

Grand Bargain in 2020:

Annual Self Report – Narrative Summary

Name of Institution: United Nations World Food Programme

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(NB. Please limit your answer to no more than **5 pages in total** – anything over this word limit will not be considered by ODI in their analysis. Please respond to all of the questions below.)

Grand Bargain in 2020

Question 1: Reflecting on the information you have provided in the Excel spreadsheet, please highlight the 2 or 3 key outcomes or results relating to the Grand Bargain that your institution achieved in 2020?

In 2020, WFP continued to increase the use of cash-based transfers, channelling around 37% of its total assistance through cash, value and commodity vouchers, totalling USD 2.1 billion. WFP also focussed on supporting governments in their Government-to-People (G2P) scale-ups for responding to COVID, adapted its internal business process model, strengthened its assurance and oversight frameworks, and is increasingly adopting a more beneficiary-oriented approach to delivering cash. Additionally, there has been significant work in joint programming, procurement and interoperability with other agencies, including establishing UN Guidance on Collaborative Procurement for Humanitarian Cash Transfers, agreeing on a Minimum Data Set for Assistance to be collected by all actors, and a trilateral global Data Sharing Agreement (among WFP, UNHCR and UNICEF).

WFP also developed the new Protection and Accountability Policy – approved by the Executive Board in November 2020 – which places protection at the core of design, implementation and reporting of/on programmes. Its theory of change, complementing our food security analysis, was developed in close consultations with affected populations.

Finally, WFP remained committed to ensuring transparent reporting, expanding country capacity strengthening with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) on specific areas (i.e. early warning and forecast-based financing), and conducting the vast majority of needs assessments jointly with governments and partners.

Question 2: How has your institution contributed to the advancement of gender equality and women’s empowerment in humanitarian settings through its implementation of the Grand Bargain? What results/outcomes have been achieved in this regard? (please outline specific initiatives or changes in practice and their outcomes/results). Please refer to the Guidelines for definitions of Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment, which are included in this self-report template package.

WFP continued integrating gender in its country strategic plan framework, including through appropriate analysis of country context, design of activities, partnerships, monitoring and evaluation, and reporting. In 2020, building on lessons learned, further guidance and support was provided in better mainstreaming gender.

Investments were made in producing evidence-based research in various domains. In partnership with Gallup and the FAO Statistics Division, the “Gender Equality for Food Security” measure report was finalized and used to inform programming, including COVID-19 response. Various gender studies and analyses were undertaken in Bolivia, Jordan, Libya, Mauritania and Yemen.

Concurrently, WFP expanded implementation of its main gender mainstreaming mechanisms: the Gender Transformation Programme (GTP), the Gender and Age Marker (GaM) and the second iteration of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan for gender equality and women’s empowerment of women (UNSWAP 2.0).

In 2020, 12 WFP country offices were participating in the GTP, developing and implementing improvement plans, and undertaking a final assessment to measure their achievement against 39 benchmarks. In particular, six country offices (Bolivia, Cameroon, Jordan, Libya, Tunisia and Yemen) successfully completed the GTP.

WFP continued using its Gender and Age Marker (GaM) - an adaptation of the IASC Gender Marker. The WFP GaM is a corporate tool that codes – on a 0 to 4 scale – the extent to which gender and age are integrated into the design and monitoring of a WFP programme. Country offices apply the GaM through an online dedicated platform and are continuously supported with guidance materials and assistance.

In 2020, WFP exceeded nine UNSWAP indicators, met four, approached three and did not report on one (due to non-applicability). Despite progress made in several areas, WFP's 2020 performance highlighted the need to further improve gender parity among employees, as well as the area of financial resource allocation and tracking.

WFP was also actively involved in the recent Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation [on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls](#), through its Office of Evaluation.

Question 3: How has the humanitarian-development nexus been strategically mainstreamed in your institutional implementation of the Grand Bargain commitments? Please explain how your institution has linked commitments 10.1 - 10.5 with other commitments from other workstreams.

WFP has made significant efforts to internalise humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus approaches – both at a strategic and operational level. This includes efforts to ensure alignment with national governments' development priorities and those described in the UNSDCF, with clear transition strategies linking relief efforts to recovery and longer-term development. A mid-term review of the WFP Strategic Plan (2017-2021), completed in mid-2020, provides key recommendations that will allow WFP to further improve its planning, budgeting and performance reporting.

Importantly, in July 2020, WFP adhered to the OECD-DAC Recommendations on the HDP Nexus, demonstrating WFP's commitment to improving programming in fragile settings. WFP's multi-year country strategies must aspire not only to address humanitarian needs, but to reduce needs over time - including facilitating sustainable handover to national authorities - and strive to contribute to peace, where possible.

