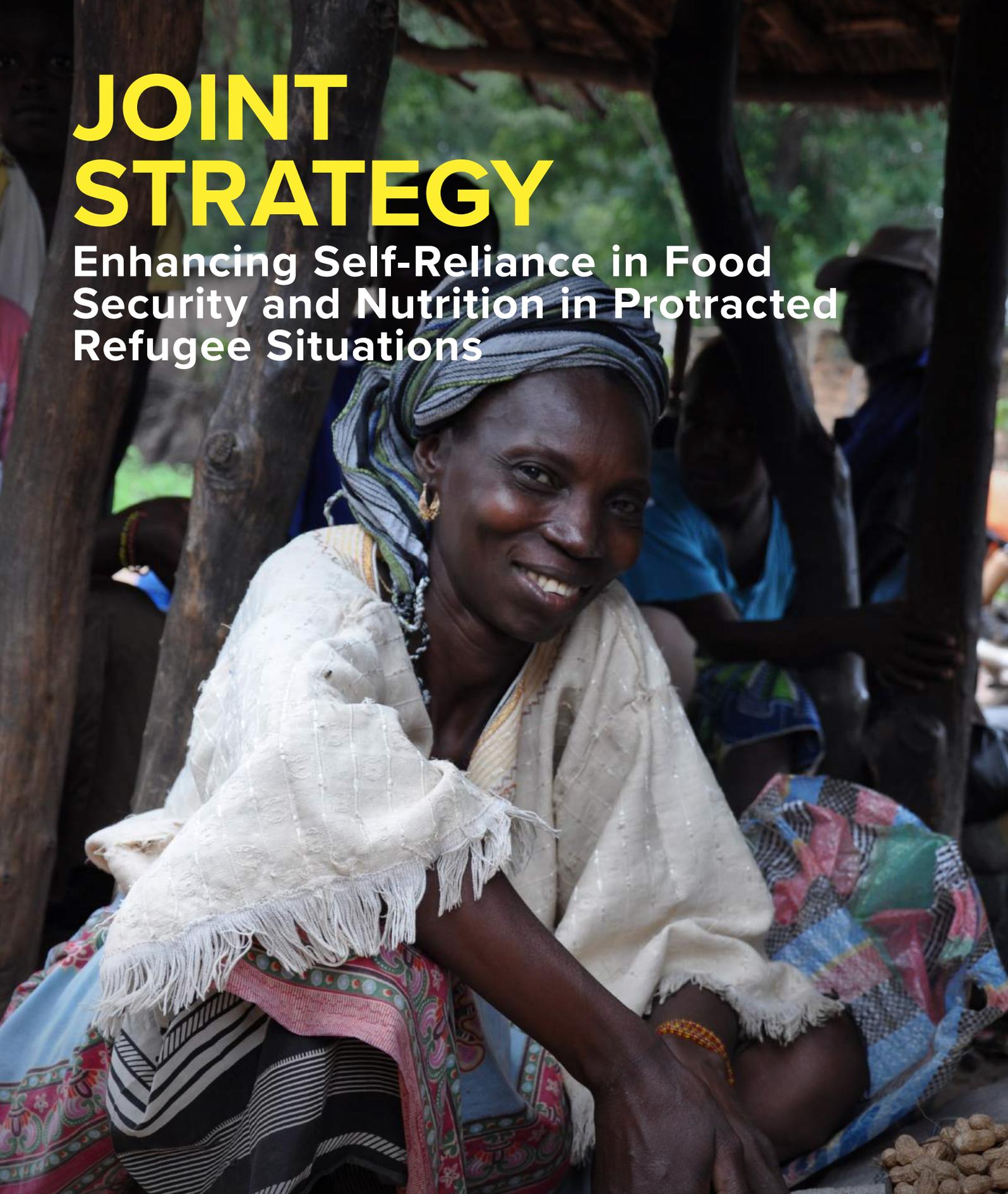


JOINT STRATEGY

Enhancing Self-Reliance in Food
Security and Nutrition in Protracted
Refugee Situations



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency



**World Food
Programme**

wfp.org



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Almost half of all refugees in the world today are caught in protracted situations. In many cases, there are limited prospects for durable solutions, and refugees remain dependent on ongoing international humanitarian assistance. Given the trends in conflict, it is likely that increasing numbers of refugees will face similar circumstances in the future. Yet a traditional humanitarian assistance approach undermines their dignity and may not be financially sustainable in the long term.

