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**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

**BETWEEN**

**THE OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER  
FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR)**

**AND**

**THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME (WFP)**

**January 2011**

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**UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES  
WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME**

## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The strong partnership between the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the World Food Programme (WFP) pre-dates the first Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in 1985. This partnership was enhanced by new working arrangements introduced in 1992. Revised MoUs, reflecting experience gained in implementing the new arrangements, were adopted in 1994, 1997 and 2002. This 2010 revision incorporates lessons learned from implementing the provisions of the revised MoUs, and takes into account the latest developments within the global humanitarian arena, which affect both policies and operations.

1.2 The 2010 MoU sets out the objectives and scope of collaboration between UNHCR and WFP, and establishes the division of responsibilities and arrangements between the two agencies.

1.3 By virtue of its Statute (General Assembly resolution 428 (V) of 14 December 1950), the role of UNHCR is to provide international protection to refugees and to seek durable solutions to refugee problems. As regards UNHCR's assistance activities, the basic provisions of the Statute were expanded by the General Assembly in its resolution 832 (IX) of 21 October 1954. Subsequent resolutions of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme have called on the Office, in the context of its basic mandate, to protect and assist other groups of persons regarded as falling within the competence of UNHCR. For the purpose of this MoU, the following categories are persons of concern (PoCs) to UNHCR: refugees, asylum-seekers, returned refugees (returnees), and stateless persons. Internally displaced persons (IDPs) are also of concern to UNHCR and will be dealt with according to the framework of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) humanitarian reform/cluster approach.

1.4 By virtue of its Statute (General Assembly Resolution 1714 (XVI) and FAO Conference Resolutions No. 1/1961 and No. 4/1965) and the subsequent adoption of the WFP Mission Statement by the Executive Board in December 1994, WFP's role as the food assistance<sup>1</sup> arm of the United Nations is to: (a) use food aid to support economic and social development; (b) meet emergency and protracted relief food needs; and (c) promote world food security in accordance with the recommendations of the United Nations and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). To achieve these goals, WFP implements programmes to:

- i. aid economic and social development, concentrating its efforts and resources on the neediest people and countries;
- ii. assist in the continuum from emergency relief to development by giving priority to supporting disaster prevention, preparedness and mitigation and post-disaster rehabilitation activities; and
- iii. assist in meeting refugee and other emergency and protracted relief food needs, using this assistance to the extent possible to serve both relief and development purposes.

Considering the impact of displacement on food security, refugees, returnees and IDPs are of particular concern to WFP, regardless of their status and location (i.e. whether they reside in camps or urban centres, or are accommodated by host communities).

1.5 Reference to food-insecure populations and PoCs in this MoU should be interpreted in line with the respective policies of each agency on gender.

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<sup>1</sup> WFP Strategic Plan, 2008-2011 (WFP/EB.A/2008/5-A/1/Rev.1). "Food assistance" refers to the set of interventions designed to provide vulnerable and food-insecure populations with access to food. It includes instruments such as in-kind food, voucher or cash transfers that assure access to food of a given quantity, quality or value.

## 2. OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

2.1 The ultimate goal of the partnership between UNHCR and WFP is to ensure that the food security and related needs of PoCs are adequately addressed. Food security is defined as a situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.<sup>2</sup> On the basis of this principle, and through the timely provision of the right quantities of the right food and non-food items and services, UNHCR and WFP seek to contribute to the:

- restoration and/or maintenance of a sound nutrition status for different population groups through culturally acceptable food assistance that meets internationally accepted standards of assessed nutritional requirements; and
- promotion of self-reliance among beneficiaries through the implementation of appropriate programmes to develop food production or generate income, which facilitate a progressive shift of the response from general relief food distribution towards more targeted assistance and sustainable development-oriented activities, and create suitable conditions for durable solutions.

2.2 The MoU covers cooperation in the provision of food assistance and related non-food items to food-insecure refugees, asylum-seekers, returnees and, in specific situations, to other PoCs. For refugees and asylum-seekers, it applies when at least 5,000 people are concentrated in one or more areas in a given country, and are in need of food assistance. Other situations will be agreed upon by WFP and UNHCR on a case-by-case basis (e.g. support to other categories of PoCs, or at the onset of a refugee crisis when the number of beneficiaries is below 5,000 but growing rapidly). When the beneficiaries are in a developed country or countries,<sup>3</sup> the provisions of the MoU will still apply, provided that donor resources are not allocated at the expense of WFP's relief operations in developing countries, as determined by WFP on a case-by-case basis.

