiaries gain access to essential financial services and ensure that assistance is targeted effectively. Over the past five years, we increased the number of people registered digitally ninefold and the amount of funds distributed by digital means threefold. These results would not have been possible without the joint efforts of our partners, including our expanded collaboration with several international financial institutions to ensure that governments' social safety net programmes reach people in greatest need.

One of my key personal priorities has been to explore every option for increasing efficiencies while streamlining costs in WFP. Every dollar and minute we save today means we can assist more people, more rapidly tomorrow while supporting local and regional economies. In 2021, WFP increased the savings achieved from the top ten initiatives that produced efficiency gains, such as its remote monitoring system and the United Nations booking hub, by 3 percent compared with 2020.

I am hugely proud of the willingness of WFP employees to serve in the most adverse situations, and unfortunately the difficulties of delivering assistance during the pandemic and of enduring multiple lockdowns took a great toll in all duty stations. In 2021, we paid tribute to four WFP employees who tragically lost their lives serving on the front lines of the struggle to end hunger. We honour our colleagues' memories by rededicating ourselves to continuing their critical work.

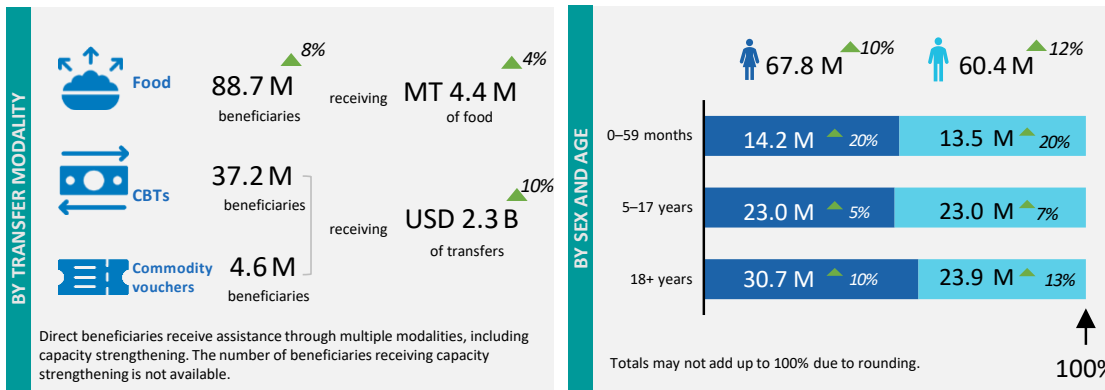
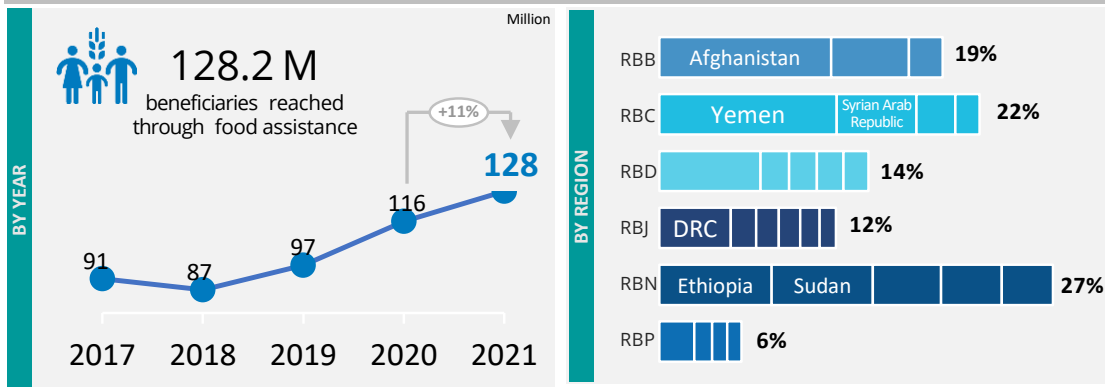
WFP has the expertise, innovative solutions and global reach to stave off famine, conquer malnutrition and build resilience to food insecurity. However, without significant additional resources, we risk a world where famine, mass migration and destabilization rise to levels never seen before. Our greatest challenge in 2022 is the dangerous and growing gap between needs and available resources. Despite signs of economic recovery after the pandemic, this gap is expected to reach the highest level in a decade, further fuelled most recently by the devastating global impacts of the conflict in Ukraine.