In this context, jointly commissioned UNHCR/WFP Impact Evaluations examined the agencies' efforts to support refugees' self-reliance in food security and nutrition and found that there were opportunities to take a more concerted and strategic approach. In response, UNHCR and WFP are launching this 'Joint Strategy for Enhancing Self-Reliance in Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Refugee Situations.' The strategy is applicable to all situations in which UNHCR and WFP are jointly assisting refugees in protracted situations and focuses on self-reliance in terms of food security and nutrition.

Guided by a vision of refugees in protracted situations living in dignity and gaining progressively greater self-reliance, the strategy has two complementary components. First, UNHCR and WFP will focus on strengthening the livelihoods of refugees, while ensuring that basic food and nutrition needs are met. Second, UNHCR and WFP will work with governments, host communities, and humanitarian and development partners to create an enabling

environment that will allow refugees to use their livelihood assets to contribute to greater self-reliance.

To implement this new strategy, UNHCR and WFP will focus on three main steps. In each refugee situation, they will jointly assess the self-reliance context, examining vulnerabilities and capacities and analyzing opportunities and constraints. On the basis of these assessments, they will develop joint self-reliance strategies that provide realistic goals and context-specific pathways for improved livelihoods that contribute to achieving greater self-reliance. The agencies will then closely monitor and evaluate progress made on self-reliance in food security and nutrition to ensure that any necessary corrections in the approach are implemented in a timely and effective manner.

By adopting this forward-looking strategy, UNHCR and WFP will contribute to wider efforts to address the challenges of protracted displacement. The agencies will continue to work in close partnership with a range of other stakeholders including: refugees; host communities; governments; donors; wider UN Country Teams; academia; civil society; the private sector; and international consortia such as the Solutions Alliance. In doing so, the agencies hope to provide a positive example of how to strengthen the humanitarian-development nexus and better support millions of refugees worldwide.

CONTEXT

Nearly half of all refugees in the world today are caught in protracted situations. UNHCR reported that, by the end of 2014, 6.4 million refugees, amounting to 45 percent of refugees under its mandate, were in situations of protracted displacement.¹ Given the current trends in conflict, protracted displacement will likely increase in the coming years. The proliferation and fragmentation of conflicts, particularly in the Middle East and the Sahel region of Africa, have caused wide-scale displacement and will likely continue to force people to seek asylum across borders. In many of these protracted situations, the prospects for durable solutions² remain limited, and refugees are reliant on international humanitarian assistance to meet their food and nutrition needs.

Despite these trends, a ‘humanitarian assistance’ approach still predominates in many protracted situations. This traditional approach presents two principal challenges. First, it undermines the dignity of refugees by not allowing them to utilize their full potential. Many refugees have considerable capacities and skills that would permit them to become more economically self-reliant and benefit countries of asylum, but are unable to make these contributions under a traditional approach. Second, the cost of ongoing assistance may be financially unsustainable. Not only have the number of refugees increased, but total humanitarian needs have risen dramatically, making it difficult for donor countries to provide adequate levels of assistance.

As a result, policy-makers and practitioners have a renewed impetus to support self-reliance in protracted refugee situations by strengthening the humanitarian-development nexus. Recognising the key leadership role of States and national civil society, the Solutions Alliance³ has provided a forum for governments, donors, academics, the United Nations, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to discuss the latest thinking and approaches. Universities in both developing and developed countries have been engaged in research on the challenges and opportunities for self-reliance. Development actors, including the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), are exploring how they might be able to contribute to these efforts.

Within this evolving context, UNHCR and WFP commissioned a series of independent impact evaluations (the Evaluations) and a synthesis report (the Synthesis Report) in 2011 to determine the contribution of food assistance to durable solutions in protracted refugee situations. Using a mixed-method approach, the Evaluations looked at four specific protracted contexts in which UNHCR and WFP were jointly operating: Bangladesh, Chad, Ethiopia and Rwanda. While recognizing the positive effects of humanitarian food assistance in addressing the immediate food security and nutrition needs of refugees, the Evaluations found little evidence of a transition towards increased self-reliance as an important step towards the achievement of solutions in the case study countries and argued that the international community’s response was failing to deliver on agreed intentions to promote self-reliance.

Recognizing that no single actor alone can resolve the complex challenges that exist in relation to protracted refugee situations, the Synthesis Report directed its recommendations to a number of different stakeholders, including donor countries, the United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs), and UNHCR and WFP. It recommended that donors need to find new ways to finance self-reliance, while UNCTs should provide mechanisms for addressing refugee issues more systematically. For UNHCR and WFP, it recommended that the agencies jointly develop a new approach to assistance in protracted contexts to increase refugee self-reliance in food security and nutrition. This Joint Strategy represents the fulfilment of this recommendation. ■

1. UNHCR 2015, UNHCR Global Trends 2014.
2. ‘Durable solutions’ refer to the point when refugees no longer need international protection, generally after voluntary repatriation, local integration, or resettlement to a third country. Complementary pathways to protection and solutions are being expanded, always with consideration given to durability.
3. The Solutions Alliance aims to improve the lives of displaced persons and the communities that host them by responding more collaboratively to displacement and contributing to durable solutions. More information is available at www.solutionsalliance.org

AGENCY ROLES AND COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGES

UNHCR and WFP have, for many years, been at the forefront of the international humanitarian system's work in protracted refugee situations.