2.3 UNHCR and WFP will separately meet the food needs of their own target populations who are outside the scope of the MoU as defined above, as well as the needs of any persons who fall within the scope of the MoU but have been excluded by a situation-specific agreement.

2.4 UNHCR and WFP are committed to ensuring that food assistance and non-food items affecting health and food security are targeted at the household level and reach the most vulnerable populations through delivery mechanisms that respect the guiding principles of humanitarian action, especially impartiality, neutrality, accountability and transparency.

2.5 UNHCR and WFP have an interest in creating suitable conditions for durable solutions. The promotion of self-reliance within the context of refugee legal rights – to employment, access to land, etc. – is one of several essential elements for a lasting solution. The achievement of self-reliance implies a range of activities that promote the socio-economic empowerment of refugees and other PoCs as part of a local community. As self-reliance must fit into the larger context of local development, WFP and UNHCR will make efforts to link their self-reliance and reintegration activities to the longer-term recovery and development plans of Governments and other actors.

2.6 The MoU is a management tool that contributes to the achievement of these objectives by recognizing the mandates of each agency and defining clearly the responsibilities and arrangements for cooperation between UNHCR and WFP. In doing so, it maximizes the strengths of each agency and

<sup>2</sup> FAO, 2002. The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2001, p. 49, Rome.

<sup>3</sup> Countries other than those listed in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) annual report as aid-recipient countries that fall below the threshold for World Bank loan eligibility.

builds on their comparative advantages in cooperation arrangements that provide added value for beneficiaries and contribute to the discharge of both agencies' mandates and responsibilities.

### **3. AREAS OF COOPERATION**

#### **Preparedness planning**

3.1 UNHCR and WFP will establish early-warning systems, undertake regular geographic or situation-based risk evaluations, and maintain contingency plans for countries where this is deemed appropriate. The contingency-planning exercise will include an operational continuity and readiness component. Each agency will seek to ensure the participation of others concerned in the process, and will share relevant early-warning information and contingency plans where these cannot be developed jointly.

#### **Registration/verification**

3.2 The host Government is primarily responsible for determining the numbers of refugees and other PoCs. In the context of its protection mandate, UNHCR will fully support the Government in processes related to the determination of refugee status and the registration of and provision of identity cards to refugees. In situations of internal displacement, members of the United Nations country team will support the Government in determining the numbers and locations of displaced persons, and in identifying the most vulnerable persons among them.

3.3 WFP and UNHCR will jointly assess the numbers of refugees and returnees eligible for food assistance in consultation with the Government concerned. Accurate identification of beneficiaries and sound assessment of their needs are essential for the mobilization and efficient use of the resources made available to both agencies.

3.4 In most circumstances, refugee populations will be registered within three months of the start of a major influx. The size and nature of the influx will determine the type of registration and population data management system to be used. UNHCR will work with the Government to establish local arrangements for registering, to the extent possible, any new arrivals, departures, births, changes in household composition and deaths. This will ensure that changes in the family size of the beneficiaries of food and non-food items can be matched by a corresponding change in family entitlements. Where satisfactory registration has not been possible within three months, UNHCR and WFP will jointly determine the number of beneficiaries in need of food assistance and estimate the demographic breakdown of the population, in consultation with the host Government. Beneficiary numbers and the refugee food security situation will be jointly updated at least annually, unless otherwise agreed by the UNHCR and WFP country offices. The timing of registration, verification or revalidation exercises will be agreed at the country level within the Joint Plan of Action (JPA).

3.5 UNHCR will involve WFP in the planning and execution of refugee enumeration, registration and verification exercises for actual or potential beneficiaries of food assistance and related non-food items. Operational partners and representatives of donor Governments should be closely associated with this and other aspects of enumeration and registration. Should the country offices of the two agencies disagree on the number of beneficiaries to plan for in the absence of a satisfactory registration, the matter will be referred to the respective regional bureaux. Pending resolution, and in consultation with the host Government, WFP will provide food to the number of beneficiaries that its country office estimates to need assistance.

#### **Needs assessment**

3.6 In consultation with government authorities, implementing/operational partners and beneficiaries, UNHCR and WFP will jointly assess the overall food assistance and related non-food requirements of PoCs. Assessments will identify different levels of socio-economic capacity among population groups, to inform targeting and guide the development of livelihood and self-reliance programmes from the early stages of displacement. Special consideration will be given to the needs of women, children – especially those who are unaccompanied – and other vulnerable groups.

