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An Analysis of the Working of UNs World Food Programme in Alleviating Hunger during Covid-19

ANKANA BAL¹

ABSTRACT

The World Food Programme is the world's largest humanitarian organisation addressing hunger and promoting food security. It won Nobel peace prize for 2020. The award was the recognition for its efforts to combat hunger, for its contribution to bettering conditions for peace in conflict-affected areas and for acting as a driving force in efforts to prevent the use of hunger as a weapon of war and conflict. The coronavirus pandemic has contributed to a strong upsurge in the number of victims of hunger in the world. In countries such as Yemen, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria, South Sudan and Burkina Faso, the combination of violent conflict and the pandemic has led to a dramatic rise in the number of people living on the brink of starvation. In the face of the pandemic, the World Food Programme has demonstrated an impressive ability to intensify its efforts. In the light of the event, the researcher tries to analyse the activities and the measures that has taken up by World Food Programme to reduce increasing rate of hunger during pandemic.

I. INTRODUCTION

The UN World Food Programme (WFP) is the world's largest humanitarian organisation, saves lives in emergencies and using food assistance to build a pathway to peace, stability and prosperity for people recovering from conflict, disasters and the impact of climate change. WFP is the 2020 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate.² The WFP has taken the lead in combining humanitarian work with peace efforts through pioneering projects in South America, Africa and Asia. In 2015, eradicating hunger was adopted as one of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.³ The WFP is the UN's primary instrument for realising this goal. It is the largest provider of school meals. In 2019, the WFP provided assistance to close

¹ Assistant Professor in Law Amity Law School, New Delhi, India.

² *UN World Food Programme wins 2020 Nobel Peace prize, as hunger mounts*, UN NEWS, Oct, 9, 2020, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/10/1075012>

³ *Zero Hunger, WFP*, <https://www.wfp.org/zero-hunger>

to 100 million people in 88 countries who are victims of acute food insecurity and hunger.⁴ In recent years, the situation has taken a negative turn. In 2019, 135 million people suffered from acute hunger, the highest number in many years.⁵ Most of the increase was caused by war and armed conflict.

The coronavirus pandemic has contributed to a strong upsurge in the number of victims of hunger in the world. In countries such as Yemen, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria, South Sudan and Burkina Faso, the combination of violent conflict and the pandemic has led to a dramatic rise in the number of people living on the brink of starvation.⁶ In the face of the pandemic, the World Food Programme has demonstrated an impressive ability to intensify its efforts.

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) is the world's largest humanitarian agency fighting hunger worldwide. On average, WFP aims to reach more than 90 million people with food assistance in more than 70 countries.⁷ More than 70 million of these people are directly affected by climate-related disasters such as floods, droughts, and storms. Given the impact of climate variability and change on food security, WFP has prioritised efforts to mainstream climate risk in its operations – including through analysis of climate impacts on food security, design and implementation of food security and climate change adaptation projects, and similar innovative services. WFP, every year, implements projects with a total budget of US\$3-4 billion (approximately).⁸ A large proportion of this budget directly supports people affected by climate-related disasters.

II. PRE-COVID WFP STRATEGICS

WFP's strategic plan for 2014-2017 lays out four objectives⁹ for the organization:

1. Save lives and protect livelihoods in emergencies;
2. Support or restore food security and nutrition and establish or rebuild livelihoods in fragile settings and following emergencies;

⁴ *World Food Program wins 2020 Nobel Peace Prize*, NBC News, Oct. 10, 2020,

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/world-food-program-wins-2020-nobel-peace-prize-n1242678>

⁵ Sara Gustafson, *Global Report on Food Crises: 135 million in 55 countries faced acute hunger in 2019*, IFRI, Apr. 23, 2020, available at <<https://www.ifpri.org/blog/global-report-food-crises-135-million-55-countries-faced-acute-hunger-2019>>

⁶ *The Nobel Peace Prize for 2020, Press Release*, Oct. 9, 2020, <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/2020/press-release/>