UNHCR

Within the United Nations system, UNHCR holds the mandate for refugees and is the lead agency with respect to normative policy, legal issues and operational matters related to refugees. UNHCR is working using multi-sectoral approaches and addressing the interests and requirements of host states and host communities, and the sharing of responsibilities between states, UNHCR and the broader UN system. Additionally, since the adoption of Executive Committee Conclusion on protracted refugee situations in 2009, UNHCR has corporately shifted from a traditional humanitarian assistance approach to one that supports the building of self-reliance among refugees. UNHCR also adopted an Alternatives to Camps policy (2014) which calls for UNHCR to avoid the establishment of camps where possible and work decisively towards the removal of obstacles to achieving

self-reliance. To support the implementation of this and other related policies⁴ and guide its work on livelihoods as an important way to increase self-reliance, UNHCR has developed a market-oriented, data-driven Global Livelihood Strategy (2014-2018)⁵ and, Minimum Criteria for Livelihoods Programming.⁶ Among other livelihood interventions, UNHCR promotes the Graduation Approach, intended to help the poorest of the poor, is a targeted, sequenced and time bound approach to livelihoods support including assessment, training, support for wage and self-employment, access to finance, and mentoring.

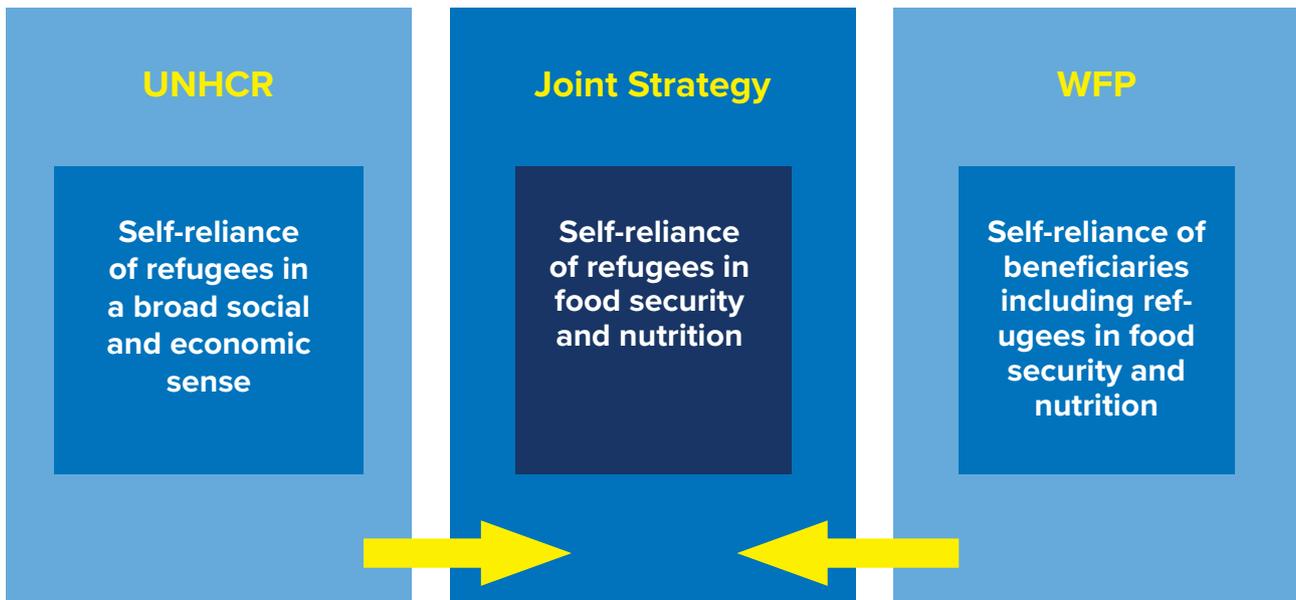
WFP

Within the UN system, WFP is the lead food assistance agency, covering both refugee- and non-refugee settings.⁷ As set out in its Mission Statement and its Strategic Plan, WFP uses food assistance to serve both relief and development purposes and to contribute to the achievement of Zero Hunger. Given its strong experience in emergency response and its innovative approaches to development work, it is particularly well-placed to help bridge the humanitarian and development divide in addressing the food and nutrition needs of refugees. It has corporate expertise in Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (VAM) in both contexts and can draw upon a range of humanitarian and development tools, including general distributions, nutrition assistance, livelihood asset-creation, risk insurance, and supply chain interventions that link small-scale producers to markets. WFP can also draw upon its significant experience in facilitating south-south and triangular cooperation as well as on issues of social protection and national safety nets. In addition, WFP also has different transfer modalities at its disposal, such as food and cash-based transfers, which can be selected based on the context.



