



**Food Assistance Convention**

# **FOOD ASSISTANCE CONVENTION 2017 ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT**

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## ACRONYMS

ADA	Austrian Development Agency
ADC	Austrian Development Cooperation
ARC	African Risk Capacity
BMNT	Austrian Federal Ministry of Sustainability and Tourism
CaLP	Cash Learning Partnership
CBI	Cash-based interventions
CBT/CTP	Cash Based Transfer / Cash transfer programming
CFS	Committee on World Food Security
COHAFA	Council Working Group meeting on Humanitarian aid and Food Aid
CSB+	Corn Soya Blend Plus
CTP	Cash Transfer Programming
DG ECHO	Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
DIPECHO	Disaster Preparedness programme
DPRK	People's Republic of Korea
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DSM	Dried skimmed milk
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
EiE	Education in Emergencies
ERC	Enhanced Response Capacity
ESSN	Emergency Social Safety Net
EU	European Union
EUR	Euro
FAC	Food Assistance Convention
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

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FEWSNET	Famine Early Warning Systems Network
FFP	USAID's Office of Food for Peace
FY	Fiscal Year
GB	Grand Bargain
GFD	General food distribution
GHD	Good Humanitarian Donorship
HA	Humanitarian Aid (of SDC)
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IFRC	International Federation of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent Societies
INGO/ NGO	International Non-governmental organisation/Non-governmental organisation
kg	kilogramme
l	litres
MPCT	Multi-purpose cash transfers
MT	Metric Ton
mVAM	mobile Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping project
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Aid
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OFDA	USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance
pcs	pieces
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PRRO	Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation
PSN	Persons with Special Needs
PSNP	Productive Safety Net Program

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REFANI	Research on Food Assistance for Nutritional Impact initiative
R&I	Refine and Implement
RUTF	Ready-to-use therapeutic foods
SAM	Severe acute malnutrition
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SHA	Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit
t	tonnes
TSFP	Targeted Supplementary Feeding Program
UCPM	Union Civil Protection Mechanism
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNOCHA	UNICEF and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees
UNSG	United Nations Secretary-General
UNWOMEN	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	US Dollar
USDA	U. S. Department of Agriculture
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation
WHS	World Humanitarian Summit

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Food Assistance Convention (FAC) includes many of the largest humanitarian food assistance donors that together seek to save lives, reduce hunger, improve food security, and improve the nutritional status of the most vulnerable populations around the world. To achieve these goals, the 14 FAC members provide a defined minimum level of food assistance on an annual basis. In 2017, this assistance totalled more than USD 7 billion – the largest commitment to date and reflective of the increasing need for food assistance around the world.

FAC members assisted with key responses supporting countries such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Democratic Republic of Korea (DPRK), Ethiopia, Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, the Kyrgyz Republic, Namibia, Nepal, Nigeria, Palestine, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria, Tajikistan, Uganda and Yemen. Donors also responded to global food insecurity, including the Rohingya crisis (Bangladesh and Myanmar), Sahel food and nutrition crisis, Hurricane Irma, and El Niño.

FAC members continue to strengthen ties both among donors and between donor countries and international organizations, by collaborating on key overarching policies. For example, FAC members are actively leading and participating in work streams associated with implementing the Grand Bargain commitments that came from the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit (WHS).

Putting policy into practice, several FAC members continued government-wide responses to tackle hunger, including innovative approaches to food assistance such as multi-year funding, multi-purpose cash, and efforts to improve malnutrition treatments and delivery systems. Sharing best practices amongst themselves, FAC members also focused on localized partnerships in emergency and long term food security programs, as well as transparency on beneficiary outreach.

## GENERAL CONTEXT

### About the Food Assistance Convention

The Food Assistance Convention (FAC) entered into force on January 1, 2013, following the depositing of instruments of ratification of the FAC by six parties –Canada, Denmark, the European Union, Japan, Switzerland, and the United States of America. The FAC is the latest in a long series of such multilateral cooperation instruments in operation since 1967, most recently preceded by the Food Aid Convention 1991.

The FAC expands the traditional focus of previous Food Aid Conventions that focused exclusively on commitments of in-kind food aid for direct consumption. The new Convention includes a broader toolbox of eligible activities and food assistance products, including cash, vouchers, products intended for protecting livelihoods, a greater focus on nutrition, as well as a commitment to improved transparency and accountability. The Convention also provides an important set of guiding principles for the Parties to follow in implementing their food assistance

programs. Finally, Parties to the Convention now make their commitments in monetary value as opposed to metric wheat ton equivalent.

The objectives of the FAC are to save lives, reduce hunger, improve food security, and improve the nutritional status of the most vulnerable populations by:

- Addressing the food and nutritional needs of the most vulnerable populations through commitments made by the Parties to provide food assistance that improves access to, and consumption of, adequate, safe, and nutritious food;
- Ensuring that food assistance provided to the most vulnerable populations is appropriate, timely, effective, efficient, and based on needs and shared principles; and
- Facilitating information-sharing, cooperation and coordination, and providing a forum for discussion in order to improve the effective, efficient, and coherent use of the Parties' resources to respond to needs.

To achieve these objectives, FAC Parties have committed to providing a defined minimum level of food assistance on an annual basis. Additionally, Parties have embraced the notion of transparency in all food assistance operations. To support this commitment, FAC Parties will report food assistance activities publicly, by country on an annual basis. This report is the narrative component of the Parties' 2017 annual reporting. It includes information on how each Party's food assistance policies, programs, and operations have contributed to the objectives and principles of the Convention for the reporting year.

The FAC is also a forum for Parties to share information and best practices in food assistance delivery. Meeting twice annually, the FAC provides an open forum for Parties to discuss the most efficient and effective means of delivery of food assistance. Recognizing the changing landscape of emergencies and other assistance needs, the Parties have prioritized the consideration of new modalities for food assistance aimed at reducing associated costs, while ensuring that those most in need are reached.

The proliferation of serious and large-scale crises occurring simultaneously confirms the relevance of the FAC. Combined with the ever-widening gap between resource needs and available humanitarian funding, the incentive to develop innovative solutions is more pressing than ever. International financial commitments certainly have their part to play – they are a visible and tangible demonstration of a minimum response by the donor community and one against which members are held publicly accountable. This predictable and certain response is an important signal to our partners and to those affected by crises that the international community stands with them in times of need.

Humanitarian assistance should be seen as a multi-faceted response to improve the human condition during conflicts and disasters, as a first step in reinvigorating local business and agriculture, and in helping people rebuild their lives and livelihoods. The forum provided by the FAC plays a key role in promoting best practices and shaping policies to encourage participating members to develop and implement innovative solutions to better respond to challenges faced by affected communities.