This new commitment takes place alongside an increased investment in building evidence to better understand current results of operationalising the nexus in different protracted crises, with emerging findings from East Africa illustrating that there can be no single "nexus approach". WFP also continued to expand the evidence base on its contribution to peace – the least known pillar of the nexus – through a partnership with the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). In-depth research into thematic areas such as climate change, gender, cash, stabilization and measurement is ongoing despite challenges posed by COVID-19.

WFP's internal considerations on "collective outcomes", outlining the linkage between food security and other related SDGs, fed into joint UN-IASC Light Guidance on Collective Outcomes, to support the process of creating and delivering context-specific collective outcomes. WFP has also invested in strengthening its internal capacity to deliver conflict sensitive programmes and analysis to better understand the root causes and drivers of hunger. Corporate Conflict Sensitivity Minimum Standards were launched in late-2020.

At an operational level, WFP and UNHCR launched the first Joint Programme Excellence and Targeting Hub, working towards common outcomes to better meet the basic needs of vulnerable refugee populations, and reducing them over time. The Hub supports the operationalization of UNHCR-WFP global frameworks, particularly joint needs assessments, targeting strategies, data sharing and systems interoperability, strengthening accountability to affected populations, and developing joint strategies to promote refugee livelihoods and self-reliance. The Joint Hub already provides support to Cameroon, DRC, Jordan, Mauritania, Mozambique, Rwanda, and Zambia.

Finally, WFP is currently developing a new Corporate Results Framework, building on findings from a mid-term review in 2020, which recommended, *i.a.* improved metrics to *changing lives*. As part of its work on the HDP nexus, WFP has started to develop a system to measure WFP's contribution to peace.

Grand Bargain 2016-2020: Overall achievements and remaining gaps

Question 4: What are the 2-3 key achievements/areas of most progress by your institution since 2016? Please report on your institutional progress for the period 2016-2020, even if your institution did not become a signatory until after 2016.

Overall, WFP constantly invested in strengthening the use of cash-based transfers, not only through increased quantity (from US\$ 880 million in 60 countries in 2016, to US\$ 2.1 billion in 67 countries in 2020), but also augmenting the use of unrestricted cash transfers (representing over 54% of the total USD volume of cash transfers in 2020); quality programme design (rolling out of a corporate guidance and new digital systems to improve the efficiency of delivery); improved assurance (i.e. tighten reporting, analytics and segregation of duties in more robust systems to increase accountability); and support to governments in their cash-based responses.

There has been progress in reducing the duplication of management costs through the increased collaboration with other UN entities - also leveraging the UN Reform frameworks for collaboration (Business Operations Strategy and Common Premises), as well as the digitalisation of services (e.g. WFP developed the Humanitarian Booking Hub to simplify service provisioning among UN agencies worldwide for UN guesthouses, UNHAS flights, UN clinics and counsellors, etc). The harmonised partnership agreements and partner assessment information sharing - particularly through the UN Partner Portal (UNPP) - have also supported this objective, allowing four UN organizations (WFP, UNHCR, UNFPA and UNICEF) to register and update partner profiles reducing the administrative burden of due diligence.

WFP also played a key role in promoting simplified and harmonised reporting, launching a set of changes in 2016 which formed the basis for the initial "8+3" template later proposed by Global Public Policy Institute (GPPi).

Additionally, WFP remained strongly committed to ensuring the transparency of its operations. publishing quality data through the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) since 2013 and checking alignment and consistency with other internal and external reports (e.g. the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination). Last but not least, WFP launched a [data portal for Member States](#) with information on programme, finance and performance for Board-approved country strategic plans. This platform has been building donors' confidence to support increased multi-year, multilateral and results-based funding.

Question 5: What, in your institutional view, have been the main achievements of the Grand Bargain signatories, as a collective, since 2016? Please indicate specific commitments, thematic or cross-cutting issues or workstreams where you think most progress has been made collectively by signatories.

Five years on, the GB remains for a number of actors the reference for improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the humanitarian action. Although the “quid pro quo” concept is not functioning as originally envisaged, the GB seems to have a wider impact in terms of a more cohesive, collaborative approach across the humanitarian sector.