⁷ Kathryn Milliken, *World Food Programme (WFP)*, SAFE, <https://www.safefuelandenergy.org/about/partners.cfm?org=WFP>

⁸ "Report No. 9203-UG, Public Choices for Private Initiatives", *World Bank* <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000117029/download/>

⁹ *Draft WFP Strategic Plan (2014-2017)*, WFP, Feb. 28, 2013, available at <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000037842/download/>

3. Reduce risk and enable people, communities and countries to meet their own food and nutrition needs; and

4. Reduce undernutrition and break the intergenerational cycle of hunger.¹⁰

These objectives reflect the changing nature of food aid and hunger, and WFP's history, experience and comparative advantages. The third Strategic Objective, in particular, aims under its first goal to "support people, communities and countries to strengthen resilience to shocks, reduce disaster risk and adapt to climate change through food and nutrition assistance."

WFP's Policy on Disaster Risk Reduction and Management,¹¹ approved in 2011 by its Executive Board, highlights the organisation's critical role in food security analysis (including assessment of loss and damage), monitoring and early warning (including observation of climate impacts on food security), programme design (including implementation of country-driven risk management strategies), emergency preparedness and response, resilience-building, social protection, and capacity development to support the most vulnerable communities.¹² Through all of these functions, WFP addresses climate risks faced by the most food insecure and vulnerable people, supports adaptation, and helps governments and communities manage loss and damage.

III. COVID-19: A HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a worldwide loss of human life. It presents an unprecedented challenge to public health, food systems and the world of work.¹³ The pandemic causes devastating economic and social disruption: tens of millions of people are at risk of falling into extreme poverty, while the number of undernourished people, currently estimated at nearly 690 million, which could increase by up to 132 million.¹⁴ The pandemic has been affecting the entire food system and has laid bare its fragility. Border closures, trade restrictions and confinement measures have been preventing farmers from accessing markets, including agricultural workers from harvesting crops,¹⁵ for buying materials and selling their

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ *WFP policy on Disaster Risk Reduction and Management*, WFP, Nov. 2011, <<https://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/newsroom/wfp247914.pdf>>

¹² *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*, SDG, <<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/frameworks/sendaiframework>>

¹³ *COVID-19 and global food systems*, OECD, Jun. 2, 2020, <<http://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/covid-19-and-global-food-systems-aeb1434b/>>

¹⁴ *Impact of COVID-19 on people's livelihoods, their health and our food systems*, WHO, Oct. 13, 2020, <<https://www.who.int/news/item/13-10-2020-impact-of-covid-19-on-people's-livelihoods-their-health-and-our-food-systems>>

¹⁵ *Covid may leave 132 mn more undernourished by year-end*, Mint, Oct. 15, 2020,

produce, thus disrupting domestic and international food supply chains and reducing access to healthy, safe and diverse diets. The pandemic has decimated jobs and placed millions of livelihoods at risk. The food security and nutrition of millions of women and children are under threat as bread-earners lose jobs, fall ill and die, particularly the most marginalized populations of the low-income countries.¹⁶ The small-scale farmers and indigenous peoples are being hardest hit by the pandemic crisis. Millions of farmers – waged or self-employed – while feeding the world, face high levels of working poverty. They regularly suffer from malnutrition, poor health, lack of safety and labour protection as well as other types of abuse. With nominal and irregular incomes and a lack of social support, many of them are spurred to continue working, often in unsafe conditions.¹⁷ Consequently exposing themselves and their families to additional risks. Further, when experiencing income losses, they may resort to negative coping strategies, such as distress sale of assets, predatory loans or child labour. Migrant agricultural workers are particularly vulnerable, because they face risks in their transport, working and living conditions and struggle to access support measures put in place by governments. Guaranteeing the safety and health of all agri-food workers – from primary producers to those involved in food processing, transport and retail, including street food vendors – as well as better incomes and protection, will be critical to saving lives and protecting public health, people’s livelihoods and food security.