## Reporting on Food Assistance Operations

Following each calendar year, Parties provide a report on food assistance operations, detailing how respective commitments were fulfilled. The minimum annual financial commitments of the 15 Parties who have ratified, accepted, and/or approved the FAC in 2017 are set out below, **totalling more than USD 3 billion:**

Donor	Commitments in 2017	Equivalent in US \$ <sup>1</sup>
<b>Australia</b>	AU\$80 million	US \$60.4 million
<b>Austria</b>	€1.495 million	US \$1.6 million
<b>Canada</b>	C\$250 million	US \$187.6 million
<b>Denmark</b>	DKK185 million	US \$29.4 million
<b>European Union</b>	€350 million	US \$379.7 million
<b>Finland</b>	€6 million	US \$6.5 million
<b>France<sup>2</sup></b>	-	-
<b>Japan</b>	JPY10 billion	US \$89.0 million
<b>Luxembourg</b>	€4 million	US \$4.3 million
<b>Russia</b>	US \$15 million	US \$15 million
<b>Slovenia</b>	€30,000	US \$32,545
<b>Spain</b>	€10 million	US \$10.8 million
<b>Sweden</b>	SEK200 million	US \$24.5 million
<b>Switzerland</b>	CHF34 million	US \$34.2 million
<b>United States</b>	US \$2.2 billion	US \$2.2 billion

In 2017, all members fulfilled their commitments, with some member substantially exceeding them. All members either maintained or increased their commitments for 2018.

In line with the Convention, in 2017 members focused on addressing the food and nutritional needs of the most vulnerable populations to provide food assistance that improves access to and consumption of adequate, safe, and nutritious food. Parties also ensured that the food assistance provided was appropriate, timely, effective, and based on needs in line with the principles of the FAC.

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<sup>1</sup> All currency conversions into U.S. Dollars were made using a table provided by the FAC Secretariat.

<sup>2</sup> France ratified FAC on 23 June 2017 and its “minimum annual commitment” for 2018 was notified.

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Food assistance was delivered through: i) the provision and distribution of eligible products; ii) the provision of cash and vouchers; and iii) nutritional interventions. All funding was made fully in grant form. Food assistance was delivered in ways that avoided harmful interference with normal patterns of production in recipient countries and international commercial trade. Food assistance operations were provided bilaterally, through intergovernmental or other international organizations, including the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and other food assistance partners.

Members also made considerable effort to facilitate information sharing, cooperation, and coordination, while also providing a forum for discussion in order to improve the effective, efficient, and coherent use of resources to respond to needs.

### Committee Meetings

In 2017, members convened two meetings, in June and November, to discuss unprecedented levels of global food and nutrition insecurity, share how FAC members are responding, and outline their current food assistance operations. Members also discussed in depth the adverse role of conflict in driving historic levels of displacement and emergency food needs in places like Yemen, South Sudan, Somalia, and Nigeria.

The formal Session in November was preceded by a seminar entitled “Sahel – A forgotten food and nutrition crisis” which focussed on the current food and nutrition security situation in the Sahel. An overview of the unique challenges faced in addressing food insecurity in the Sahel was presented by the FAO and Action Against Hunger, providing a contextual analysis of the nutrition crisis and response. The U.S., EU, DFID and others discussed the need to work across the humanitarian-development nexus to address the unique challenges faced in the region.

More information is available at [www.foodassistanceconvention.org](http://www.foodassistanceconvention.org).

## OVERALL ASSISTANCE

### Australia

Australia provided all food assistance as untied, cash-based support to the WFP. In 2017 Australia provided AUD 84.4 million (USD 64.9 million) in food assistance through WFP, for populations affected by emergencies, protracted conflict, food insecurity and displacement in countries across Asia and the Pacific, the Middle East and Africa.

Of this amount, Australia provided AUD 40 million (USD 30.8 million) as core, un-earmarked funding under its multiyear partnership with WFP, which WFP allocated to country operations according to need. This helped WFP retained the flexibility to adapt its operations to manage

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evolving situation challenges and determine the most effective means of delivering assistance. In addition, Australia provided AUD 44.4 million (USD 34.2 million) to specific crises with minimal earmarking. This assistance targeted conflict-affected populations in Syria, Yemen and Iraq as well as countries in Africa affected by famine. It included significant support to Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh..

### Austria

In 2017, Austria responded to food insecurity and humanitarian crises caused by conflict and natural disasters alike. Austria again exceeded its financial commitment within the framework of the FAC of EUR 1.495 million (USD 1.33 million) by a slight margin, increasing the Austrian commitment within the reporting period to total contributions amounting to EUR 1.64 million (USD 1.46 million).

Since 2015 the annual funds allocated for food assistance activities provided by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Sustainability and Tourism (BMNT) have been administered by the Austrian Development Agency, the operational unit of the Austrian Development Cooperation. This step was taken in order to establish a whole-of-government approach to ensure coherency and enhance effectiveness in Austria's aim to raise food security.

The food assistance contributions on behalf of Austria within the reporting period concerned were implemented via the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO), and WFP. The ICRC received EUR 500.000 (USD 445.000), the FAO EUR 640.000 (USD 569.600), and the WFP received EUR 500.000 (USD 445.000).

### Canada

Canada's commitment under the Food Assistance Convention for 2017 was CAD 250 million. Total Canadian food assistance and nutrition allocations in 2017 were CAD 361.8 million (USD 272.4). Thus, Canada exceeded its commitment in 2017. Compared to the 2016 allocation of CAD 351.1 million, this represents a 3 percent increase. More than 63 percent of Canada's 2017 food assistance was implemented via WFP.

### European Union

In 2017 the European Union (EU) provided substantial needs-based emergency assistance in more than 80 countries around the world, primarily outside the EU, for which the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) committed a total of over EUR 2.430 billion, including Emergency Support within the EU (EUR 198 million). A significant proportion of this went to supporting the conflict-affected populations inside Syria and refugees in neighbouring countries and regions, to the Rohingya crisis with its dramatic population movements, as well as to vulnerable people in the four countries facing an alarming risk of famine in Yemen, north-east Nigeria, Somalia and South Sudan. The EU has also continued to be a leading donor in other parts of the world, with Africa continuing to account for a large share of funding.

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Food security and livelihoods was the most significant area of EU assistance in 2017, with food and nutrition interventions representing over 25 percent of total EU humanitarian funding.

Over 38 percent of the total funds committed by DG ECHO are linked to cash-based interventions, increasing from 2016 (33 percent). Cash assistance was used primarily to meet multi-purpose basic needs and food assistance needs, followed by education in emergencies, protection, shelter and Water-Sanitation-Hygiene (WASH).

### Finland

Finland's commitment under the Food Assistance Convention for 2017 was EUR 6 million. This was the same as in previous years. Finland clearly exceeded its commitment in 2017. Most of the food assistance, EUR 20.75 million, was channelled through WFP. This was divided between 8 regional or country operations in Africa and the Middle East. The largest operations funded were Yemen, South Sudan, Nigeria and Somalia (“the four famines”).

Finland's humanitarian assistance is unearmarked and untied. It means Finland provides core funding or funding at the level of country or region and does not earmark its contributions for any particular activity or sector. This is the case with regard to UN organizations as well as the Red Cross Movement.