3.7 At the country level, both agencies will agree on the modalities of food assistance and distribution, the composition of the food basket, ration size, duration of assistance, and related non-food inputs. The proposed food and non-food assistance programmes, whether in-kind or through cash transfers or vouchers, will take into account all relevant factors, including the socio-economic and nutrition status of the beneficiaries, cultural practices, overall food availability, prospects for self-reliance, availability of cooking fuels and milling facilities, and environmental impact. Energy requirements for cooking, and corresponding energy supply options and quantities are to be carefully assessed in each situation.

3.8 In a major new emergency, in line with article 3.4, the initial assessment to determine the number of beneficiaries and the most urgent food and non-food needs will normally be carried out within the framework of the emergency responses being mobilized by both agencies. Emergency response teams from UNHCR, WFP and prospective operational partners will participate, and guide the formulation of joint activities.

3.9 In ongoing operations, food and other relief needs will normally be reviewed through periodic joint assessment missions (JAM), jointly led and undertaken by the country offices of both agencies in line with JAM standard guidelines. The JAM report will be finalized within a month of the completion of the mission, and will provide the basis for any necessary adjustments to joint activities and to the JPA.

3.10 Should either the UNHCR or the WFP country office consider that developments since the last needs assessment warrant a change in the agreed ration, the modality for providing food assistance, or the number of beneficiaries, the other agency will be informed immediately in writing. The implications of these developments will be reviewed jointly, and a course of action agreed to. Should the country offices not agree on a course of action, the issue will be referred to the respective regional bureaux/headquarters for appropriate and immediate resolution.

3.11 UNHCR and WFP will also consider the food security situation of communities in the proximity of refugee camps and of individuals and families hosting refugees, and will address their needs as appropriate. Protection concerns resulting from tensions between refugees and local communities will be addressed.

#### **Self-reliance/durable solutions**

3.12 In accordance with their respective mandates, UNHCR and WFP will collaborate in defining and implementing comprehensive livelihood support programmes to encourage and build the self-reliance of both PoCs and host communities. This will include programming food and non-food assistance to support asset building, training, income generation and other self-reliance activities. Attention will be paid to reinforcing individual and community coping mechanisms. As self-reliance increases, UNHCR and WFP will carefully plan the gradual phasing out of assistance, in consultation with the Government, implementing/operational partners and beneficiaries. Whenever feasible, possibilities for allocating agricultural land for use by PoCs will be pursued with host Governments.

3.13 UNHCR and WFP will jointly advocate with Governments to include PoCs in existing national nutrition and food security programmes – supplementary feeding, food security safety nets, micronutrient supplementation programmes, etc. – as appropriate.

3.14 WFP will be involved with the planning and implementation of repatriation and return operations, particularly with regard to timing, security and other components that affect food assistance planning and implementation. Decisions on food assistance modalities will be taken jointly. If a repatriation or return commission is established by the Government(s) concerned, UNHCR will request WFP's participation in its meetings, as an observer or as otherwise agreed.

3.15 In consultation with WFP and other relevant partners, UNHCR will develop reintegration strategies that help integrate returnees into their former or new communities, keeping in mind the food security situation of these communities, and government policies and sensitivities. UNHCR and WFP will

make efforts to link UNHCR's reintegration programmes to longer-term development plans and programmes.

### **Nutrition**

3.16 WFP/UNHCR selective feeding<sup>4</sup> guidelines and JAM guidelines will be used to assess, monitor and evaluate the food needs for both general and selective feeding programmes.

3.17 The decision to implement general food assistance, including the rations to be provided, will be taken jointly by UNHCR and WFP. At the outset of any emergency situation, the indicative average energy, protein and lipid requirements for human beings, established by FAO, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (Sphere) guidelines – 2,100 kcal per person per day, with 10 to 12 per cent coming from protein and at least 17 per cent from lipids – will be used as the initial planning figure. This figure will be adjusted as soon as possible to take into account the temperature in the area and the demographic composition, health, nutritional status and physical activity levels of the beneficiaries, as specified in the Joint WFP/UNHCR/United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)/WHO *Guidelines for Estimating Food and Nutritional Needs in Emergencies*. Other factors, such as the population's ability to provide its own food and the factors specified in article 3.7, will also be taken into consideration when estimating the food assistance needs of beneficiaries.