WFP leverages technology and innovation in COVID-19 response

COVID-19 makes WFP’s work more urgent than ever. WFP is mobilising to meet the food needs of 140 million people,¹⁸ but tackling the rising tide of hunger requires the biggest humanitarian response in WFP’s history. The pandemic almost doubled the number of people suffering from acute hunger, while creating additional logistics challenges. Thankfully, several years of investment in innovation, technology and digital transformation, WFP has been able to maintain existing operations and start ramping up the COVID-19 response. As the logistics backbone for global humanitarian assistance, WFP is delivering vital food and medical supplies to the most-affected communities despite unprecedented restrictions on movement. There’s a lot more to be done and we’ll need more help to do it, but thanks to

<<https://www.livemint.com/news/india/covid-may-leave-132-mn-more-undernourished-by-year-end-11602727161589.html>>

¹⁶ Kieran McConville, *Livelihoods Lost as COVID Impacts Global Economy*, CWU, Sep. 10, 2020, <<https://www.concernusa.org/story/covid-and-livelihoods/>>

¹⁷ *Market wipe*, Ingredients insight, Dec. 8, 2020, <<https://www.ingredients-insight.com/features/featuremarket-wipe-8396514/>>

¹⁸ *supra* note 2

some great partners and donors, we've made a good start.¹⁹

Maintaining WFP's reach

After hit by the pandemic, WFP's first priority was sustaining life-saving assistance. It moved quickly to adapt operations to ensure that amidst the pandemic and corresponding measures to limit the spread of the virus, they were still able to reach vulnerable populations. Some of the measures put in place were:

1. Reduced congestion at distribution sites, retail shops and banks by staggering attendance,
2. provided double distributions, redesigned layouts to allow for physical distancing, increased the number of assistance sites, and offered door-to-door delivery services.
3. Health mitigation measures such as hand washing stations, educating communities on COVID-19 prevention measures, and promoting contactless alternatives to biometric verification and malnutrition screening.
4. Adapted school-feeding programmes to provide take-home rations or vouchers to seven million children across 45 countries. WFP also supported 71 countries to adapt their own school-feeding programmes.

To mitigate against the risks of supply chain disruptions, WFP asked donors to front load their contributions of USD1.9 billion to allow WFP to pre-position 3 months' worth of resources in or near the most fragile countries.²⁰ It was done to ensure the regular food distributions were not affected by border closures or transport delays and no-one went without food. Leveraging livelihoods support the socioeconomic impacts of the crisis in the medium-term required WFP to safeguard its resilience interventions. When WFP developed innovative approaches to sustain Food-For-Asset programmes safely, particularly when social distancing measures threatened livelihood support, identifying alternative working methods to reduce crowding at community-level asset development sites.²¹ WFP also leveraged its livelihood programmes by providing essential trainings and materials, including sewing machines, to enable participants to produce face masks for the community.²²

¹⁹ *Populations at Risk: Implications of COVID-19 for Hunger, Migration and Displacement*, November, 2020, WFP, Nov. 9, 2020, <https://www.wfp.org/publications/populations-risk-implications-covid-19-hunger-migration-displacement-2020>

²⁰ *Finance Committee - 183 Session - WFP Management Plan (2020-21)*, FAO, Nov. 2020, <http://www.fao.org/3/nd540en/nd540en.pdf>

²¹ *WFP Global Response to COVID-19: September 2020*, WFP, Nov. 2020, <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/WFP%20Global%20Response%20to%20COVID-19%20-%20September%202020.pdf>

²² *Populations at Risk: Implications of COVID-19 for Hunger, Migration and Displacement*, IOM, Nov. 24, 2020, <https://migration.iom.int/reports/populations-risk-implications-covid-19-hunger-migration-and-displacement>

Sustaining critical assistance

The economic contraction caused by COVID-19 led to the reduction of vital imports and increased food prices, a trend observed particularly in Eastern and Southern Africa. To ensure operational continuity, in addition to the pre-positioning of stocks nearer to beneficiary populations, WFP looked wherever possible to procure in local and regional markets, mitigating against any possible delays caused by a slowdown in global transport markets. 553,000 Metric ton of food was sourced in countries of operation during the first half of 2020 – an increase of 17 percent compared to the same period in 2019.²³

