

# LIVELIHOODS AND SELF-RELIANCE PROGRAMMING IN REFUGEE AND DISPLACEMENT SETTINGS

UNHCR AND WFP CORPORATE APPROACHES

## PART 1: POLICY FRAMEWORKS

### KEY DEFINITIONS



**DURABLE SOLUTIONS** for refugees are:

- Voluntary repatriation to country of origin,
- Local integration in the country of asylum, or
- Resettlement to a third country



**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.



**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.



**RESILIENCE** is the ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate to and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions.



**LIVELIHOODS** comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources), financial resources and activities required for a means of living.



**ECONOMIC INCLUSION** entails access to labour markets, finance, entrepreneurship, and economic opportunities for all, including non-citizens and vulnerable and underserved groups.



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## JOINT STRATEGY FOR ENHANCING SELF-RELIANCE IN FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION IN PROTRACTED REFUGEE SITUATIONS.

Building on the [2011 Memorandum of Understanding](#) that sets the objectives and scope of collaboration between UNHCR and WFP, and the longstanding partnership between UNHCR and WFP in support to refugee livelihoods and self-reliance, in 2016 the two agencies launched the [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.

The strategy is based on a vision in which refugees in protracted situations live in dignity and progressively attain greater self-reliance in food security and nutrition, and has two objectives:

1. STRENGTHEN LIVELIHOODS, WHILE ENSURING BASIC FOOD AND NUTRITION NEEDS ARE MET
2. ENCOURAGE AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR INCREASED SELF-RELIANCE

WFP and UNHCR should work together and with other partners to support the increase of human, natural, physical, economic, and social capital.

Following a robust analysis of refugees' existing knowledge, skills, and capacities, as well as value chains and labor markets, WFP and UNHCR should work with partners to strengthen the livelihoods assets of refugees over multi-year timeframes and by providing education and training opportunities, while ensuring that basic needs are met.

UNHCR and WFP should work with governments, humanitarian and development partners and the private sector to create a supportive legal and policy environment that allows refugees to use their livelihood assets and become more self-reliant over time.

Supported by research and analysis that shows the positive impacts refugees have on host communities and countries, as well as through building wider partnerships, advocacy and policy dialogue.

The objectives are complementary as refugees require strengthened livelihood assets and an enabling environment to be able to utilize those assets to achieve self-reliance in food security and nutrition.

## UNHCR POLICY FRAMEWORKS

### COMPREHENSIVE REFUGEE RESPONSE FRAMEWORK (CRRF)

Adopted by all 193 Member States of the United Nations in September 2016, the [New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants](#) is a set of commitments to enhance the protection of refugees and migrants, a milestone for global solidarity and refugee protection at a time of unprecedented displacement across the world. The New York Declaration lays out a vision for a more predictable and more comprehensive response to these crises, known as the [Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework \(CRRF\)](#). The CRRF provides for a more comprehensive, predictable, and sustainable response that benefits both refugees and their hosts, with the central idea that refugees should be included in communities from the very beginning, helping them to thrive, and not just survive.

### GLOBAL COMPACT ON REFUGEES (GCR)

In December 2018, after two years of extensive consultations led by UNHCR with Member States, international organizations, refugees, civil society, the private sector, and experts, the United Nations General Assembly affirmed the [Global Compact on Refugees \(GCR\)](#) in which member states committed to reducing pressure on host countries and enhancing refugee self-reliance.

Improving the livelihoods and economic inclusion of refugees is key to addressing issues of poverty, protection and durable solutions. Economic inclusion contributes to the self-reliance and resilience of refugees, empowering them to meet their needs in a safe, sustainable and dignified manner; contributes to their host economies; and prepares refugees for their future whether they return home, integrate in their country of asylum, resettle in a third country or have access to complementary pathways.

#### OBJECTIVES OF THE GLOBAL COMPACT ON REFUGEES

	Ease pressure on host countries		Expand access to third country solutions
	Enhance refugee self-reliance		Support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity

The GCR advocates that economic inclusion should start from the beginning of displacement. Positive outcomes for livelihoods and economic inclusion require multi-year, multi-partner strategic planning, engaging with partners who have the expertise and ability to support an enabling environment that is conducive to refugees' ability to participate economically.

### REFUGEE LIVELIHOODS AND ECONOMIC INCLUSION STRATEGY

The [Refugee Livelihoods and Economic Inclusion 2019-2023 Global Strategy Concept Note](#) states that improving livelihoods through advocating and catalyzing resources for economic inclusion is a key component of achieving protection and solutions outcomes for refugees. With around 50% of refugees not allowed to work in asylum countries, the right to work (among other related rights), and access to relevant resources and services facilitates the economic inclusion of refugees. Building self-reliance is essential throughout all phases of displacement and should be advocated for and

supported whether persons of concern will return home, be resettled or locally integrated. The concept note serves as a position paper on why UNHCR implements livelihoods programming: to decrease dependency and increase self-reliance for people of concern and host communities and guides the development of national and local livelihoods strategies.

## MINIMUM ECONOMIC RECOVERY STANDARDS

When implementing directly, UNHCR uses the [Minimum Economic Recovery Standards \(MERS\)](#) which are a set of qualitative standards and best practices for facilitating economic recovery in emergency and crisis contexts. Developed by the SEEP Network, the MERS standards are based on the accumulated expertise, best practices and industry standards of humanitarian and economic development practitioners and are summarized in the MERS Handbook. Articulating the minimum level of activities required to support the economic recovery of crisis affected vulnerable populations, the set of 5 standards can be applied sequentially or separately by practitioners, multi-lateral stakeholders, local market actors, governments, and donors to support economic recovery through a market-based response. The Standards are: Humanitarian programs are market aware; Efforts are coordinated to improve effectiveness; Staff have relevant skills; Do no harm principle; and Intervention strategies for target populations are well defined.

## ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE

In addition, UNHCR's mandatory [Policy on Age, Gender and Diversity](#) commits the agency to a participatory and inclusive approach to programme design and implementation.

## WFP POLICY FRAMEWORKS

### REFUGEE ASSISTANCE GUIDANCE MANUAL

The [Refugee Assistance Guidance Manual](#), affirms that while meeting humanitarian needs will always be at the core of WFP's work with refugees, the new refugee landscape also calls for a greater focus on enhancing self-reliance. In the context of increasingly protracted displacements, the limitations of the traditional 'care and maintenance' model of refugee assistance have been laid bare and there is a growing interest in exploring alternative ways for assisting refugees in countries of asylum that are more suited to longer term timeframes. WFP regards this challenge first and foremost as one of how to create more dignified conditions for refugees in countries of asylum through more coherent efforts that cut across the humanitarian-development nexus, though it should also be acknowledged that, in the context of growing resource constraints, there is a need to break the cycle of dependence of refugee populations on humanitarian assistance. The global MOU between WFP and UNHCR already indicates that the scope of the inter-agency partnership encompasses both the provision of food assistance and the promotion of self-reliance.

### POLICY ON BUILDING RESILIENCE FOR FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

WFP's [Policy on Building Resilience for Food Security and Nutrition](#) represents the strategic framework within WFP's programmatic approach is designed in addressing refugee resilience in displacement settings. The first one recognizes that development gains can be quickly wiped out by a natural disaster, a surge in food prices or conflict. Gains can also be undermined over time by the

cumulative effects of stressors such as climate change, environmental degradation, water scarcity and economic uncertainty. Humanitarian responses to crises have saved lives and helped to restore livelihoods, but resilience-building approach to programming helps to mitigate the damaging effects of shocks and stressors before, during and after crises, thereby minimizing human suffering and economic loss.

The policy recognizes that people dealing with the effects of hunger, poverty and displacement are often consumed with responding to daily adversities, and there is particular need to enhance the capacity of WFP and its partners to build resilience for food security and nutrition amid conflict and displacement and less familiar contexts such as urban environments, through their inclusion in Country Strategic Plans.

### EMERGENCY AND PREPAREDNESS POLICY

The [Emergency and Preparedness Policy](#) recognizes the situations necessitating emergency response have become increasingly complex. Emergencies have evolved from short-lived events driven by single factors to situations fueled by protracted conflict, economic crisis, natural hazards and outbreaks of disease, often occurring simultaneously. The strategy also positions WFP vis-a-vis its partners, stating that the organization aims to engage further in joint planning and programming, based on jointly defined risk scenarios, applying six overarching principles: national leadership; humanitarian principles; accountability to affected populations, including in providing sustainable and gender transformative assistance; context specificity; partnership and innovation.

### ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE

In addition, WFP's [Social Protection and Safety Nets](#), guidance on [Nutrition-Sensitive Programming](#), [Gender toolkit](#), set the approaches and the orientation in addressing community resilience in refugee and displacement settings.