The Grand Bargain Signatories were able to increase the use of cash in humanitarian and development assistance, demonstrating that this modality is not riskier than in-kind assistance. Inter-agency collaboration was also important – through data sharing agreements, MoUs between organisations, common cash statement – as well as the increased focus on the importance in linking cash to existing social safety net systems. With the continued global adoption of the UNPP, specifically in response to the GB commitment for harmonized due diligence, four UN agencies are avoiding duplication of assessments and focusing efforts on capacity strengthening as “one UN”. Over 14,000 partners are currently registered in the UNPP - the vast majority small, national CSOs - providing them with a new channel to submit one profile to multiple UN agencies and allowing a new transparent and competitive selection process.

Additionally, the overall funding to local actors was slowly increased and targeted WFP investments to strengthen capacities of local partners brought measurable results, as shown by the initiative with IFRC that was developed and implemented between 2017 and 2019.

Question 6: What has the Grand Bargain not been able to achieve in its five-year tenure? What outstanding obstacles, gaps, areas of weakness still remain after five years, in terms of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian action? Please indicate specific commitments, thematic or cross-cutting issues or workstreams where you think there remain key gaps or obstacles.

The GB is about increasing efficiency and effectiveness thus to reduce funding gaps, maximize the impact of funds received and meet the humanitarian needs. The inability (often political) to tackle the root causes of humanitarian crises prolongs their duration, significantly increasing needs over time (in 2015 needs amounted to USD 16 billion, whereas in 2020, they rose to USD 37.4 billion) thus widening rather than closing the funding gap.

While the Grand Bargain was conceived to leverage the political will of its Signatories, several workstreams focused their efforts on technical issues (e.g. cash or joint needs assessments) instead of leveraging their constituencies’ political role to overcome bottlenecks. This constitutes a missing opportunity as the essence of the Grand Bargain is to bring more value added than other existing fora working those same issues.

Although requiring regular efforts and investments, the UN and NGO constituencies have been pursuing greater coordination and collaboration. On the other hand, coordination and cohesion among donors appear to be more challenging. For example, donors presented differing views on cash-based programming whether as a transfer modality or for its delivering mechanisms; together with the need for a broader understanding of the [essential needs approach](#) to guide assistance.

Progress achieved on some donors' commitments has also been limited, especially around the reduction of individual donor assessments.

Risk and the Grand Bargain

Question 7a: How has risk (financial, operational, reputational, etc) affected your institution's implementation of the core commitments since you became a signatory to the Grand Bargain?

WFP operates in complex and fast changing environments, requiring frequent reassessments, adaptation and innovation to deliver the expected assistance in a sustainable and effective way. Risk is therefore an ever-present consideration in decision-making at WFP. At country level, especially in larger emergencies, WFP faces key risks related to logistics, security and access, as well as exposures to reputationally sensitive matters such as potential fraud/corruption or sexual exploitation. These risks can constrain WFP's effectiveness in certain contexts, in particular where there is conflict, or where WFP is unable to directly support and monitor the implementation of partners due to access issues. More high-level strategic risks include the failure to demonstrate WFP's value proposition in development and peace-building; failure to adapt to shifts in the funding landscape; and failure to adapt tools and approaches to changing operational contexts to provide value to beneficiaries and host governments.

Question 7b: How has your institution sought to mitigate or address these risks to enable implementation of the core commitments?

While for operational, financial and fiduciary risks WFP is "risk adverse", for strategic risks WFP may be characterized as "risk hungry". WFP designs and implements its programmes in difficult contexts, hence it must continually adapt its business model to changing needs and operating environments. WFP has a corporate risk register in place to weigh opportunities and risks in the medium-to long-term (5-10-year horizon), based on which senior management makes risk-informed decisions to maximize WFP's overall likelihood of achieving its objectives.

To mitigate its strategic risks, WFP is committed to designing evidence-based, robust, gender-sensitive and environmentally sustainable country strategic plans, in partnership with host governments, donors, civil society and other key stakeholders. WFP will also continue to develop funding partnerships to align its resources with implementation priorities, as well as invest in training, sourcing of employees with the required skills and mechanisms to deploy them rapidly. WFP continuously seeks to foster an innovative culture that allows the organization to accelerate its contribution to achieve the SDGs.

For more operational risk mitigation, guidance was issued to all Directors across WFP in mid-2019 encouraging the sharing of risk information with partners and donors. As more than 70% of WFP's distributions to beneficiaries are handled by local partners, building capacity amongst this network is essential to combatting critical risks. For instance, WFP holds an annual partner conference and often uses this forum to discuss key risks – i.e. a special session was facilitated in 2018 on sexual exploitation and abuse concerns in the humanitarian sector. WFP also provides training and materials to local partners on managing fraud and corruption risks. Building capacity with partners does require longer term commitments, and WFP has consistently advocated for longer term funding for its programmes from its donor base, but is still seeking greater progress in this regard.