Scaling up

Alongwith maintaining support to its existing 100 million beneficiaries, WFP is aware of the need to urgently scale up its operations to meet the necessity of further vulnerable populations impacted by COVID-19.²⁴ Increasing food costs and reduction in incomes caused people sliding into food insecurity, particularly within urban populations, who often saw more restrictive measures to combat the spread of the virus than their rural counterparts. WFP launched a Global Response Plan including a target to scale up to reach as many as 38 million additional people if resources allowed.²⁵ Although both rural and urban populations have been impacted by the pandemic, the crisis has highlighted the disproportionate affect crises can have on urban areas. More than half of WFP country offices expanded their targeting to urban areas, providing direct assistance in capitals and other urban centres. For some, like the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, and Peru, this was the first time WFP had provided direct assistance in these urban centres.²⁶

As COVID-19 pushed new population groups into hunger (or back into hunger), WFP partnered with governments as well as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration to extend assistance to refugee, migrant and host groups excluded from social protection and humanitarian assistance, including in the Middle East, East Africa, and South America.²⁷

Expanding cash-based transfers

Where markets were operating, WFP scaled up its use of cash-based transfers, transferring

²³ *supra* note 18

²⁴ *supra* note 20

²⁵ *As more go hungry and malnutrition persists, achieving Zero Hunger by 2030 in doubt, UN report warns*, WHO, July 13, 2020, <https://www.wfp.org/2020/covid19-response_o.int/news/item/13-07-2020-as-more-go-hungry-and-malnutrition-persists-achieving-zero-hunger-by-2030-in-doubt-un-report-warns>

²⁶ *FAO-WFP early warning analysis of acute food insecurity hotspots*, FAO, Oct. 2020, <<http://www.fao.org/3/cb1907en/CB1907EN.pdf>>

²⁷ *Protecting Refugees*, UNHCR, 2014, <<https://www.unhcr.org/509a836e9.pdf>>

USD 1.15 billion to vulnerable people across 64 countries by August.²⁸ These transfers empowered communities, particularly those in urban settings, to meet their food needs in local markets and allowed WFP to leverage technology to deliver assistance while reducing human contact and subsequent risk to beneficiaries and staff.

The Covid-19 Common Services

As it became apparent that the world was facing a global pandemic, in March 2020, the entire humanitarian community was forced to think of new ways to ensure that relief items and aid workers could make it to where they were most needed. The health and humanitarian community quickly realized that the response to the COVID-19 emergency had to be planned as something unique, utilizing new coordination mechanisms and new tools. It was an unprecedented call for agencies and humanitarian tools. It was an unprecedented call for agencies and humanitarians had to work together and cooperate in ways they have never done before. In particular, the unprecedented market pressure, especially on critical medical items, as well as transportation constraints, created the need for a collaborative system to identify, certify, source, allocate, direct and deliver essential supplies to where they were needed most. To ensure operational continuity, WFP, working closely with the World Health Organization, the UN system, the NGO community and governments, stepped up to lead the delivery of COVID-19 relief items through a hub-and spoke distribution system.²⁹

In conjunction with this, WFP also stood up a global passenger service, ensuring that health and humanitarian workers were still able to move around the world to where they were needed. To ensure that any humanitarian worker struck down by COVID-19 was able to receive sufficient medical care, WFP also participated in the UN Medevac Cell,³⁰ leveraging its experience in carrying out medical evacuations and its network of aircraft to ensure that frontline workers had the confidence to stay and deliver knowing that medevac services would be available if need be.