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4. UNHCR 2005 Handbook for Self-reliance; UNHCR 2009 Policy on Refugee Protection and Solutions in Urban Areas; UNHCR 2011 Promoting Livelihoods and Self-reliance: Operational Guidance on Refugee Protection and Solutions in Urban Areas; Investing in Solutions: A Practical Guide for the Use of Microfinance in UNHCR Operations.
5. UNHCR 2014, Global Strategy for Livelihoods 2014-2015
6. <http://www.unhcr.org/54fd6cbe9.html>
7. WFP's obligation to provide assistance to refugees is set out in Article II.2.(C) of the WFP General Regulations http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/newsroom/wfp261672.pdf?_ga=1.176663847.380862258.1428389656



The partnership

Both agencies are working towards self-reliance objectives independently of this Joint Strategy: UNHCR is committed to enhancing the self-reliance of refugees in a broad socio-economic sense; and WFP is focused on enhancing the self-reliance of all its beneficiaries, including refugees, in food security and nutrition. Working together, therefore, the agencies are committed to promoting the self-reliance of refugees in food security and nutrition.

This Joint Strategy is aligned with the existing agency commitments of UNHCR and WFP, which are formalized through a global Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).⁸ The MOU articulates the agencies' commitments to restore nutritional status through provision of appropriate food assistance and promotion of self-reliance through development activities to create suitable conditions for durable solutions. It indicates

that UNHCR and WFP will conduct joint needs assessments to identify food and non-food needs as well as assess socio-economic capacity of different population groups to inform targeting and guide the development of self-reliance activities. In addition, UNHCR and WFP will collaborate to define and implement comprehensive livelihood support programmes to encourage and build the self-reliance of both populations of concern and host communities. As self-reliance increases, UNHCR and WFP will plan the gradual phasing out of assistance in consultation with the Government, implementing partners and beneficiaries.

The Joint Strategy is also aligned with the 2030 Agenda, with particular focus on Sustainable Development Goal 2 related to Zero Hunger and Sustainable Development Goal 17 concerning partnerships. ■

⁸ Memorandum of Understanding between the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the World Food Programme, January 2011.

VISION

UNHCR and WFP have a shared vision, in which refugees in protracted situations live in dignity and progressively attain greater self-reliance in food security

and nutrition, while working to achieve the ultimate goal of durable solutions. ■

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Joint Strategy is to set the parameters for inter-agency collaboration between UNHCR

and WFP on self-reliance in food security and nutrition in protracted refugee situations. ■



SCOPE

This Joint Strategy focuses on:

- **Refugees:** Although many of the issues discussed in this Joint Strategy apply to internally displaced persons, the approach has been tailored to the specific considerations of working with refugees, including their unique legal status.
- **Host communities:** The Joint Strategy acknowledges that efforts to promote self-reliance in refugee populations need to consider both the food security and nutrition status of host populations as well as the socio-economic dynamics that exist with host communities and be sensitive to any tensions that might be present in the local context.
- **Protracted refugee situations:** While self-reliance efforts should begin during the initial phase of displacement, currently the most significant challenge is identifying ways to support refugees in protracted refugee situations to meet more of their food and nutrition needs.
- **All environments in which refugees are residing:** The Joint Strategy applies to refugee camps and settlements as well as to out-of-camp situations in both rural and urban contexts, recognizing that the opportunities and challenges vary widely depending on the situation.

- **Self-reliance in food security and nutrition:** The focus of the Joint Strategy is on the ability of refugees to increasingly meet their food and nutrition needs, which is where the work of UNHCR and WFP overlap.⁹ ■

⁹ However, it is important to recognize that these efforts can make a contribution to wider self-reliance in three ways: 1) food security and nutrition is one of the essential needs that refugees must meet to be self-reliant in the broader sense; 2) good food security and nutrition can provide a foundation for refugees to make progress in other areas of self-reliance; and 3) the modalities and platforms used to support food security and nutrition, such as 'multi-purpose' cash, can also provide refugees with assistance on other essential needs and contribute to their ability to become more broadly self-reliant.