That is why we are redoubling our efforts to increase the efficiency of WFP's operations, streamline our costs and search out new funding while prioritizing assistance to the people in greatest need. The new WFP strategic plan for 2022–2025 charts how the organization will address the changing global hunger landscape through renewed partnerships, principles, innovations and targets.

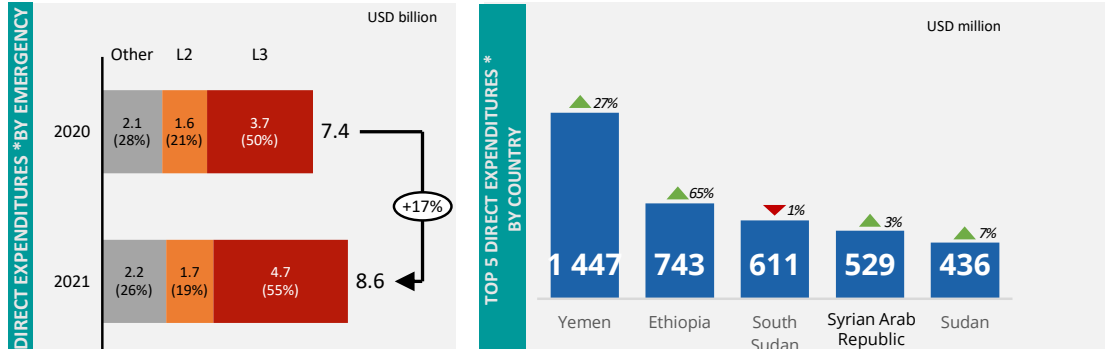
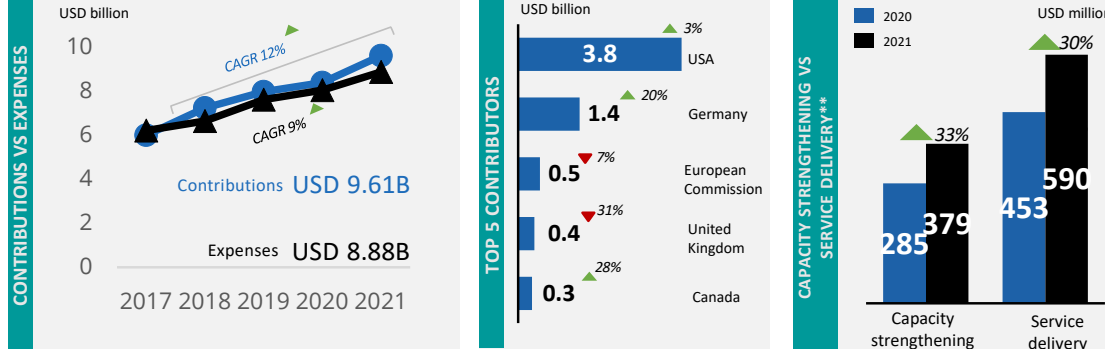
Only by saving and changing the lives of the world's poorest, most vulnerable citizens can we hope to build a future free from hunger. As we face up to the immense challenges of delivering WFP's vital mission in 2022, we count on the continued strong support of our donors and partners to help us achieve our shared vision.

# WFP 2021 REACH AT A GLANCE

## DIRECT BENEFICIARIES REACHED



## FINANCE AND FUNDING



Note: expenditures listed here differ from actual expenditures on a comparable basis as displayed in statement V of the annual audited accounts due to the exclusion of outstanding commitments. \* Direct expenditures include direct support costs and exclude indirect support costs. \*\* The capacity strengthening and service delivery graph excludes direct and indirect support costs.

Abbreviations: CAGR = Compound Annual Growth Rate; DRC = Democratic Republic of the Congo; RBB = Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific; RBC = Regional Bureau for the Middle East, Northern Africa and Eastern Europe; RBD = Regional Bureau for Western Africa; RBJ = Regional Bureau for Southern Africa; RBN = Regional Bureau for Eastern Africa; RBP = Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean.

## Executive summary

### Part I: Introduction

In 2021, the continued effects of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), compounded by increased conflict and climate shocks and worldwide rises in the cost of living, resulted in unprecedented increases in hunger and malnutrition. Acute malnutrition in 80 countries where WFP had an operational presence almost doubled compared with pre-pandemic levels, while a record 45 million people were at grave risk of famine. Significant increases in food and fuel prices and supply chain disruptions severely affected people's access to food and pushed WFP's food procurement costs up by 36 percent over 2019.