WFP Air Passenger Services

WFP's air passenger services have provided a lifeline to health, humanitarian and diplomatic staff who still needed to travel, despite commercial airlines withdrawing services as countries

²⁸ *WFP Cash-Based Transfers: Empowering People, Markets & Governments - 2020*, WFP, Nov. 27, 2020, <<https://www.wfp.org/publications/2020-cash-transfers-factsheet>>

²⁹ *WHO, UN Foundation and partners launch first-of-its-kind COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund*, WHO, Mar. 13, 2020, <<https://www.who.int/news/item/13-03-2020-who-un-foundation-and-partners-launch-first-of-its-kind-covid-19-solidarity-response-fund>>

³⁰ *COVID-19 Medical Evacuation Framework*, UNs, Aug. 31, 2020, <https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/covid-19_medevac_framework_document_160720.pdf>

clamped down on international arrivals to prevent the spread of the disease. Building on its experience as manager of the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service, WFP worked closely with governments around the world to open up humanitarian access, ensuring that all health regulations were followed to protect the safety of its passengers as well as local populations.

From the first flight on 1 May,³¹ the service quickly expanded to destinations throughout Africa, the Middle East, the Commonwealth of Independent States countries, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, reaching a total of 68 destinations at its peak, a span comparable with some of the world's biggest airlines.

WFP, as of 31 October 2020, has transported 25,000 health and humanitarian personnel on behalf of 389 organizations over the course of 1,400 flights.³² As air travel has slowly resumed and restrictions have eased, WFP has stood down its passenger services to locations serviced by safe and reliable commercial operators, however remains ready to resume services as needed.

UN Medevac Services

To support all humanitarian and health staff on the front lines and ensure their ability to “stay and deliver”, the UN Secretary-General activated a common COVID-19 Medical Evacuation (medevac) System on 22 May.³³ As part of this, a medevac cell was established, leveraging assets from WFP, WHO and the United Nations Department of Operational Support (UNDOS) to enable a coordinated and centralized approach to COVID-19 related medevacs.³⁴ As co-lead with UNDOS of the aviation arm of the cell, WFP has utilized its access to a global network of contracted air ambulances and leveraged its experience to provide medical evacuations on behalf of the response.

Since the unified system was activated, the cell has now completed a total of 79 medevacs – 50 carried out by WFP and 29 by UNDOS. In parallel, regional treatment and isolation centres were identified by the UN Medevac Task Force and arrangements with host governments put in place to receive eligible UN and INGO personnel and dependents. As part of this initiative, WFP completed the construction of a 68-bed field hospital in Accra,

³¹ *WFP Common Services: COVID – 19 Response*, WFP, Jun. 29, 2020, <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/WFP_COVID-19%20Common%20Services_Situation%20Report_1_29June.pdf>

³² *Standing Committee on National Defence – 43rd Parliament – 2nd Session*, House of Comm. Canada, Nov. 23, 2020, <<https://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/Committee/432/NDDN/Evidence/EV10977509/NDDNEV06-E.PDF>>

³³ “WFP Common Services Brief,” WFP, Jun. 15, 2020, <<https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000116701/download/>>

³⁴ *supra* note 18

Ghana which has been handed over to the World Health Organization to operate.³⁵ WFP also completed the construction of a 92-bed COVID-19 field hospital in Addis Ababa that has since been turned over to the Ethiopian Ministry of Health for COVID-19 treatment of the local population.³⁶ This was made possible even though most air spaces were closed for commercial travel. Since lockdowns were imposed in many countries, it was not allowed for people to travel, however the WFP arranged an exception to be made for these front-line workers.

Going digital and taking WFP remote

While most WFP staff are still working in the field, business continuity planning enabled thousands of staff to switch seamlessly to working remotely, including most of WFP's headquarters-based staff in Rome and many regional and country offices. As well as sharing its own knowledge and expertise, WFP is also benefitting from the experience of a wide range of private sector partners who specialize in innovation, technology and digital transformation.³⁷ This covers everything from unearthing, incubating and piloting new ideas through hackathons and start-up mentoring, to scaling up solutions with leading experts in data management or telecommunications.

WFP's Innovation Accelerator program is now fully virtual. After the first virtual innovation bootcamp for the UN Digital Solutions Centre, the Accelerator is hosting bootcamps for UNFPA; the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation; and USAID with a specific COVID-19 focus.³⁸

A global community coming together

WFP's fundraising app, ShareTheMeal reached its first emergency fundraising goal in just 10 days – thanks to over 2 million donors worldwide³⁹ - and has now launched a second campaign highlighting WFP's response to the COVID-19 crisis.