3.18 Where beneficiaries are totally dependent on food assistance, WFP will ensure the provision of multi-fortified food items according to the WFP/UNHCR/UNICEF/WHO guidelines.

3.19 The decision to implement supplementary feeding programmes, including the type of programming required, will be taken jointly by UNHCR and WFP, based on the *WFP/UNHCR Guidelines for Selective Feeding: The Management of Malnutrition in Emergencies* (2009).

3.20 The decision to implement therapeutic feeding programmes will be taken by UNHCR, based on the *WFP/UNHCR Guidelines for Selective Feeding: The Management of Malnutrition in Emergencies* (2009)

3.21 The decision to implement micronutrient interventions involving the provision of fortified blended foods, ready-to-use supplementary foods, lipid-based nutrient supplements and micronutrient powders will be taken jointly by UNHCR and WFP.

3.22 In refugee camp settings, UNHCR and its implementing/operational partners are responsible for assessing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating nutrition programmes and the status of beneficiaries, including any selective feeding programmes that are necessary. UNHCR will organize regular nutrition surveys and maintain an effective surveillance system for monitoring the nutrition status of beneficiaries. UNHCR will ensure the full involvement of WFP staff in planning and executing nutrition surveys, and in the analysis, interpretation and dissemination of their results. UNHCR will regularly inform WFP of the status of implementation of feeding programmes which WFP supports. WFP may recommend specific actions to UNHCR in the nutrition field based on its own technical assessments.

3.23 For refugees outside of camps, responsibility for assessing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating selective feeding programmes will be decided at the country level on a case-by-case basis. The responsible agency will regularly inform the other agency of the status of the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of these programmes.

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<sup>4</sup> Refers to supplementary and therapeutic feeding programmes to treat moderate and severe acute malnutrition, and targeted micronutrient interventions.

3.24 UNHCR will maintain its responsibility for overseeing and monitoring its implementing partners' distribution of food for supplementary and therapeutic feeding programmes.

3.25 UNHCR and WFP will adhere to UNHCR's Health Information System (HIS) as the standard reporting format for the monitoring of nutrition and related programmes in camp-based refugee operations.

3.26 Should the respective country offices not agree on a course of action in the area of nutrition, the issue will be referred to the respective regional bureaux/headquarters for resolution.

#### **HIV and AIDS**

3.27 As co-sponsors of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), WFP and UNHCR are committed to moving the AIDS response forward and scaling up towards universal access to HIV protection, prevention, treatment, care and support. UNHCR and WFP will advocate for the inclusion of refugees, IDPs and other PoCs in national AIDS strategic plans, policies, programmes and proposals, such as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

3.28 WFP will seek to provide food assistance to persons affected by HIV/AIDS, and their families, through complementary food rations or other modalities.

3.29 UNHCR will seek to ensure that persons affected by HIV/AIDS, and their families, are included in protection, prevention, care, support and treatment, including food security and livelihood initiatives.

#### **Gender, age and diversity**

3.30 UNHCR and WFP will collaborate in formulating and implementing joint policies and strategies to promote gender mainstreaming in all activities. The two agencies will endeavour to implement joint operations in full respect of their common commitment to enhance the status and role of women, as well as groups facing discrimination and marginalisation. Both agencies are responsible for identifying gender-, age- or diversity-specific challenges to their joint operations, including the protection of women and girls. Where appropriate and feasible, UNHCR and WFP will ensure the collection of sex- and age-disaggregated data.

3.31 UNHCR and WFP are responsible for designing long-term targeted actions to increase the participation of women and girls in decisions affecting their livelihood, and to ensure more equal access to food and non-food assistance programmes in activities covered by this MoU.

3.32 WFP and UNHCR will take measures to ensure that – to the extent possible and taking into account the demographic profile of the beneficiary population – at least 80 per cent of food assistance is managed directly by the woman/women in the household. They will also work together to involve the beneficiary community, particularly women, in establishing safety and violence-prevention measures for all aspects of managing food assistance. Women should be encouraged to participate fully in decision-making bodies, and should comprise at least 50 per cent of the members of PoC community management committees.

#### **Education**

3.33 WFP and UNHCR will jointly assess the need for school feeding programmes, identify target groups and appropriate modalities – on-site cooked meals, fortified snacks and/or take-home rations – for the specific context, and develop joint interventions as appropriate. Alternative school feeding programmes for secondary education should be considered when appropriate.