Definition of 'Self-Reliance'

Self-reliance is the ability of an individual, household or community to meet essential needs and to enjoy social and economic rights in a sustainable manner and with dignity.

Source: <http://www.unhcr.org/530f107b6.pdf>

Definition of 'Self-Reliance in Food Security and Nutrition'

Self-reliance in food security and nutrition is the ability of refugees to meet their food security and nutrition needs – in part or in whole – on their own in a sustainable manner and with dignity.



OBJECTIVES

This Joint Strategy sets out two objectives that will be pursued concurrently by UNHCR and WFP in order to promote the self-reliance of refugees in protracted situations:

- Strengthen livelihoods while ensuring basic food and nutrition needs are met
- Encourage an enabling environment for increased self-reliance

These objectives are complementary: refugees require both strengthened livelihood assets and the opportunities to utilize those assets in an enabling environment, in order to achieve greater self-reliance in food security and nutrition. UNHCR and WFP will work on both objectives in concert in order to achieve the overall vision.

OBJECTIVE 1

Strengthen livelihoods while ensuring basic food and nutrition needs are met

In order to become self-reliant in food security and nutrition, refugees require strengthened livelihoods that enable them to meet more of their food and nutrition needs on their own in their particular context. It is recognized that increasing self-reliance takes time and that continued humanitarian assistance will provide a critical foundation for these efforts.

Strengthen livelihoods

Refugees are situated in a variety of environments. They are sometimes concentrated in rural camps and other times dispersed in urban settings. In some cases refugees are given the right to work; in others, they are denied the right to formally enter the labour market; and in still others, there is openness to refugees working but a need to build the local economic environment to absorb additional labour to ensure employment for both them and their hosts. Recognizing the constraints and opportunities of different environments, UNHCR and WFP will work in close collaboration with host governments and communities, refugees and international development actors to identify the most viable approaches for transitioning towards greater self-reliance in food security and nutrition.

The approach will look at livelihoods in a holistic manner and explore different possibilities for increasing human, natural, physical, economic, and social capital that are appropriate and feasible in a given context. In situations with a strong enabling environment, the emphasis may be on financial and human capital, supporting income-generating activities, offering mobile banking and micro-finance, and helping refugees participate more actively in the labor market. In other environments, the approach might be to focus on the development of physical capital such as roads linking

refugees and host communities to markets. Even in seemingly constrained environments, approaches might work towards longer-term self-reliance by supporting human capital through good nutrition and educational opportunities.

Provide humanitarian assistance

The continued provision of adequate humanitarian food security and nutrition support is a critical foundation for efforts to enhance self-reliance for several reasons. First, self-reliance in food security and nutrition is a longer-term, incremental process. Humanitarian assistance will be critical to ensuring that refugees, especially the most vulnerable, are able to meet their food and nutrition needs. Second, humanitarian assistance in the form of food or cash-based transfers can provide a safety net that permits refugees to take prudent risks to improve their livelihoods. Finally, if focused on good nutrition, food assistance can help to build human capital through greater physical and mental capacity and contribute to longer-term self-reliance.

Recognizing that socio-economic links with the host community are fundamental for building self-reliance and supporting integration of refugee populations, UNHCR and WFP will, as part of this strategy, consider the humanitarian needs of surrounding host communities who may be experiencing comparable levels of food insecurity and malnutrition.

OBJECTIVE 2

Encourage an enabling environment for increased self-reliance

While it is important to strengthen livelihood assets, refugees must be able to utilize these assets in an enabling environment if they are to become self-reliant in food security and nutrition. UNHCR and WFP will engage with governments, host communities, and humanitarian and development partners to expand the opportunities and reduce the constraints for refugees.

Engage with governments

The potential of UNHCR and WFP to promote refugee self-reliance depends on collaboration with governments. A supportive legal and policy framework is essential to the creation of an environment conducive to refugee self-reliance for food security and nutrition. Key provisions that contribute to promoting self-reliance include allowing employment in formal and informal sectors, freedom of movement, access to resources such as land, financial inclusion and integration into national safety nets and national development plans. Yet governments may face challenging dilemmas, including high unemployment among nationals; competition for arable land; weak land title management systems, and security-related concerns, which make them hesitant to change the



existing frameworks. UNHCR and WFP have a role to play in creating a space for an informed discussion on these issues and helping governments, in a constructive manner, to think through policy options and the international cooperation needed to support their choices.