Covid-19 'fast track'

³⁵ Amy Lieberman, *New UN field hospitals will treat humanitarian workers with COVID-19*, Devex, Jun. 12, 2020, <<https://www.devex.com/news/new-un-field-hospitals-will-treat-humanitarian-workers-with-covid-19-97464>>

³⁶ *Global Humanitarian Response Plan COVID-19*, UNS Coord. Appeal, Apr-Dec. 2020, <https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/GHRP-COVID19_Annexes_July_update.pdf>

³⁷ *WFP leverages technology and innovation in COVID-19 response*, WFP, Jun. 2020, <<https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000117163/download/>>

³⁸ *WFP and UNFPA join forces with 8 teams to innovate Family Planning*, WFP Inn Acc. July 22, 2019 <<https://wfpinnovation.medium.com/wfp-and-unfpa-join-forces-with-8-teams-to-innovate-family-planning-a32c32f59089>>

³⁹ *The world's first app against global hunger*, STM, <<https://sharethemeal.org/en/values.html>>

Problem: The Covid-19 crisis needs solutions that are ready to be scaled. WFP Innovation is playing a supporting role to key WFP divisions fighting COVID, including social protection, supply chain, through its broad strategy of providing innovation support services. In this process, a three-step approach to accelerate the sourcing, adoption and roll out of in-country demand-driven innovative solutions.⁴⁰ Piloting in South Sudan with the aim of sustaining WFP's core operations, and supports the broader humanitarian response.

Step 1 - Prioritise problems

Step 2 - Source Solutions

Step 3 - Bring actors together

Farm to market alliance

In countries, where food markets have been severely disrupted due to COVID-19 emergency, many farmers lose up to 40% of their harvest due to unsafe or unavailable storage facilities.⁴¹ Global logistical disruptions would hinder cross-border trade of commodities. WFP, came up through a network of Farmer Service Centres (FSC), the alliance facilitates smallholder farmers with access to post-harvest handling training, equipment, inputs, mechanization services and access to credit. Activities have adapted to digital delivery - using virtual trainings, WhatsApp groups, SMS messages and interactive voice recordings (IVR), and encouraging the use of mobile money. As a result of which 38% yield increase of focus value chain commodities and 41% increase in farmer household net income. 100,000 farmers were provided improved market access,⁴² through 300+ Farmer Service Centres in 2019. Participating farmers have so far been able to reduce post-harvest losses by up to 98%.

Food ATM

Traditional distribution of in-kind commodities involves packaging of bulk goods at the end of the supply chain and distribution to beneficiaries in single, monthly rations. Beneficiaries have little choice in ration composition, often facing long queues and carrying their ration back home.⁴³ This current model does not allow for social distancing. To solve this problem,

⁴⁰ *Resilience System Analysis*, OECD, 2016, <https://www.oecd.org/dac/conflict-fragility-resilience/docs/SwedenLearning_Recommendationsreport.pdf>

⁴¹ Ruchira Boss, Mamata Pradhan, "Post-harvest Management and Farm Outcomes, 55 (16) EPW, Apr. 18, 2020, <<https://www.epw.in/journal/2020/16/commentary/post-harvest-management-and-farm-outcomes.html>>

⁴² *Resource Efficient Growth in the Rural Sector*, WB - IBRD, <<https://www.worldbank.org/en/cpf/india/what-we-work/resource-efficient-growth/resource-efficient-growth-rural-sector>>

⁴³ *No Time for Experimentation: Food Rights Activists on Delhi's Doorstep Ration Delivery Scheme*, The Wire, Jul. 23, 2020, <<https://thewire.in/rights/no-time-for-experimentation-food-rights-activists-on-delhis-doorstep-ration-delivery-scheme>>

WFP has launched contactless, automated dispensing of food rations to beneficiaries. Flexibility on collection times and quantities, minimizing crowds and queues are followed. Touchless card or mobile phone transactions are used to eliminate physical sign off. This project is currently confirming the pilot location in order to deploy the first version of the Food ATM (Oil dispensers are ready to be piloted in Kenya).⁴⁴ Potential to roll it out in urban slums to support governments intervention.