3.34 UNHCR is responsible for monitoring refugee school enrolment rates and attendance, and identifying obstacles to access to education, particularly for girls.

3.35 When the decision to implement school feeding has been agreed, households receiving general food rations should not be a disqualifying criterion to children receiving school meals.

3.36 WFP is responsible for providing food items. UNHCR is responsible for providing appropriate non-food items and infrastructure, including water and sanitation, and for mobilizing parent-teacher associations.

#### **Information management**

3.37 UNHCR and WFP will collaborate on defining standards and developing a mechanism for exchanging information on beneficiaries, including geographic information and associated technologies. All data exchange will be done in accordance with international and United Nations standards for data protection and privacy, in full recognition of the sensitive nature of beneficiary data. Information exchange will support the verification of beneficiary identities, the monitoring of concerned populations' well-being, and the integrity of assistance provision, particularly of food assistance.

### **4. JOINT WORK PLANNING**

4.1 At the country level, a Joint Plan of Action (JPA) based on JAM recommendations and referring to the global WFP-UNHCR Joint Workplan when appropriate will be developed at the outset of each joint operation and updated at least annually. The JPA will set out mutually agreed goals, objectives, responsibilities, indicators and implementation arrangements.

4.2 UNHCR and WFP country offices with JPAs will report at least annually to their respective regional bureaux and/or headquarters, highlighting the achievements and constraints faced by both agencies during implementation. Country offices are also responsible for informing their respective regional bureaux and/or headquarters of significant issues that may arise between reports. Significant issues and results emerging from joint activities will be reviewed at twice-yearly high-level meetings between the two agencies.

### **5. RESPONSIBILITIES FOR MOBILIZING FOOD ITEMS**

5.1 WFP is responsible for mobilizing cereals, edible oils and fats, pulses or other sources of protein salt, sugar, high-energy biscuits, and fortified blended foods for general, selective and school feeding programmes.

5.2 WFP will ensure the provision of improved fortified blended foods, such as corn-soya blend (CSB+ and CSB++), or other fortified food items (including ready-to-use supplementary foods, lipid-based nutrient supplements or micronutrient powders), for targeted and blanket supplementary feeding interventions that address moderate acute malnutrition, stunting and micronutrient deficiencies. When WFP is unable to provide these items, UNHCR, in consultation with WFP, will explore other possibilities for their provision until WFP is able to provide them.

5.3 UNHCR is responsible for providing therapeutic milk and ready-to-use therapeutic foods for the treatment of severe acute malnutrition in selective feeding programmes.

5.4 UNHCR is responsible for mobilizing complementary food items when recommended by JAMs or health/nutritional assessments, particularly when refugees have limited access to fresh food items. The complementary food items include dried or canned goods of animal or vegetable origin, local fresh foods, and spices and tea when recommended.

5.5 To limit any negative impacts on infant and young child feeding practices, the acceptation, sourcing and distribution of milk and milk-based products will be governed by the UNHCR Milk Policy, and the Operational Guidance on Infant and Young Child Feeding in Emergencies.



5.6 For its assistance activities, UNHCR is responsible for ensuring adequate supplies of non-food items and services, particularly those relevant to the safe and effective use of food items, such as cooking utensils, fuel, water and sanitation, medicines, soap, shelter, and appropriate health services. UNHCR and WFP should promote nutritionally and environmentally sound practices, and fuel-efficient cooking techniques and technologies.

5.7 UNHCR and WFP will also facilitate the mobilization of seeds, tools and fertilizers when land is available for cultivation and for small-scale gardening where land is scarce, in cooperation with relevant government bodies and competent United Nations and development cooperation agencies. See also articles 3.12 to 3.15 on self-reliance/durable solutions.

5.8 The JAM will determine the specific food items and quantities required for all components, including general food distribution, supplementary blanket/preventive feeding for the treatment of moderate and acute malnutrition, micronutrient-related activities, school feeding, and other food assistance programming. The JAM will also determine whether cereals are to be provided as whole grain or flour. For practical, nutritional and environmental reasons, it is preferable to provide flour in the early stages of an emergency, although this may be difficult to sustain in protracted operations. If whole grain is provided, milling must be available locally. The ration should include compensation for milling costs borne by beneficiaries. WFP is responsible for mobilizing the resources for milling, and where feasible will arrange access to milling facilities for beneficiaries. Women beneficiaries will be particularly encouraged to help manage milling, when appropriate.