Engage with host communities

To support self-reliance in food security and nutrition, UNHCR and WFP will work to build positive relations between host communities and refugees to mitigating tensions and where possible creating ‘win-win’ situations (see Example 1). It may be possible to mitigate tensions in camp situations, for example, by finding sustainable solutions to refugees’ energy needs so that they no longer cut down trees in the surrounding area, or to compensate local communities by planting more trees. Creating ‘win-win’ situations for refugee and host communities could involve: encouraging commerce between host communities and any concentrations of refugees; using market integrated approaches for delivering assistance to refugees – such as cash-based transfers – that could bring economic benefits to both communities; or providing livelihood programmes that involve members from both communities. These efforts will contribute to wider efforts to build greater cohesion between refugees and their hosts.

Engage with humanitarian and development partners

UNHCR and WFP will also work in partnership with other humanitarian and development actors to expand opportunities for refugee self-reliance in food security and nutrition. A wider partnership will be more effective in advocating for appropriate changes in the legal and policy frameworks of countries of asylum and for the inclusion of refugees and the regions that host them among the priorities in national development plans and other State and civil society planning mechanisms. Working through the UNCT, UNHCR and WFP will also jointly advocate, where appropriate, for space to be created within future United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) for refugee self-reliance to be addressed in a system-wide manner, including through greater and more predictable international cooperation and investment in market and job growth in areas that host refugees. As part of these discussions, other UN agencies with complementary mandates and expertise will be encouraged to align their efforts with the self-reliance approach. In addition, UNHCR and WFP will engage the International Labour Organization (ILO), multilateral financial institutions such as the World Bank, and other partners to better incorporate refugee issues into the design of large-scale development initiatives. ■

Example 1: Working with Both Refugee and Host Communities in Uganda

For over five decades, Uganda has been generously hosting refugees and asylum seekers. Refugees in Uganda have some of the best prospects for self-reliance. The challenge, however, is to convert this potential into reality. UNHCR, WFP and partners have been working together to help refugees take advantage of these opportunities and ensure that host communities benefit too.

In 2014, UNHCR and WFP jointly launched a new programme to enable refugee farmers to engage more actively and profitably in the thriving agricultural economy found outside the refugee settlements. Having received land for cultivation by the host government, refugees are now being given training in post-harvest handling and storage equipment. Farmers from the host community are also being provided with the same assistance. Through this more inclusive approach, UNHCR and WFP are reducing tension between the two communities and ensuring that the benefits are shared equally.

At the same time, UNHCR is working with the Government of Uganda, the World Bank and other partners to strengthen the self-reliance and resilience of both refugees and host communities through another project, the Refugee and Host Population Empowerment initiative (ReHoPE), a self-reliance and resilience strategic framework for refugee and host communities, which aims to facilitate the gradual transition from humanitarian to development programming in refugee-impacted districts. This goal will be achieved through joint analysis, collective advocacy, integrated service delivery, and joint resource mobilization.

IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH

UNHCR and WFP country offices will undertake a joint implementation approach that involves three key steps: assess the self-reliance opportunities, develop joint plans of action, and monitor and evaluate.

Assess self-reliance opportunities

The joint assessment of self-reliance opportunities will focus on two levels: vulnerabilities and capacities of refugee populations, and opportunities and constraints on self-reliance in food security and nutrition that exist in the current context. This will involve a range of different types of assessments and analysis and will to the extent possible be conducted under the umbrella mechanism of the Joint Assessment Missions (JAMs).

Recognizing that refugee populations are not homogenous, UNHCR and WFP will work with partners to carry out assessments of the vulnerabilities and capacities of refugee populations. In the past, all refugees received food and nutrition assistance based on their status as refugees. Under the new approach, humanitarian assistance will be targeted to vulnerable people with verified needs, maintaining a strong protection focus and taking account of specific requirements and circumstances of different population groups. The assessment of capacities will provide the

foundation for programmes to strengthen livelihood assets. In carrying out these assessments, UNHCR and WFP will use approaches recognized by the global community of practice such as the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework¹⁰ and the Minimum Economic Recovery Standards.¹¹ They will also ensure that refugees contribute to shaping an approach to self-reliance that is reflective of their experiences and aspirations and that considers the diversity of the populations in terms of age, sex, and disability.

At the same time, UNHCR and WFP will reexamine the broader context to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the opportunities and constraints that could affect the 'enabling environment' for self-reliance. This analysis will consider the legal and policy context in the country, which determines whether refugees have the right to work, own land, move freely, and access financial services. It will also examine relationships with the host communities, identifying possible areas of tension and opportunities for mutual benefit, and explore the potential integration of refugee issues into the work of other humanitarian and development partners. It will also examine the food security and nutrition status of host populations, many of whom may be as vulnerable as refugee populations.

