



World Food Programme
Statement at the 71th session of the Executive Committee
Delivered by Ms. Annalisa Conte, Director, WFP Geneva Global Office

Chairperson, High Commissioner, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

[Introduction]

It is a pleasure to address the 71st meeting of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' (UNHCR) Executive Committee. The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) attaches great importance to its partnership with UNHCR. Over the last year, renewed efforts were made to further strengthen the existing collaboration and synergies to enhance the food and nutrition security of people in need.

[Food Security Situation and COVID 19]

Conflicts, displacement, economic shocks, extreme weather events resulting from climate change were the underlying causes of acute food insecurity affecting over 135 million people in 2019¹. In 2020, the COVID-19 global pandemic has further exacerbated the fragile food security situation. WFP estimates that the number of people facing acute food insecurity can reach up to 270 million by the end of the year. Refugees are not spared. Measures to contain the spread of COVID-19 have obliterated job opportunities and, as you know, most refugees are not covered by social protection schemes, leaving many families solely dependent on humanitarian assistance.

[Advocacy efforts]

Last July, WFP and UNHCR warned the international community that severe underfunding, conflict and disasters threatened to leave millions of refugees across Africa without food. For example, WFP has been compelled to reduce refugees' food assistance by 30 percent in Uganda and by 50 percent in Cameroon. Unfortunately, many refugee food assistance operations, in particular in protracted situations, are *chronically* underfunded. Both organizations acknowledge the need to work together and increase investments on longer-term solutions for refugees, such as economic integration and self-reliance.

[Cash]

The use of cash transfers as assistance modality continues to expand in refugee operations. The United Nations Common Cash Statement, issued in December 2018 by WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF and OCHA to enhance collaboration, using common cash systems continues to make progress through improved complementarities, synergies and accountabilities in seven focus countries². While COVID-19 has brought some complexities, the strength of collaboration for accelerating responses has been evident. Some of the achievements include the common cash transfer mechanisms in more than 25 countries; the Joint Guidance on Collaborative Procurement of Financial Services; the agreed Minimum Core Data Set for Assistance of Vulnerable Populations among the wider

1 Global Report on Food Crisis 2020

2 The seven UNCCS focus countries are Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ecuador, Niger and Yemen.



humanitarian community. Lastly, UNICEF, UNHCR and WFP are to sign the Data Sharing Agreement Commitment in the coming weeks.

[The Hub]

In the spirit of strengthened cooperation for high quality and results, and thanks to the generous funding from the United States of America, UNHCR and WFP launched the Joint Programme of Excellence and its Targeting Hub in 2019. A group of 11 experts and two country coordinators are currently helping to design and implement programmes in eight countries³ aiming to achieve an integrated humanitarian, development and peace response. To date, the Hub has started providing technical support to a number of upcoming joint assessments in Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mozambique, Rwanda and Zambia.

High Commissioner,

[Conclusion]

These are all examples which clearly depict the relevance and importance of the longstanding partnership between UNHCR and WFP. In closing, I would like to reiterate WFP's commitment to work and support UNHCR as we jointly find new ways to deliver durable solutions for the food and nutrition security for those in need.

Thank you.

³Algeria, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Jordan, Mauritania, Mozambique, Rwanda and Zambia.