5.9 WFP and UNHCR will monitor their supply pipelines and keep each other regularly informed of any significant developments at country, regional and headquarters levels as appropriate. UNHCR and WFP will consult each other immediately should either organization become unable to ensure the timely arrival (including the milling) of food and non-food items under its responsibility, because of unavailable resources, delayed deliveries, logistics problems or other constraints. Systems should be established to ensure that such information is available at least three months in advance. The information will be jointly communicated to beneficiaries, who should also be consulted on any changes to the food basket. Whenever the timely supply of the agreed food and related relief items and services to the jointly identified beneficiaries is delayed or disrupted, UNHCR and WFP will jointly investigate all possible remedial actions and the modalities for resourcing (such as temporary modifications to the food basket composition or the forms of assistance provided, to maintain agreed kcal levels and nutrition contents).

## **6. RESPONSIBILITIES FOR DELIVERY AND DISTRIBUTION OF FOOD ASSISTANCE**

6.1 WFP is responsible for the timely transport to agreed extended delivery points (EDPs) of sufficient quantities of the food items under its responsibility (specified in articles 5.1 and 5.2). WFP is also responsible for storage at and management of the EDPs. WFP will keep UNHCR informed of in-country logistics arrangements for implementing the agreed programme.

6.2 UNHCR is responsible for the timely transport and the storage of sufficient quantities of the food and non-food items under its responsibility (specified in article 5.3 and 5.4). Unless otherwise agreed, UNHCR is also responsible for the transportation of WFP food items from the EDPs to the final delivery points (FDPs), for their final distribution to beneficiaries, and for reporting food diversions, misuse and losses. Responsibility is assumed from the EDP or free-on-truck/free-on-rail, depending on practice in the country. UNHCR will keep WFP informed of the logistics arrangements for implementing the agreed programme.

6.3 The location of an EDP is proposed by UNHCR and WFP country offices in accordance with agreed guidelines for locating EDPs and operating EDP storage facilities, and confirmed by the respective regional bureaux. The location should be selected to minimize the cost and maximize the management efficiency of the overall operation. EDPs should be located where sufficient warehousing space can be made available to ensure regular final distribution and the most efficient possible onward transportation, thus avoiding the need for further intermediate storage or trans-shipment between the

EDP and the distribution locations. Management and security considerations are particularly important. EDPs should be as close as possible to households, to minimize the burdens and risks, especially to women and girls, of managing food distribution and/or collecting the food.

6.4 Arrangements for the final distribution of food assistance to beneficiaries are agreed jointly by the Government, UNHCR and WFP, in consultation with beneficiaries, particularly food committees. These arrangements should be in conformity with the established distribution guidelines<sup>5</sup> and should consider the protection concerns of the affected population. The arrangements will respect the UNHCR and WFP policy of ensuring the maximum possible involvement of the beneficiary community, particularly women, in all aspects of distribution. The final distribution of food assistance in refugee camps will normally be the responsibility of a UNHCR implementing partner, whose designation will be jointly agreed by UNHCR and WFP.

6.5 The decision to provide food assistance in the form of cash or vouchers will be based on JAMs or other expert recommendations. Such decisions will be taken jointly at the country-level, and in consultation with the respective regional and/or headquarter levels. When cash or vouchers are deemed to be the appropriate modality for providing food assistance, responsibility for implementation will be decided on a case-by-case basis, subject to further formal agreements between the two agencies. These decisions will be informed by country-level capacity and experience with the recommended modalities, and with due consideration to ensuring streamlined and cost-effective assistance that does not compromise PoC protection and security.

6.6 Distribution modalities and the implementing partner's responsibilities for reporting on the distribution and use of food are laid down in a tripartite agreement among UNHCR, WFP and the implementing partner. A tripartite agreement will be signed for every joint operation. The agreement will require the partner entrusted with distribution to report directly to both WFP and UNHCR on the distribution of WFP food. In collaboration with WFP, UNHCR is responsible for ensuring that implementation arrangements also provide beneficiaries with appropriate guidance on their entitlements, distribution schedules and how to prepare food in ways that minimize cooking time and safeguard nutritional content.