Develop Joint Self-Reliance Strategies

At the country level, based on a joint review of assessments through the JAMs, UNHCR and WFP will develop multi-year joint self-reliance strategies to guide joint efforts. The strategies will articulate context-specific pathways to self-reliance and will identify activities to improve self-reliance in food security and nutrition including through linkages to other development plans and opportunities. Key activities will be detailed in annual Joint Plans of Action (JPAs)¹².

¹⁰. <http://www.eldis.org/vfile/upload/1/document/0901/section2.pdf>

¹¹. <http://www.seepnetwork.org/minimum-economic-recovery-standards-resources-174.php>

¹². As articulated in global MOU, the Joint Plan of Action (JPA) is the country-level coordination and planning tool for UNHCR and WFP which usually follows directly from a Joint Assessment Mission (JAM).

Example 2: Vulnerability-Based Targeting of Refugee Households in Chad

In 2014 and 2015, UNHCR, WFP, and the Government of Chad Refugee Coordination Agency jointly implemented a re-profiling exercise of refugee households living in seven of the seventeen camps in Chad. The exercise resulted in refugee households being grouped into four different categories: 1) Very Poor; 2) Poor; 3) Middle-class; and 4) Well-off. While there were challenges and lessons learned from the experience, assistance strategies are now being tailored according to the vulnerabilities and capacities of each group.



The pathways to self-reliance in food security and nutrition will represent a combination of strengthening livelihood assets, while meeting humanitarian needs, and creating a more enabling environment through engagement with governments, host communities, and development partners (see Examples 3 and 4). The activities identified to promote self-reliance will be clear, specific and linked to indicators and benchmarks that can be measured to assess progress. They will take into account the different vulnerabilities and capacities of groups within a wider refugee population and be adjusted to what is realistic in a particular context.

The joint strategies will not be created in isolation and will outline linkages to other ongoing programmes that are being implemented by the government, UN agencies, private sector, and others in the development sphere. The Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) may be able to offer technical assistance to refugee farmers through its regular portfolio. In urban settings, UNDP and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) might have relevant

programmes. The ILO and its State and social partners may be able to assist on access to employment.

Monitor and Review

In addition to routine monitoring and review of activities, UNHCR and WFP will conduct relevant assessments on self-reliance to inform analysis of progress on activities. JAMs will include a review of self-reliance assessments and activities¹³, and JPAs will be developed in line with the findings to ensure that any necessary corrections in the approach are implemented in a timely and effective manner. Monitoring systems will also be used to assess those who have been phased out of UNHCR and WFP's programmes, in order to ensure that their situation has not unexpectedly deteriorated and international protection is upheld. ■

¹³. Terms of reference for JAM missions will be adjusted to reflect these functions.

Example 3: Application of the 'Graduation Approach' in Ecuador

Since 2014, UNHCR has been coordinating with WFP in Ecuador to implement the Graduation Approach. In certain settings where both agencies are present, WFP provides food assistance, and UNHCR offers essential livelihood support to refugees to prevent them from slipping back into poverty and food insecurity. In 2016, the Graduation Approach will be embedded into UNHCR's case management system throughout the entire country.

Example 4: Enhancing the Livelihood Assets of Refugee Women in South Sudan

In 2015, UNHCR and WFP jointly planned a new self-reliance initiative targeting refugee women in the south-eastern part of South Sudan. Following a robust analysis of the constraints and opportunities in the local context, refugee women are now being provided with a holistic package of support that is designed to enhance their: 1) financial capital, by helping them to establish micro enterprises; 2) human capital, by providing them with financial literacy training; and 3) social capital, by forming them into savings and loans associations.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Joint Strategy will be guided by the following principles:

- **The principles of humanitarian action:** UNHCR and WFP will uphold the principles of humanity, impartiality and neutrality and will maintain their operational independence in accordance with their mandates. When implementing this strategy, the agencies will work to ensure that no humanitarian food and nutrition needs are neglected.
- **A spirit of collaboration:** UNHCR and WFP will work collaboratively with each other in a manner that is respectful of individual agency mandates and builds upon each agency's strengths. At the same time, the agencies will work together to strengthen relationships with the governments of countries of asylum and to bring in other partners.
- **Results orientation:** UNHCR and WFP will work to demonstrate progress in promoting refugee self-reliance, including through the establishment or identification of clear, measurable indicators that can be monitored and evaluated.
- **Context-sensitivity:** UNHCR and WFP's efforts will be country-led and will be as sensitive as possible to opportunities and constraints that are specific to the local and national context.
- **Accountability to affected populations:** Throughout this process, UNHCR and WFP will make every effort to ensure that refugees are provided with relevant information, given the opportunity to participate in decision-making, and have access to functioning complaints and feedback mechanisms.
- **Protection:** UNHCR and WFP will work to ensure that activities aimed at enhancing refugee self-reliance are promoted in a manner that contributes to the protection of refugees.
- **Durable solutions:** The joint efforts of UNHCR and WFP to promote self-reliance in food security and nutrition will be designed to contribute to the larger efforts to achieve durable solutions for refugees. ■



COORDINATION MECHANISMS

The existing Global MOU between UNHCR and WFP outlines clear coordination commitments and mechanisms, which can be activated for the purpose of implementing this strategy.