### France

France's commitment under the Food Assistance Convention has been about EUR 35 million (about USD 40 million) each year since 2013. In 2017, the amount of French food and nutrition assistance has been EUR 34.153 million (USD 39.15 million) of which 25 percent was specifically dedicated to nutrition. More than 50 percent (51 percent) of French food assistance was implemented via WFP, 22 percent via other international organisations (UNRWA, UNICEF, CICR and FAO), 22 percent via NGOs, and 5 percent directly from bilateral aid (Haiti).

More than one-third of the total funds allocated were linked to cash-based interventions, increasing each year.

France has funded 70 programs in 31 countries.

### Japan

Japan concluded the Exchanges of Notes (E/Ns) with 10 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (namely, Benin, Burundi, Comoros, DR Congo, Madagascar, Mali, Namibia, Niger, Senegal, and Uganda), to implement 10 food assistance projects amounting to JPY 3.61 billion (approximately USD 32 million).

Almost 66 percent of Japan's food assistance (JPY 214.5 billion; USD 132.2 million) was implemented via WFP and partially used to support school meals programmes. More broadly, Japan partnered with WFP in response to food needs in Asia (Cambodia and Lao), Middle East (Palestinian and Yemen), and Sub-Saharan Africa (Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central Africa, Chad, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Sierra Leone, South Sudan and Swaziland) to

implement 14 food assistance projects amounting to JPY 4.58 billion (approximately USD 41.6 million).

Also, Japan partnered with the UNRWA to provide foods to Palestinian Refugees valued at JPY 410 million (approximately USD 3.7 million).

### Russia

The Russian Federation is contributing to the resolution of the hunger and malnutrition problem on a permanent basis in multilateral as well as bilateral formats.

The greater part of Russian food assistance is distributed among developing countries, especially in Africa, Latin America, Asia and Pacific. Particular focus is made on comprehensive assistance to the countries of Commonwealth of Independent States.

In 2017 The Russian Federation contributed about USD 30 million to 13 eligible countries through the WFP.

Besides emergency food assistance in crisis situations, Russia is actively engaging in development projects aimed at finding durable solutions to food security problems. For a number of years the Russian Federation, in collaboration with WFP, has been implementing large-scale projects to support school feeding in the countries of Caucasus, Central Asia and the Middle East.

The Russian government continues to finance activities of the International Fund for Agricultural Development in 2016-2018 (overall sum of assistance is \$9 million). This money will be used to boost the volume of agricultural production in countries with low per capita income and deficit of food, to improve quality of food, and to enhance well-being of the poorest population at large.

In partnership with FAO in 2015 Russia launched a three-year program to improve food security and agriculture in the countries in Caucasus and Central Asia (total value of the program is about USD 6 million).

In 2017, the Russian Federation provided assistance to respond to emergencies and crises disrupting food production and destroying the foundations of people's livelihoods. The emergency food assistance was provided through a variety of both bilateral and multilateral foreign assistance instruments. Russia provided a mix of in-kind food and livelihood aid, cash transfers and vouchers, and food interventions in response to those emergencies. To meet those demands, Russia made local, regional and international procurements.

### Switzerland

The Humanitarian Aid (HA) of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) is helping to save lives and alleviate suffering. Together with the experts from the Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit (SHA), it implements programmes of its own and, at the same time, makes its know-how available to partner organisations. In addition, it assists partner organisations in the implementation of their own programmes, providing support in the form of funding, relief supplies and food aid.

Switzerland's commitment under the FAC for 2017 was USD 34 million. Switzerland exceeded its commitment, as its emergency food assistance was in the range of CHF 83 million (USD 84.5 million). Overall, Switzerland works in close partnership with international and national non-governmental organisations (INGOs/NGOs) on food assistance in its priority countries as well as with the WFP, FAO, UNICEF, UNHCR, UNRWA and the ICRC/IFRC through multilateral and bilateral funding.

Overall, WFP received the largest amount of Swiss Humanitarian Aid for food assistance. In 2017, Switzerland contributed a total of USD 70 million to WFP whereof 53 percent is strictly eligible under the FAC. In addition, Switzerland remained a strong partner of WFP in the provision of experts. In 2017, 23 specialists of the SHA were seconded to WFP over a period of 6 months and beyond. The majority of them worked in the area of cash transfer programming (CTP, 12 in total) followed by experts in protection and Disaster Risk Reduction.

As for 2018, Switzerland will be able to keep the same level of commitment as well as about the same level of funding to activities falling under FAC.

### United States

In 2017, the world confronted multiple massive humanitarian crises, which demanded an immediate, substantial and creative response. Early in the year, the Famine Early Warning System Network (FEWS NET) warned that 70 million people in 45 countries would need emergency food assistance due to persistent conflict, severe drought and economic instability. Six months later, that estimate was increased to 81 million people as conditions worsened.

The U.S. Government responded to this global crisis by delivering more emergency food assistance than in any prior year, working with dedicated partners to save lives, reduce suffering and support recovery for millions of people facing both acute and chronic emergency situations. The U.S. commitment under the FAC was USD 2.2 billion for 2017, and this obligation was met and exceeded. In the U.S. Fiscal Year (FY) 2017, the U.S. Government programmed USD 4.1 billion in food assistance and procured more than three million metric tons (MT) of food, reaching 69 million people in 53 countries.

The United States used a combination of modalities to respond to these crises, through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). In FY 2017, USAID provided 1.4 million MT U.S.-sourced commodities, roughly 39 percent of USAID's emergency assistance. USAID spent most of its remaining budget on in-kind food purchased locally (13 percent), regionally or internationally (23 percent). Nearly a quarter of its programs were market-based modalities, providing cash transfers and food vouchers, at roughly 13 percent and 10 percent, respectively. While 87 percent of USAID's efforts focused on emergency response, 13 percent supported programming to address underlying causes of food insecurity. Efforts ranged from providing farmers with better land management skills, to training caregivers and healthcare workers in child nutrition.

In addition to USAID efforts, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) food assistance programs focused not only on meeting immediate food and nutrition needs of food insecure people worldwide, but also on improving agricultural productivity and expanding trade of

agricultural products, and improving literacy, especially for girls. USDA administered three food assistance programs in FY 2017: Food for Progress, McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition (McGovern-Dole), and Local and Regional Food Aid Procurement programs. These programs helped improve food security for over 4.8 million people worldwide.

### KEY FOOD ASSISTANCE RESPONSES IN 2017

#### North Korea (DPRK)

Switzerland regularly provided donations of dried skimmed milk (DSM). Switzerland is the only in-kind donor and thus the main supplier of DSM in the DPRK, an important contributor to the blended food production. The blended food products of the WFP containing Swiss DSM make a significant nutritional contribution to the diet of the demographic target groups (young children, pregnant and lactating women).

The Swiss DSM reached over 950,644 beneficiaries through the channels of the WFP in 2017. SDC has donated DSM worth CHF 50 million to the WFP in the DPRK since 2009, accounting for 60 percent of SDC's total budget for the DPRK. In 2017 alone, SDC's contribution amounted to USD 5.02 Million.