6.7 Bearing in mind the broader context in which the food assistance is provided, and its impact – particularly on the protection and security of the beneficiaries – the UNHCR or WFP country office may request modifications to the pattern of distribution, or stop distribution altogether, after appropriate consultation and exchange of documentation has occurred. Should the country office of the other agency disagree with such a request, the matter will be submitted to the corresponding regional bureaux or headquarters of both agencies for a final joint decision. Pending this final resolution, the provision of food assistance will proceed as previously agreed.

6.8 There is no automatic retroactive entitlement when full distribution of the agreed ration has not been possible. The decision to make an exceptional retroactive distribution will be made jointly by UNHCR and WFP, based on substantive evidence of any negative effects of the reduced ration on beneficiaries' well-being.

## **7. RESPONSIBILITIES FOR FUNDING AND RELATIONS WITH DONORS**

7.1 UNHCR and WFP will each mobilize the funds and other resources necessary for the discharge of their respective responsibilities.

7.2 UNHCR and WFP will ensure that the resource implications for each agency are set out in all approaches to donors and related documentation in a manner that makes clear these responsibilities and their complementarity. Details on country-specific landside transport, storage and handling (LTSH) and distribution costs will be provided. Approaches to donors will be coordinated, and UNHCR will share with

<sup>5</sup> UNHCR, 1997. *Commodity Distribution, A Practical Guide for Field Staff*. Geneva.

WFP, in advance, the text covering food needs in any appeal to donors. Joint approaches will be made whenever appropriate, at the start of a new operation and whenever it appears that donors' response will not ensure the timely delivery of the necessary relief items.

7.3 WFP will seek to ensure that bilateral food resources for the PoCs falling under this MoU are accompanied by the full cash resources needed to cover LTSH and other related support costs, regardless of whether the food resources are channelled through WFP.

7.4 UNHCR will support WFP's advocacy efforts with donors that specifically seek the provision of cash for local, regional or international purchase of food to ensure that beneficiaries' needs are met in the most timely and cost-effective manner possible. UNHCR will also support WFP's general approaches to donors for cash contributions to maintain the Immediate Response Account (IRA) at the approved level, and for contributions to any similar fund allowing WFP to respond swiftly to new emergency food needs.

7.5 WFP and UNHCR will collaborate on public information activities to promote awareness of the food security and related non-food needs of beneficiaries, understanding of each agency's role, and support for each agency's work to address these needs. When communicating with the media and the general public, each agency will regularly acknowledge the other's role in joint operations, to ensure the common goal of donor and host Government support.

## **8 MONITORING, REPORTING AND EVALUATION<sup>6</sup>**

8.1 UNHCR and WFP are each responsible for monitoring and reporting on joint operations in relation to their respective work plans. Where appropriate, monitoring and reporting responsibilities for joint activities will be determined by the JAM and specified in the country-level JPA (articles 3.9 and 4.2).

8.2 The responsibilities of the Government or any other implementing partner entrusted with the distribution of WFP food will be set out in the tripartite agreement (referred to in article 6.6) in a manner that allows effective programme management and meets the responsibilities of WFP and UNHCR in reporting to donors.

8.3 UNHCR and WFP field staff will undertake periodic joint monitoring activities at distribution sites – which will include food basket monitoring – and at the household level, which will include post-distribution monitoring of the end-use of distributed items. The capacity of PoCs and local communities to contribute to project monitoring and evaluation should be taken into account.

8.4 UNHCR and WFP will seek to have multilateral donors accept the standard reports and documentation provided to their Executive Committee and Executive Board, respectively, as fulfilment of reporting requirements, instead of donor-specific reporting.

8.5 The UNHCR and WFP evaluation services will organize joint evaluations as appropriate, taking into account the scale and complexity of operations covered by the MoU. When one agency organizes an evaluation of a joint operation, the other will be informed and invited to participate.

## **9. COORDINATION**

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<sup>6</sup> In this section, monitoring, reporting and evaluation are considered in the context of results-based management, with the broad aim of informing management and other main stakeholders of the progress made and results achieved from the use of allocated resources. For the sake of clarity, responsibilities in technical areas such as nutrition, needs assessment and registration are specified in the relevant sections of this MoU.

9.1 Close cooperation and regular exchange of information between UNHCR and WFP at the field level are essential. Focal points or liaison officers will be appointed at both UNHCR and WFP field offices to deal with operational matters covered by the MoU. WFP and UNHCR will share with each other the project documents for assistance under the MoU prior to being finalized.