The core policies and strategies that govern WFP activities are to provide food aid:

- i. to save lives in refugee and other emergency situations;
- ii. to improve the nutrition and quality of life of the most vulnerable people at critical times in their lives;
- iii. to help build assets and promote the self-reliance of poor people and communities, particularly through labour-intensive works programmes.

Key Stakeholders

WFP implements projects in partnership with various stakeholders, such as:

1. National governments - The governments of the countries where WFP operates are our principal partners. Co-ordination and co-operation with them are essential - both in emergencies and development projects.⁴⁵
2. Non-governmental organisations. Non-governmental organisations transport, store or distribute food on behalf of WFP. We have productive working partnerships with around 2,000 NGOs.
3. FAO and IFAD - The three Rome-based UN agencies - WFP, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) – work together to address hunger in the world.
4. Other UN agencies - WFP often collaborates with other UN Agencies relying on its sister organisations for technical advice and non-food resources in both crises and development situations.
5. Corporate partners - WFP is seeking additional funding and valuable expertise from private companies active in areas such as transport, food, information and communications technology, logistics, finance and human resources.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ *supra* note 7

⁴⁵ “UN agencies and international institutions”, WFP, <<https://www.wfp.org/un-agencies-and-international-institutions>>

6. The R4 Rural Resilience Initiative is a strategic partnership between WFP, Oxfam America, and Swiss Re. These partners are often stakeholders.⁴⁷

Implementation Modality/ Delivery Mechanism

WFP is the food assistance programme of the United Nations system. Food assistance is one of the many instruments that can help to promote food security, which is defined as access of all people at all times to the food needed for an active and healthy life. Targeted interventions are needed to help to improve the lives of the poorest people - people who, either permanently or during crisis periods, are unable to produce enough food or do not have the resources to otherwise obtain the food that they and their households require for active and healthy lives. WFP also reflects the principle of universality, *for example* –

- i. uses food assistance to support economic and social development;
- ii. meets refugee and other emergency food needs, and the associated logistics support;
- iii. promotes world food security in accordance with the recommendations of the United Nations and FAO.

WFP supports projects primarily through food transfers. WFP is also increasingly implementing projects through cash and voucher transfers – and through the R4 Initiative, WFP is piloting the potential of using insurance-for-work as a strategy to build resilience through risk transfer.⁴⁸ A key component of WFP’s operational strategy is to build the capacity of partners and governments to implement projects, develop early warning systems, and ensure national food security.

IV. CONCLUSION

COVID-19 makes WFP’s work more urgent and more complex than ever. Already mobilizing to meet the needs of up to 138 million people, the organization must now also rise to meet the demands of the biggest humanitarian response in its history⁴⁹ – a pandemic that could simultaneously double the number of people suffering from acute hunger and multiply the logistic challenges to reach them. To continue protecting the wellbeing of our staff, delivering vital assistance and supporting the humanitarian community through logistics services, WFP is overcoming those challenges by combining learnings from past experiences,

⁴⁶ *Id.*

⁴⁷ *R4 Resilience Initiative*, OA, <https://policy-practice.oxfamamerica.org/work/rural-resilience/r4-resilience-initiative/>

⁴⁸ “The R4 Rural Resilience Initiative”, WFP, <<https://www.wfp.org/r4-rural-resilience-initiative>>

⁴⁹ “WFP and COVID-19”, WFP, <<https://cdn.wfp.org/2020/covid19-response/>>

such as Ebola, with innovative approaches, technologies and digital transformation.⁵⁰ WFP's collective effort with the local bodies and national governments has come as a saviour to many and they must be lauded for the same.

⁵⁰ *The WFP humanitarian who went from tackling Ebola to coronavirus*, WFP, Apr. 30, 2020, <<https://www.wfp.org/stories/wfp-humanitarian-who-went-tackling-ebola-coronavirus>>