Progress was made in implementing the United Nations development system reform aimed at enabling governments to regain momentum in their implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. More than 70 percent of country offices developed business operations strategies outlining their contributions to achieving cost efficiency. Central elements of the latest quadrennial comprehensive policy review were mainstreamed into the new WFP strategic plan for 2022–2025 and the associated corporate results framework.

### Part II: Programme performance

A record 128.2 million people were assisted by WFP and its partners in 2021, an increase of 11 percent compared with 2020 and slightly higher than the 9 percent average annual growth in the number of beneficiaries assisted during the five years of the WFP strategic plan for 2017–2021. Distributing 4.4 million mt of food and USD 2.3 billion in cash-based transfers, WFP reached 8 percent more beneficiaries through food assistance and 9 percent more through cash-based transfers and commodity vouchers than in 2020, with expenditures of USD 8.6 billion.

The increase in the number of beneficiaries assisted outpaced the increase in food and cash-based transfer distributions. WFP therefore had to prioritize assistance by reducing the size of rations or the duration of assistance in many operations because of resource constraints and food and fuel price inflation.

WFP surpassed the 2021 needs-based targets established in the management plan for 2021–2023 for the number of beneficiaries reached overall and the number reached through nutrition-specific interventions, but owing to COVID-19-related school closures it fell short of meeting the targets for the number of schoolchildren reached. In 2021 the resource-based targets for in-kind food distributions were exceeded, but the needs-based targets were not met; nor were either the resource- or needs-based targets for cash-based transfers met.

The following paragraphs summarize WFP's achievements in making progress towards its strategic objectives, using improved performance measurement metrics introduced in 2021. The results reflect the challenges of meeting rising needs without a matching increase in the food and cash-based transfers distributed.

**Strategic Objective 1 – End hunger by protecting access to food:** Most of WFP's operations – representing 78 percent of total expenditures – contributed to Strategic Objective 1, which accounted for 95 percent of the food and 93 percent of the cash-based transfers distributed. WFP implemented eight Level 3 and 11 Level 2 emergency operations in 2021, providing timely life-saving assistance, particularly in Ethiopia, Madagascar, South Sudan and Yemen, where people in some areas faced famine-like conditions. Cash-based transfers increased particularly in Bangladesh, Somalia and Yemen. Outcome level results in WFP's ability to maintain or

enhance people's access to adequate food were mixed because of funding and operational constraints.

**Strategic Objective 2 – Improve nutrition:** WFP's nutrition activities accounted for 5 percent of total expenditures in 2021. Programmes for the treatment of moderate acute malnutrition delivered strong results in improving the nutrition status of the people reached, in part because WFP prioritized the distribution of scarce specialized nutritious foods to the people most at risk. However, programmes fell short of their targets for the proportion of the eligible population participating.

**Strategic Objective 3 – Achieve food security and Strategic Objective 4 – Support Sustainable Development Goal implementation:** Results under these two objectives were mixed. Success in strengthening food systems was partially demonstrated by the high proportion of the assisted population reporting increased benefits from the livelihood assets created or rehabilitated through WFP's activities. However, a large proportion of assisted households were unable to consume a diversified daily food basket or avoid adopting negative coping strategies. As a result of WFP's capacity strengthening and South-South and triangular cooperation activities, strong performance was recorded in enhancing national nutrition and other policies and programmes and the capacity of national governments to implement the related Sustainable Development Goals. Only moderate progress was made in strengthening national partners' ownership of emergency preparedness activities.

**Strategic Objective 5 – Partner for Sustainable Development Goal results:** WFP was successful in supporting national governments and other partners in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, meeting the targets for partners' satisfaction with WFP coordination and logistics support for the health and humanitarian community. A 93 percent reduction in the use of cash-based transfers compared with 2020 was due primarily to the handover of the large-scale emergency social safety net programme to local partners in Turkey.

WFP enhances the review of performance by analysing results in its main programme areas:

- **Unconditional resource transfers:** 91 million beneficiaries were reached, an increase of 10 percent compared with 2020, reflecting WFP's response to rising needs linked to conflict, COVID-19, climate change and food and fuel cost increases. The amount of food and cash-based transfers distributed in WFP's largest programme area increased slightly over their 2020 levels. Moderate progress was recorded against targets on average, in part because distributions fell short of planned values and the average daily ration was reduced by 31 percent from the planned size. Weak performance against the targets for improving people's consumption of iron, protein and vitamin A was observed in some of WFP's largest operations.
- **Nutrition:** Globally, 23.5 million people – primarily children and pregnant and lactating

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