9.2 The UNHCR and WFP country offices, in liaison with the relevant government authorities, will establish and maintain food assistance coordinating mechanisms that allow regular consultation and information exchange with donors, the diplomatic community, other relevant United Nations agencies and non-governmental organization (NGO) partners.

9.3 Letters of Understanding (LOUs) between WFP and the host government will expressly provide for full access to and monitoring by both organizations on all aspects of the joint operation covered by the LOU. WFP will request UNHCR's participation, as an observer or as otherwise agreed, in discussions pertinent to the LOU when related to persons of concern to UNHCR.

9.4 When either UNHCR or WFP is developing emergency response capacities, systems and guidelines, or taking any other action that could benefit – or duplicate – the work of the other, the responsible unit in the other agency is to be informed. Every effort should be made to maximize the benefits to both agencies.

9.5 As appropriate, UNHCR and WFP will collaborate on transport and logistics issues at both the field and headquarters levels, to ensure coordination and best use of assets and resources. Where possible, this will include regular information exchange, joint logistics planning, and the use of common services and tools.

9.6 UNHCR and WFP will exchange information, collaborate, and coordinate activities regarding the safety and security of staff and beneficiaries. The agencies will work together to enhance the United Nations Security Management System, while promoting an integrated approach to staff safety and security for the United Nations and NGO implementing partners.

9.7 As appropriate, UNHCR and WFP will collaborate on telecommunications and information technology issues at both field and headquarters levels, to ensure coordination and the best use of assets and resources.

9.8 Each agency will develop and maintain its own training materials. Joint workshops will focus on enhancing the skills and knowledge required for joint support to operations. Each agency will invite the other to participate in courses of a more general nature and when new developments require additional skills.

9.9 Joint headquarters-level meetings with Governments and other parties concerned in specific country or regional operations will be held as required. If either UNHCR or WFP organizes a meeting with external bodies on operations covered by the MoU, the other agency will be invited.

9.10 Responsibility for ensuring the practical implementation of this MoU resides with the country representatives of each agency.

9.11 Regular contact and joint strategic planning between the regional/bureaux directors is encouraged. Regional/bureau directors will play a proactive role in guiding the joint implementation of new modalities and strategies at the country level.

9.12 Responsibility for coordinating overall policies and functional issues of this MoU lies primarily with the directors of UNHCR's Division of Programme Support and Management and WFP's Operations Department. The directors will encourage direct contact among the technical, logistics and programme staff concerned.

9.13 High-level meetings, co-chaired by the Assistant High Commissioner for Operations at UNHCR and by the Deputy Executive Director/Chief Operating Officer at WFP, will be organized twice a year – alternating between UNHCR and WFP headquarters – to review overall implementation of joint activities and any major strategic operational or policy issues of interest and concern.

9.14 Both agencies are committed to ensuring that their staff and the staff of partner organizations adhere to their respective codes of conduct and/or other internationally agreed principles of accountability pertinent to humanitarian workers, including the Sphere guidelines.

## 10. GENERAL PROVISIONS

10.1 This MoU will come into effect on the date of its signing and supersedes the revised MoU of July 2002.

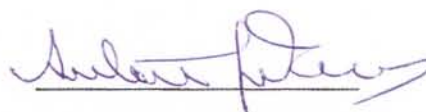
10.2 It governs cooperation in all operations covered by its terms, except those operations, or parts thereof, that may be specifically excluded by mutual agreement.

10.3 Should there be disagreement between the respective country offices on a course of action, the matter will be submitted to the corresponding regional bureaux and/or headquarters of both agencies for resolution. If it is not possible to reach an agreement at the regional and/or headquarters level, the matter will be referred for final resolution to the Deputy Executive Director/Chief Operating Officer of WFP and the Assistant High Commissioner for Operations of UNHCR.

10.4 The MoU may be modified at any time by mutual written agreement.



Josette Sheeran  
Executive Director  
World Food Programme



António Guterres  
United Nations High Commissioner  
for Refugees

Acronyms:

CSB	Corn-Soya Blend
EDP	Extended Delivery Point
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FDP	Final Delivery Point
HIS	Health Information System
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IRA	Immediate Response Account
JAM	Joint Assessment Missions
JPA	Joint Plan of Action
LoU	Letter of Understanding
LTSH	Landside Transport, Storage and Handling
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD/DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee
PoC	Person of Concern
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization