



WFP Statement to the 152nd Session of the WHO Executive Board January 2023

President, Honourable Delegates, Director-General,

The World Food Programme (WFP) would like to commend the World Health Organization (WHO) for tirelessly working to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and humanitarian calamities across the globe.

Today the world faces an unprecedented humanitarian caseload. Conflict has brought misery to millions of people. The war in Ukraine is accelerating the global food and energy crises. Diseases from cholera to COVID-19 to Ebola continue to claim lives and disrupt economies. And the climate crisis is causing deadly droughts and unprecedented floods.

New estimates from the 79 countries where WFP has an operational presence and where data is available show the number of acutely food insecure people hit a record high of 349 million in 2022. This is an increase of 200 million people compared to pre-pandemic levels. Some 49 million people across 49 countries were recorded to be in Emergency or worse levels of acute food insecurity in 2022 and for the first time since the existence of the Integrated Phase Classification system, almost 1 million people are in, or projected to face, Catastrophic famine-like conditions (IPC Phase 5).

In addition, currently, more than 30 million children in the 15 worst-affected countries suffer from wasting – or acute malnutrition – and 8 million of these children are severely wasted, the deadliest form of undernutrition. This is a major threat to children's lives and to their long-term health and development, the impacts of which are felt by individuals, their communities and their countries. In response, WFP and WHO joined hands with the Food and Agriculture Organization, the UN Refugee Agency, and the United Nations Children's Fund, to scale up joint responses and call for action to prevent a malnutrition catastrophe in 2023.

The gravity and scale of the current situation requires us to work better together and align responses to save lives and find new ways to deliver collective outcomes across food security, nutrition and health sectors. Now more than ever it is time to invest in multilateralism and cooperation. COVID-



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19 has exposed the fragility in our global systems and demonstrated the need for collective action to address global threats that transcend borders. Such action must put communities and affected people at the centre and prioritize the needs of the most vulnerable.

WFP has a long history of working with WHO to respond to the needs of the furthest behind and remains steadfast in our commitment to supporting partners and governments respond to emergencies and drive progress towards the SDGs. For this reason, WFP will continue to further augment cooperation with WHO via our bilateral corporate Memorandum of Understanding, through our commitment to The Global Action Plan for Healthy Lives and Well-being for All and the UN Global Action Plan on Child Wasting and via mechanisms such as the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and the UN Crisis Management Team.

Thank you.