- **Local and country level:** In accordance with Articles 3.9 and 4.1 of the MOU and as outlined above, coordination at the sub-national and national level will take place around the existing JAM and JPA mechanisms. In contexts where it is not immediately possible to undertake a new JAM or develop a new JPA, such coordination will be carried out through other compatible mechanisms. The country-level coordination mechanism will also be responsible for contributing to some of the strategic-level engagements with the country of asylum on refugee policy issues including employment and livelihoods.
- **Regional level:** In accordance with Article 4.2 of the MOU, progress at the country level on JAMs and JPAs will be communicated to UNHCR and WFP's respective regional coordination structures at least annually. The regional-level coordination

structures will be responsible for reaching out to regional-level entities, such as the African Union, the Arab League, the Asian Development Bank, and the Organization of American States and, where appropriate, making proposals regarding opportunities for South-South cooperation.

- **Global level:** In accordance with Article 4.2 of the MOU, two high-level meetings are held annually between UNHCR and WFP. Any issue related to the Joint Strategy requiring attention from a corporate perspective will be escalated within agencies, so that they can be addressed in this forum. In addition, a global-level working group will have responsibility for reaching out to important global-level entities, such as the Solutions Alliance, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, and the Bretton Woods Institutions. The global-level working group will also be responsible for developing and drafting an operational framework that will accompany this Joint Strategy and which will set out how the strategy is to be operationalised over the first five years. ■



MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING

UNHCR and WFP will monitor global progress on the implementation of this Joint Strategy. Within 4-6 years of the start of the implementation of this Strategy, an evaluation of its results will be commissioned by the evaluation mechanisms of WFP and UNHCR jointly. The Joint Strategy will be evaluated on the extent to which it has contributed to a sustained improvement in refugees' ability to meet their

food security and nutrition needs in protracted situations. In addition, a decentralised mid-term, formative review will be conducted. The evaluations will serve the dual purposes of accountability and learning, which will enable the agencies to make necessary adjustments and to share key lessons learnt with the wider international community. ■

PARTNERSHIPS

In order to deliver this Joint Strategy, UNHCR and WFP will work in partnership with a wide range of different stakeholders including but not limited to: refugees; host communities; governments of countries of asylum; humanitarian and development donors; wider UNCTs; academic and research institutions;

non-governmental organizations and broader civil society; and the private sector. UNHCR and WFP will also seek to work directly with other UN agencies, especially those specialized in protection, decent work, development and gender issues, in order to deliver this strategy. ■

ASSUMPTIONS

The success of the Joint Strategy rests on three over-arching assumptions:

- **Sufficient commitment from the governments of countries of asylum:** Host governments need to support the focus on self-reliance and engage in constructive policy dialogue on adapting legal and policy frameworks to allow for greater opportunities for refugees.
- **Adequate investment and flexibility from donors:** The promotion of self-reliance will require a significant, upfront investment that is sustained for a number of years. This will imply working across the humanitarian-development nexus, and therefore ensuring that the donor community provides States, UNHCR and WFP with adequate,

predictable and multi-year financial assistance. This may require actions to remove bureaucratic impediments and ensure that administrative arrangements are supportive of the promotion of self-reliance in food security and nutrition.

- **Realistic expectations:** Even with the necessary political commitment and financial support, it will be challenging to take forward this agenda. In many countries, refugees are located in environments where infrastructure is poor, basic social services are weak or absent, and where there are only very limited livelihood opportunities. It is therefore important to have a shared recognition of the challenges as well as the opportunities going forward. ■

LIST OF KEY ACRONYMS

FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations
ILO	International Labour Organization
JAM	Joint Assessment Missions
JPA	Joint Plan of Action
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
UN	United Nations

UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WFP	World Food Programme



For more information, please contact:

UNHCR contact:
Operational Solutions and Transition Section (OSTS)
livelihood@unhcr.org

WFP contact:
The Emergencies & Transitions Unit (OSZPH)
HQ.OSZPH@wfp.org

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