MEDIA BRIEFING
GOVERNMENT OF ZIMBABWE (GOZ)/WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME (WFP) COOPERATION

WFP 2017 – 2021 COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN

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The Government of Zimbabwe has had an enduring warm and cordial relationship with the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP). This relationship is guided and reflected in the letter and spirit of the Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) between Government and WFP that are renewed from time to time as well as the broader Zimbabwe United Nations Development Frameworks (ZUNDAF). It is pleasing to note that all WFP programmes in the country have not only been aligned to the existing operational Government policies but have also demonstrated this resolve.

The current MoU between the Government and WFP covers the period from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2018. It is on the WFP Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO) number 200944 which together with two development projects form the foundation of the WFP Zimbabwe Country Strategic Plan. The MoUs are made pursuant to the Basic Agreement signed between the Government and WFP on 24 November 1982 and are in fact complementary to this Basic Agreement.

The WFP PRRO recognises that both Government and WFP need to urgently distribute the food assistance to those people who have been assessed and identified. Thus the WFP PRRO helps Government move towards its vision of "every Zimbabwean free from hunger and malnutrition". It aims at strengthening the basic food needs of the most vulnerable, improving livelihood resilience, and preventing stunting; all Government development priorities.

The PRRO is guided by the mutually agreed principles of:

- national policy integration: the alignment of current WFP programmes to ZimASSET and the National Food and Nutrition
Security Policy are notable examples of implementation of this principle;

- analysis and evidence-based engagement: use of WFP’s comparative advantage in assessments and analysis as well as the unwavering support to ZimVAC livelihoods and market assessments are important examples in this regard;

- capacity development and technical assistance: Examples here include WFP support to the development of the National Food and Nutrition Security Policy, the ZERO Hunger Strategy, the Zimbabwe Resilience Building Framework, the National Social Protection Policy Framework and currently the Cost of Hunger Analysis for Zimbabwe.

- prioritisation of nutrition-related approaches: Upon realizing that Government has prioritized nutrition in HIV under the focal area of care, treatment and mitigation in the ZIMBABWE NATIONAL HIV AND AIDS STRATEGIC PLAN (ZNASP II) 2011-2015 document, WFP proactively responded by committing financial and technical support to integrate Nutrition into HIV and Prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) programmes in the country. This is just but one of the examples of application of this principle.

- prioritising coordinated quality partnerships in seasonal programming and interventions

- mainstreaming gender and protection: gender and protection policies are being applied in all WFP interventions.

Through the MoUs with WFP, the Government makes a number of commitments that include, among others, to facilitate as required the safe and unimpeded access by WFP for purposes of assessments, delivery, distribution and monitoring of assistance commodities/cash.
The Government has largely lived up to these commitments and expectations.

The Government and WFP work hand in glove with other key cooperating partners such as local and international NGOs in all aspects of beneficiary targeting including registration, distribution and monitoring following a set of multi-stakeholder agreed guidelines.

Pursuit of the letter and spirit of the tenets and principles such as those agreed in the 2016-2018 MoU, the Government and WFP working closely with their other Development Partners have successfully mobilised resources and implemented a number of successful food assistance programmes that have averted wide spread hunger amongst the Zimbabwean population over the years. This was particularly so in the consumption year following the 2015/16 El Nino induced drought that rendered about 42% of the rural population food insecure and prompted the Government to declare a State of Disaster and to institute both a Domestic and an International Appeal for assistance. WFP was amongst the major contributors to the Government appeal for assistance. As of January 2017 WFP was providing food assistance to about 1.1million people. Most commendable has been the collaborative food assistance programme in which Government provided grain for distribution while WFP supported the same households with other complementary commodities such as pulses and cooking oil.

Given the foregoing strong partnership between the Government and WFP, it is Government’s expectation that the incoming WFP Country Strategic Plan (CSP) 2017 -2021 will be built on this positive and progressive legacy and take the collaboration to even higher levels. Fortunately, there appears to be little room if any at all for prospects to be on the contrary. The WFP Zimbabwe 2017-2021 CSP was born out
of robust consultations with key Government Ministries and other Development Partners and it goes under the theme, “changing how we plan and implement to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals”. The Strategy is aligned to helping the Government to achieve its priority Sustainable Development Goals. The CSP reorients WFP in Zimbabwe to focus on supporting longer-term national social protection and resilience building to achieve Zero Hunger. It is therefore fortuitous that this CSP is coming hot on the heels of the Government launching its National Social Protection Policy Framework, which stresses resilience building and building community capacities to deal with shocks and disasters. The consistency and coherence between the two are apparent.

With the new CSP, WFP aims to help the Government build sustainable systems to eradicate hunger and ensure better nutrition through six strategic outcomes:

1. Food insecure people, including refugees, in most affected districts are enabled to meet their basic food and nutrition requirements during severe seasonal shocks or other crises.
2. Children in prioritised districts will have stunting rates reduced in line with national and global targets by 2025.
3. Smallholder farmers have increased access to well-functioning agricultural markets by 2030.
4. Food-insecure rural households achieve food security and demonstrate resilience to seasonal shocks and stressors.
5. Zimbabwe’s social protection system ensures that chronically vulnerable populations across the country are able to meet their basic needs all year round.
6. Partners are reliably supported by world-class cost effective and efficient supply chain services.

Not only will the CSP be supporting national priorities, it is also aligned to ZimASSET 2013-18 and the ZUNDAF 2016-2020, the National Social Protection Policy Framework and the Food and Nutrition Security Policy.

I thank you.