#### Nepal

In August 2017, the southern belt of Nepal experienced intense rainfall. The continuous rains triggered floods and landslides in thirty-five out of seventy-five districts, resulting in the loss of homes, food stocks, livestock and agriculture production. During the crisis Australia provided an additional AUD 1 million (USD 769,230) in funding allowing WFP to run a Targeted Supplementary Feeding Program, which assisted 5900 malnourished children as well as 1600 pregnant and lactating women.

#### Syria

The Syria conflict is the biggest humanitarian, peace and security crisis facing the world today. An estimated 13.5 million people in Syria need some form of humanitarian assistance, and an additional 4.8 million Syrians are registered refugees in neighbouring countries.

In 2016, **Australia** announced a three-year AUD 220 million (USD 169.2 million) package of assistance in response to the Syria crisis to build the resilience and self-reliance of refugees and refugee-hosting countries. WFP is a partner to this multi-year strategy and Australia has provided AUD 4.9 million (USD 3.8 million) in Syria, AUD 2 million (USD 1.5 million) in Lebanon, and AUD 3 million (USD 2.3 million) in Jordan for its operations annually. Additionally, WFP allocated a further AUD 1.9 million (USD 1.5 million) of Australia's unearmarked funds to programs in Syria in 2017. Prior to this Budget announcement, Australia had provided more than AUD 213 million (USD 163.8 million) in humanitarian assistance in response to the Syria crisis since 2011.

**Switzerland** opened a humanitarian office in Damascus in 2017 in order to provide best possible humanitarian aid at the country level. In 2017, Switzerland provided CHF 66 million



(USD 67.3 million), more than half thereof have been spent directly for Syria and the other half for the affected neighbouring countries Lebanon and Jordan. These means have supported many humanitarian partner organizations, including ICRC, UNDP, WFP, and OCHA – as well as NGOs. Additionally, 14 members of the SHA have been seconded to UN organisations to support them in areas such as CBT, protection & gender based violence, and WASH.

In 2016 **Austria** committed EUR 5,050,000 (USD 5,629,877) to the WFP Emergency Operation in Syria (EMOP 200339/PRRO 200 988) with a grant period until the end of 2017. A part of the contribution was already implemented by WFP in 2016 and reported on in the 2016 Report. The remaining part of the contribution was being implemented by WFP in 2017. The WFP programme funded by the Austrian contribution aimed at providing food assistance to vulnerable households in Syria whose food and nutrition security was adversely affected by the on-going armed conflict.

The **EU** continues to deliver life-saving assistance and support to millions of people throughout the country, including across conflict lines and international border crossings. This assistance contributed to the vital delivery of food, medicine, water, and shelter items for millions of Syrians directly affected by the conflict. In neighbouring Lebanon, EU humanitarian funding has provided cash assistance for the most vulnerable refugees, secondary healthcare for life-saving cases, non-formal education and shelter as well as water, hygiene and sanitation to improve the living conditions of the vulnerable families most affected by displacement. In Jordan and Turkey, DG ECHO supports the most vulnerable refugees *inter alia* through cash assistance.

The Brussels conference on "Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region" held on 4-5 April 2017 has raised awareness of the plight of affected civilians in Syria and resulted in the pledging of EUR 5.6 billion for 2017. At the end of 2017, the total amount of EU humanitarian aid to address the consequences of the Syria crisis on the region had reached EUR 1.6 billion. For Turkey in 2017 a total of 10 projects were funded for a total record amount of EUR 789 million.

**Canada** is providing multi-year humanitarian assistance funding to WFP to provide emergency food assistance to crisis-affected populations in Syria, Iraq, Lebanon and Jordan. In 2017, Canada provided a total of CAD 58 million to WFP operations in Syria (CAD 5M), Iraq (CAD 10M), Lebanon (CAD 13M) and Jordan (CAD 10M).

In 2017, with support from Canada and other donors, WFP reported reaching an average of 5.3 million people per month with food assistance in all 14 Syrian governorates, representing 75 percent reached against a target of 7 million, through multiple delivery modalities, including regular deliveries, cross-line inter-agency convoys, cross-border deliveries, high-altitude airdrops and airlifts. Moreover, through e-vouchers in Jordan, about 500,000 Syrian refugees were reached with food assistance in refugee camps and in host communities.

**Finland** supported WFP's Syria regional response with EUR 1.5 million. In addition, Finland provided EUR 3 million in support to ICRC and EUR 1.5 million to IFRC in Syria. This support also included food assistance and nutrition components.

**Russia** provided USD2 million of humanitarian food assistance in the framework of the WFP. It also provided 99.88 thousand tons of wheat to the Syrian Arab Republic



**France** has chosen to fund neighbouring countries of Syria (**Jordan, Lebanon**), targeting Syrian refugees, either by direct distribution of food or by cash transfer to support the local economy, especially in Lebanon where the UN agencies have developed an e-card system.

### Congo DRC

By 2017, the previously peaceful region of Kasai joined Kivu and Tanganyika as the latest victim of DRC's political crisis. As WFP's corporate Level 3 emergency response was activated in October, **Finland** granted EUR 1 million to WFP's operations in Congo DRC.

### Ethiopia

Following the worst drought in more than 50 years, which has left a negative legacy on many households including those that lost livestock and other productive assets, Ethiopia had to continuously cope with severely reduced agricultural and pastoral resource production in 2017. Livestock deaths and water shortages were reported from the primarily pastoral areas in the southern and south-eastern parts of the country in 2017. In addition, disease outbreaks and food and nutritional insecurity persisted in different areas throughout Ethiopia. The number of people to be assisted was further increased by the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs), who had migrated as a result of conflict in the Somali and Oromia Region. Some 8.5 million people were in need of assistance in mid-2017.

**Austria** contributed EUR 500,000 (USD 533,618) in response to the severe food insecurity in Ethiopia by requesting WFP to implement activities within the framework of the FAC in the country. Thereby, Austria contributed to the WFP's Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO) "Responding to Humanitarian Crises and Enhancing Resilience to Food Insecurity" in Ethiopia to address structural food insecurity and malnutrition among people living in disaster-prone areas, including short-term food assistance for households in periods of acute emergency stress, addressing moderate acute malnutrition among children under five and pregnant and lactating women. The PRRO is providing life-saving food assistance to 4.7 million people.

### Uganda

The ongoing crisis and protracted conflict in the Republic of South Sudan has created significant population displacement and a massive influx of refugees to the Republic of Uganda. Uganda currently hosts more than 1 million people from South Sudan, comprising the vast majority of the total refugee population of more than 1.4 million refugees in the country.

In 2017, Uganda was the recipient of funds made available by **Austria** for food assistance activities implemented by FAO. In order to increase resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises, the contribution has been supporting 100,000 refugees from South Sudan hosted in north and northwestern Uganda in the districts of Arua and Lamwo, alongside 45,000 Ugandan host community members.

Austria contributed a total of EUR 640,000 (USD 719,101) to FAO's broader emergency response to the refugee crisis in Uganda, within the framework of the FAC. The contribution has been supporting on-going FAO response programmes to kick-start agricultural production in the first

season of 2018. This contributed to the enhancement of food and nutrition security by restoring productive capacity through life-saving emergency agricultural livelihood interventions aimed at reducing dependency on food assistance and improving self-reliance.

## Four Famines

### ➤ Nigeria

**Finland** supported WFP's operations in Nigeria with EUR 2 million. In addition, EUR 1.5 million regional support was provided via UNHCR, totalling Finland's support to Nigeria to EUR 3.5 million.

A combination of natural and man-made disasters have resulted in one of the largest humanitarian crises in the world since 1945 with more than 20 million people facing the threat of starvation and famine in Yemen, Somalia, South Sudan and Nigeria. , according to the UN. The **EU** immediately scaled up its response and invested massively in the four countries facing the threat of starvation and famine, with EUR 750 million allocated in 2017 to respond to both humanitarian and development needs. Of this amount, EUR 378 million was allocated through humanitarian assistance by DG ECHO to cover immediate basic needs.

For a comprehensive response to the crises beyond immediate emergency needs, the EU is fully committed to tackle the underlying root causes to mitigate the effects of conflicts and seek more sustainable solutions. In addition, the EU also mobilised funding to cover the regional spill-over effects of these crises in neighbouring countries, to help the region cope with the huge fall out of the crisis in terms of refugee flows in the greater Horn of Africa and the Lake Chad basin. Although famine has been averted as a result of the immediate and sustained multi-sector humanitarian assistance delivered in 2017, extreme vulnerability and food insecurity remain very high.

**Japan**, in cooperation with international organizations, provides humanitarian assistance such as water and sanitation (including the response to the cholera epidemic), health, nutrition, insect pest control and prevention, and others.

Japan's emergency food assistance through WFP, valued at USD 14 million, has been implemented to countries in the Middle East and Africa, namely Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen, which have been suffering from the famine.

### ➤ Somalia

Protracted and severe drought in Somalia led to consecutive poor harvests and extremely limited the availability of water. The number of people facing crisis and emergency levels of food insecurity reached 3.2 million by May 2017.

**The US** and its USAID partners provided food assistance to meet emergency needs, and also provided additional assistance to vulnerable populations to increase resilience. USAID provided Somalia more than USD 262 million in FY 2017 in life-saving emergency food assistance to approximately 5.7 million drought-affected Somalis. However, the risk of famine persisted at the start of FY 2018 because of relentless drought and ongoing conflict. While the overall number of

people in need of humanitarian assistance is declining, the severity of hunger is increasing, particularly among internally displaced persons, according to FEWS NET, and FSNAU.

**Australia** provided AUD 4.5 million (USD 3.4 million) to WFP's Somalia operations in 2017. With this funding WFP was able to provide malnourished children with Plumpy Sup and Plumpy Doz, and pregnant and lactating women with CSB+.

**Finland** supported WFP's operations with EUR 2 million. In addition, EUR 2.4 million in support was provided through ICRC, EUR 600,000 through Finn Church Aid, and EUR 460,000 through Save the Children Finland. These operations included some food assistance and nutrition components. Finland's support to Somalia totalled EUR 5.46 million in 2017.

### ➤ **South Sudan**

Six million people in South Sudan are severely food insecure – the highest number ever recorded in the country – and sustained efforts to deliver humanitarian assistance are necessary.

The **United States** provided millions of vulnerable South Sudanese with emergency food assistance in FY 2017. In June, USAID contributed approximately 53,400 metric tons of regionally procured food to WFP. This was one of the largest regional commodity purchases ever made by USAID, and was enough food to feed approximately 3.5 million people for one month.

Humanitarian conditions in South Sudan continue to deteriorate because of the ongoing conflict, which left an estimated 1.5 million people still at risk of famine at the beginning of FY 2018. USAID continues to use regionally procured food, and the cost savings stretches U.S. food assistance resources as far as possible to prevent famine.

In 2017, **Canada** provided CAD 42.9 million in life-saving humanitarian assistance funding to its experienced partners to help conflict-affected people in South Sudan. Of this, CAD 23.85 million was allocated to WFP and ICRC in 2017 to support the delivery of critical emergency food assistance; coordination and logistic support for the delivery of that assistance; unconditional cash transfers; and treatment for severe acute malnutrition. Canada also provided CAD 10.65 million to projects that included elements of nutrition programming.

Since 2011, **Australia** has provided AUD 52.5 million (USD 40 million) to WFP's operations in South Sudan, including support for emergency food and nutrition supplies and provision of agricultural livelihood support. In 2017 alone, Australia provided AUD 3.1 million (USD 2.4 million) to WFP to preposition food before the rainy season and to conduct road works to keep major transport arteries open during the season.

**Finland** supported WFP's operations in South Sudan with EUR 2 million. In addition, Finland supported ICRC's operations with EUR 2,1 million and Finn Church Aid with EUR 525,000. These operations included some food security and food assistance components. Regional support was provided through UNHCR totalling EUR 3 million. Finland's support to South Sudan in 2017 totalled EUR 7.625 million.

The **French** contribution has been used for the reinforcement of agriculture, by providing seeds and tools, and also for the treatment of severe acute malnutrition.

➤ **Yemen**

In the numerous armed conflicts and ongoing hostilities in Yemen throughout 2017, civilians continue to bear the brunt of the violence. Thousands have been reportedly killed or injured, and millions displaced. IDPs and residents alike have difficulties in obtaining basic commodities and essential services as a result of damages to public infrastructure and restrictions on the movement of goods and people.

In 2017, **Canada** provided CAD 49.5 million in humanitarian assistance funding to its experienced partners to address the most urgent needs of conflict-affected people in Yemen. In addition to its bilateral contributions, Canada supported the 2017 humanitarian response in Yemen through its allocations to the UN Central Emergency Response Fund and WFP's Immediate Response Account.

Canada's humanitarian funding increased in 2017 compared to 2016 in response to the sharp increase in food insecurity and high risk of famine in Yemen. A total of CAD 22 million was allocated to the WFP and the ICRC to contribute to the delivery of critical emergency food assistance, coordination and logistical support for the delivery of that assistance, unconditional cash transfers, and treatment for severe acute malnutrition.

**Finland** provided support to WFP's operations in Yemen with EUR 2.5 million. In addition, EUR 1.5 million in support was channelled through UNHCR, bringing the total figure to EUR 4 million.

### Sahel food and nutrition crisis

In response to the continued food and nutrition crisis in the Sahel, in 2017, DG ECHO covered emergency humanitarian needs in food and nutrition in eight countries of the region. With DG ECHO support, over 1.9 million vulnerable people received food assistance, covering 14 percent of the food needs of the population in crisis during the lean season and supporting 13 percent of children who were suffering from Severe Acute Malnutrition and in need of life-saving treatment. Treatment was provided to 455,000 children. While addressing immediate humanitarian needs, **the EU** worked actively on implementing the humanitarian-development nexus in order to build the resilience of the affected population, reduce humanitarian needs and to address the root causes of food insecurity and acute undernutrition.

### Refugees or evacuees assistance in Rohingya crisis and other areas

➤ **Rohingya crisis (Bangladesh and Myanmar)**

Violence in Rakhine State, Myanmar, which intensified in August 2017, resulted in a heavy death toll and significant population displacement. Over 688,000 Rohingya sought refuge across the border in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, bringing the total number of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh close to one million.

A UN pledging conference on the Rohingya Refugee Crisis was organized on 23 October 2017, resulting in total pledges of USD 345 million for Rohingya refugees. With nearly USD 170 million, **the EU** and its Member States accounted for over 50 percent of the total. Total EU support to the Rohingya and host communities in both Myanmar and Bangladesh amounted to EUR 78 million in 2017 (of which EUR 27 million was from DG ECHO). This funding enabled the delivery of multi-sector life-saving assistance to the refugees, IDPs, and vulnerable host communities. Due to a high number of diphtheria cases reported among Rohingya refugees in December 2017, the EU Civil Protection Mechanism was also activated. This resulted for example in the deployment of the UK Emergency Medical Team for infectious care, co-financed by the EU, to provide treatment to patients in cooperation with the World Health Organisation (WHO).

On behalf of the **United States**, USAID contributed more than USD 20 million in FY 2017 for food and nutrition assistance and logistical support for the humanitarian response in Burma and Bangladesh. USAID also deployed additional staff to Bangladesh to conduct rapid field assessments, support programmatic plans for the coming year, and ensure our partners had the resources to scale up operations.

The United States invested in Bangladesh's long-term development, as well. In FY 2017, USDA's McGovern-Dole program began work with WFP in Cox's Bazar to supplement ongoing work in Gaibandha, one of the poorest regions of the country. McGovern-Dole provides daily high-energy biscuits containing about two-thirds of the recommended intake of micronutrients to school children while building the local, regional, and national capacity to manage the distribution. McGovern-Dole also trains school administrators and parent teacher associations to support education, in addition to training teachers in literacy, health and nutrition

**Canada** provided more than CAD 25.2 million in humanitarian assistance funding in 2017 to partners in both Myanmar and Bangladesh to meet the needs of crisis-affected people, including the Rohingya. This includes CAD 500,000 to WFP in Myanmar for the provision of food assistance as well as CAD 1.9 million to the ICRC in Myanmar for emergency interventions which included the provision of food assistance.

**Switzerland** increased its financial contribution to CHF 8 million (USD 8.16 million) for operations run by WFP, UNHCR, IOM and various NGOs in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. In addition, three experts from the SHA helped the IOM and UNICEF set up reception centres and install sanitation facilities and systems for distributing drinking water, and a senior cash expert supported UNICEF's activities in the camps over 5 months. In Myanmar – and specifically in the Rakhine, Kachin and Shan States – Switzerland increased its humanitarian assistance to CHF 11.3 million (USD 11.53 million) in 2017.

In 2017, **Australia** provided AUD 8.9 million (USD 6.8 million) to WFP to provide food assistance to people affected by the crisis and by ongoing food insecurity in Bangladesh. This assistance included emergency food, school feeding, nutritional support and helped to improve longer term food security. Since September 2017, Australia has provided AUD 70 million (USD 53.8 million) in humanitarian assistance to affected communities in Bangladesh and Myanmar.

Furthermore, **Japan** provided over USD 5 million in Emergency Grant Aid to residents and displaced persons in Rakhine State

➤ **Other areas**

**Austria** contributed EUR 500,000 (USD 561,798) to ICRC activities in Yemen, following the 2017 ICRC Emergency Appeal. The ICRC undertakings in Yemen, aimed at meeting Austrian obligations within the framework of the FAC, consisted of the distribution of basic food items (rice, lentils, oil) and livelihood support through the distribution of seeds (sorghum seeds, okra seeds, tomato seeds, barley seeds), tools, and fertilizer to people in need in different parts of the country.

Throughout FY 2017, the **United States** provided multiple forms of assistance that improved Yemenis' access to food. Between April and June, WFP reached an average 4.8 million beneficiaries with some form of food assistance each month. In the final three months of FY 2017, WFP increased its average to nearly 6.5 million beneficiaries each month with food assistance, the majority of which came through in-kind food distributions.

In total, USAID contributed more than USD 296 million of U.S. in-kind food aid to WFP in Yemen throughout FY 2017, strengthening the flow of food into the country and preventing the emergency from tipping into famine conditions. The support included nearly 319,000 metric tons of food, sufficient to provide assistance to WFP's target beneficiary population—which consists of the most severely food-insecure Yemenis—for nearly four months straight.

In Nigeria, USAID empowered partners—including WFP and multiple non-governmental organizations (NGOs)—to rapidly scale up emergency food assistance, reaching more people with life-saving aid. At the beginning of the fiscal year, WFP reached approximately 160,000 people with food assistance. With USAID support, the UN agency expanded its reach as FY 2017 progressed: between December 2016 and August 2017, WFP assisted more than one million people in eight out of nine months, and in September 2017 alone provided in-kind or market-based food assistance to nearly 1.3 million people. Together, WFP and USAID's NGO partners reached more than three-quarters of September's total emergency food assistance caseload in northeast Nigeria.

**Russia** also supported WFP's operations in Iraq with EUR 1 million and in drought-stricken Ethiopia with EUR 750,000.

## Hurricane Irma

**Switzerland** supported the national efforts of Cuba in response to Hurricane Irma in applying a mix of aid modalities through 1) delivery of food assistance over a six month period, implemented by WFP (immediate response of CHF 400,000) and 2) supporting reconstruction efforts by strengthening local productive capacities and sustainable use of natural resources, implemented by UNDP (early recovery of CHF 1.5 million).

**Canada** provided close to CAD 500,000 in food-based programming to support vulnerable and crisis-affected households in both Cuba and Dominica. This support has enabled hurricane-affected populations to access immediate food assistance. WFP was also able to preposition



supplies and swiftly respond to humanitarian needs throughout the Caribbean through its Immediate Response Account (IRA). In 2017, Canada was the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest donor to the IRA (\$6 million allocation through CAP 2017).

### COORDINATION AMONG DONORS

#### Global Network against Food Crises

The "Global Network against Food Crises" was launched in 2016 jointly by the **EU**, WFP and FAO in Istanbul during the WHS. It is a platform to coordinate data on food crises, and to build consensus on the assessment of needs and coordination of the global response to food crises. The Global Network consists of a technical component (joint publication of the annual Global Report on Food Crises) and a strategic component (aiming for a global dialogue to facilitate coordination, joint planning, and implementation of responses to food crises).

Following the successful experience of the 2016 Global Report on Food crises, the **EU**, FAO and WFP agreed to move the partnership forward via the involvement of additional partners, namely other donors (such as the U.S. through FEWSNET), other UN agencies, and regional economic organisations of the recipient countries, with the aim of producing an annual report to serve as a shared reference for a coordinated analysis and response to food crises. The 2017 Global Report on Food Crises was presented at a launch event in Brussels in March 2017, with participants from NGOs, UN Agencies, media, and EU member state representatives.

The importance of the Global Network comes from the fact that food insecurity is the extreme manifestation of vulnerability, and, for this reason, food crises are extremely sensitive indicators of crises in general. The initiative increasingly gained momentum in 2017, in particular with the alarming food crises in South Sudan, Somalia and Lake Chad, which are still facing the risk of famine.

#### Disability Inclusiveness

People with disabilities are disproportionately affected by natural disasters and, consequently, face higher risks as they are often excluded from, or are unable to safely access, humanitarian protection and assistance. To further encourage WFP's implementation of the 2016 Charter on the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action, **Australia, Finland and Italy** organised a side event focused on disability inclusion at the WFP Executive Board meeting in June 2017. Australia invited a Vanuatu-based disability advocate to share her experiences post Tropical Cyclone Pam (which struck Vanuatu in 2015), to bring attention to particular vulnerabilities faced by people with disabilities. As a result of sustained efforts, WFP has committed to developing a 'Guide to Disability Inclusion', which Australia continues to support through the provision of technical expertise.

#### Yemen Pledging Conference 2017

On the request of UN Secretary General (UNSG) António Guterres, Switzerland and Sweden organised the Yemen pledging conference in Geneva in April 2017. The conference was attended by more than 70 countries and a large number of regional organisations, UN agencies

and non-governmental humanitarian organisations, including from Yemen. Overall, donors pledged USD 1.1 billion.

### UNRWA

At the request of the UNSG, Switzerland agreed at the beginning 2017 to lead a consultation process as chairman of the advisory commission of the UNRWA with the aim of identifying ways to stabilise UNRWA's financial situation. Based on the results of the consultations, the UNSG submitted a report to member states and asked them to increase their voluntary contributions.

### OCHA

As a member and chair (July 2017-June 2018) of the OCHA Donor Support Group (ODSG), Switzerland followed the Change Management process, resulting in a new strategic plan, created in close coordination with the other ODSG members. It is anticipated that a reinvigorated OCHA will be in a better position to support HCTs and clusters, both at country level and globally (linked to a potential reform of the IASC in 2018).

## POLICY INITIATIVES

### The Grand Bargain

One of the clearest outcomes of the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016 was the Grand Bargain. The Grand Bargain is a set of 10 non-binding political commitments that donor governments and humanitarian organizations plan to jointly pursue to strengthen the effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability of humanitarian assistance to people in need.

The **EU's** DG ECHO is a co-convener of the Grand Bargain Workstream on Needs Assessment and was also part of the Grand Bargain Facilitation Group, which aims to drive the momentum of the Grand Bargain itself and support activities across the different work streams. After being in office from 1 October 2016 to 31 August 2017, the members of the first Grand Bargain Facilitation Group (DG ECHO, Switzerland, OCHA, WFP, UN Women, the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response network and the IFRC) handed over to the new Facilitation Group as of 1 September 2017 (UK, Germany, OCHA, UNHCR, InterAction network and the ICRC).

**Australia** made progress in supporting localisation, increasing the use of cash-based programming, and increasing multiyear planning and funding in 2017.

**Finland** has also endorsed the Grand Bargain and already achieved its benchmark of providing 30 percent of its overall humanitarian funding as unearmarked. Multiyear core funding is granted to UNHCR, WFP, UNRWA, OCHA, UNISDR and ICRC.

Under the Grand Bargain, the **United States** supports the New Way of Working to strengthen the humanitarian-development nexus, recognizing that greater continuity of resources at different phases along this continuum can better serve the needs of affected populations. The U.S. aim is to ensure adequate responses to both immediate life-saving needs and livelihood development.



The **United States** is also co-leading the Grand Bargain's Participation Revolution work stream with the Steering Committee on Humanitarian Response. The United States has produced guidance for Grand Bargain signatories in this area, including detailed recommendations to incentivize good practice.

### Cash assistance

In 2017, **Switzerland** supported the Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP) not only financially but also through secondment of a senior SHA technical advisor to the CaLP office in Geneva. For over a decade, Cash has been an integral part of SHA policy dialogue with its multilateral partners (WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNRWA, and ICRC/IFRC). SHA pursued its policy of strategically seconding CTP experts to partners, with 21 experts deployed in 2017. Increasingly, cash is also mainstreamed into preparedness activities linked to social protection: first responders are being trained on how to use cash approaches in rapid and onset emergencies

### Conflict and Hunger

**Switzerland**, together with the Netherlands, led a high profile UN discussion series on the issue of Conflict & Hunger in New York, Geneva and Rome. The final report captured as much as possible from the expertise that was shared during these meetings. Its recommendations to the Security Council, Member States, and the UN system were followed up on by both the Swiss and Netherlands missions in New York over the past months. On May 2018, the Security Council's 15 members unanimously voted in favour of a resolution to ban the use of starvation as a weapon of war championed by a core group consisting of **Côte d'Ivoire, Kuwait, the Netherlands and Sweden**; starvation is prohibited by international humanitarian law and "may constitute a war crime." The resolution also calls for action to address the growing number of people suffering from hunger around the world, especially in conflicts. It appeals to all parties to armed conflict to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law, including sparing infrastructures needed for producing and distributing food, such as farms, markets, mills and water systems.

### Education in Emergencies

In 2017 DG ECHO dedicated 6 percent of its budget to Education in Emergencies (EiE). This is well on track towards the pledge by the Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management at the World Humanitarian Summit to reach 10 percent by the end of his mandate in 2019. Besides the humanitarian budget, in 2017 DG ECHO also managed EiE funding through the Emergency Support Instrument in Greece and the **EU** Facility for Refugees in Turkey, amounting to nearly EUR 96 million in support to EiE globally.

In 2017, 1.14 million girls and boys benefited from this assistance. DG ECHO also continued to raise awareness of the importance of quality education in crisis and forced displacement contexts, linking the work of humanitarian and development actors, and strengthening coordination and capacity building in the sector through funding the Global Education Cluster and hosting its annual partners' meeting. Those who benefit from the EiE programs will, in all likelihood, also be recipients of assistance in the form of cash or food assistance.

## Innovation and Digitalisation

Support for innovation and digitalisation emerged in 2017 as a major focus in DG ECHO's support to maximise the impact of humanitarian aid. By changing humanitarian programme design and delivery (including in the form of cash), as well as developing new partnerships and introducing new actors in humanitarian response, there has been a growing interest in new technologies and solutions. The humanitarian sector is increasingly testing and adopting digital technologies to improve the speed, efficiency and effectiveness of their operations. Digital technologies are having a direct impact on people in need of or receiving humanitarian assistance by giving affected persons a voice and providing access to information and services. Additionally, increasing the availability of data is a strong push toward greater data-driven decision making.

The **EU** is looking into what aspects of innovation and digitalisation can be applied to humanitarian preparedness and response to ensure humanitarian aid, including food assistance, remains timely, relevant and effective. The potential is huge and so are the challenges. Data protection is a particular concern in light of the sensitive, personal or community data handled by many organisations, which highlights the inherent link between digitalisation and protection.

## Gender and Call to Action

In June 2017 the **EU**, through DG ECHO, formally took over the leadership of the 'Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies' from Sweden, during the 2017 ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment in Geneva. During its one-year leadership, the EU will focus on strengthening awareness and implementation of the Call to Action by the humanitarian community, in particular at field level. In line with the Call to Action Road Map 2016-2020, the EU will also advocate for the need to prevent and respond to gender-based violence during each phase of an emergency.

The Call to Action is a global multi-stakeholder initiative which brings together over 60 members, including States and donors, international organisations and NGOs striving to ensure that gender-based violence is addressed in humanitarian crises. Its goal is to drive change and foster accountability so that every humanitarian effort, from the earliest phases of a crisis, includes policies, systems and mechanisms to mitigate gender-based violence risks, especially violence against women and girls, and to provide safe and comprehensive services for those affected by gender-based violence. The EU will be the fourth lead of the Call to Action following the **United Kingdom, the United States, and Sweden**.

## Feminist International Assistance Policy

**Canada**, with its Feminist International Assistance Policy, released in 2017, will continue to champion and systematically advance gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment in every humanitarian response and in development assistance, including food assistance. The specific needs of women and girls are often overlooked and underfunded during humanitarian crises, and their voices and leadership remain undervalued and untapped. Canada is promoting

system-level change to ensure that humanitarian action is principled, evidence-based and empowers women and girls. Canada asks its partners to integrate gender equality, through gender analysis, the collection of disaggregated data and thorough consultation processes, noting the need for women's and girls' engagement in decision making on issues that affect them.

## INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO FOOD ASSISTANCE

### Technological Innovations

**Australia** is supporting WFP's 'Building Blocks' project. Building Blocks is a block chain-based system that was piloted in Azraq refugee camp in Jordan in early 2017. The building blocks system relies on biometric registration data from UNHCR for authentication purposes and allows refugees to purchase food from local supermarkets using retinal scanning technology to verify their identify. As of October 2018, more than 100,000 people residing in camps redeemed their WFP-provided assistance through the block chain-based system. The next stage of the block-chain project will see an expansion to all 500,000 Syrian refugees in Jordan receiving support from WFP.

**Australia** is also supporting WFP's mobile Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping project (mVAM). mVAM uses mobile technology to track food security trends in real-time, providing high-frequency data that supports humanitarian decision-making. A successful trial in Papua New Guinea (PNG) during the 2015-16 El Niño event led to WFP partnering with PNG government agencies in an ongoing surveillance and analysis program.

### Cash Innovations

In line with its commitment to support cash as a delivery modality whenever possible, The **EU's** DG ECHO has encouraged the use of cash in its programmes throughout the world. DG ECHO has reached its Grand Bargain target of 35 percent of all DG ECHO assistance to be delivered through cash transfer-based activities.

DG ECHO issued a Cash Guidance note in November 2017 with the aim of boosting the effectiveness and efficiency of large-scale cash transfer operations. The approach has already resulted in more effective and efficient cash transfer programmes in DG ECHO-funded operations in Somalia, Iraq, Lebanon, Greece and Turkey. Efficiency ratios of 85:15 are already being achieved and DG ECHO will continue to seek even greater efficiencies.

The **United States** has committed to increasing the use of cash for food assistance, when and where appropriate. The proportion of cash used to respond to food crises has increased in recent years. USAID's Office of Food for Peace more than doubled cash programming for food to \$318 million in Fiscal Year 2017, from \$126 million in Fiscal Year 2015. Total cash programming, including food vouchers, was \$735 million in FY 2017.

While the U.S. Government is committed to increasing cash programming, its guiding principle is to choose the most appropriate food assistance modality for each situation. The U.S. Government believes that using the right type of food assistance in the right context is the key to effectiveness.

In 2017, the United States continued to support efforts to increase the evidence base for the use of different modalities and worked to improve the coordination of cash-based programming among donors. The United States sees a clear need for better donor coordination and a shared vision and principles for reform for cash to be an effective modality. Work in this area will continue.

### Innovative Resilience and Livelihood

**Canada** is partnering with the United Nations Rome-based agencies (RBAs) –FAO, WFP, and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) – to further test in the field their joint Conceptual Framework for strengthening resilience in the areas of food security and nutrition. In line with commitments made at the World Humanitarian Summit of 2016 and in the Grand Bargain, Canada is seeking to advance new and differentiated approaches to protracted crises. To this end, Canada is contributing CAD 50 million for the implementation of an innovative, five-year Resilience Initiative (2017-2021) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Niger and Somalia. While the RBAs collaborate closely in many countries, this is the first time that they have received joint multi-year funding for resilience work.

The **EU**, through DG ECHO, is involved in the 'No Wasted Lives' coalition. Created in 2016 in partnership with key actors in the Nutrition Sector, the coalition aims to optimize synergies for faster, greater impact in the scale-up of nutrition programmes globally. DG ECHO has helped design and is involved in the implementation of the 2016-2020 workplan, and provides inputs at both the regional and the global levels through expert input from its extended field network. In January 2017 DG ECHO published the 'Wash & Nutrition Guidebook', a practical guide on increasing nutritional impact through the integration of WASH and Nutrition programmes. In addition, DG ECHO is part of the Nutrition Research Steering Committee of the Research on Food Assistance for Nutritional Impact (REFANI) initiative, funded by the UK and the EU. In this framework, DG ECHO participated in April 2017 to the REFANI conference in Dakar, Senegal to share its experience and approach on cash and WASH nutrition research projects.

**France** has supported the 4R Program in Senegal and Zimbabwe. This program aims to allow vulnerable rural population to strengthen their food security and to secure their income by improved resources management (risk reduction), insurance (risk transfer), micro-credit (controlled risk-taking) and saving (reserve to address the risk). The objectives are primarily improve food security and livelihoods in years with normal rainfall and at secondarily to strengthen resilience to shocks, allowing households to maintain adequate level of food consumption in years with drought.

### BEST PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED IN 2017

**Australia** produced an internal Cash Transfers Humanitarian Strategy Guidance Note outlining support for cash as a humanitarian programming option for relief and early recovery where appropriate, based on case by case analysis. Research conducted by Overseas Development Institute (ODI) has shown that cash is usually more cost efficient and faster, offers more flexibility and choice to recipients, is more dignified and empowering and affords benefits to local markets and trade. In concert with biometric registration and other innovations such as

block chain, cash can also reduce the risk of fraud and corruption, ensuring funds are received by those most in need. To guide increased use of cash-based programming, Australia provides funding to the Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP) to develop and employ common markers and definitions for organisations to track and report cash transfer programming. To bolster expertise in the Pacific region, Australia funded CaLP to deliver training on cash programming in the Pacific in 2017. **Canada** has continued to work with international humanitarian partners to improve implementation of collective commitments from the World Humanitarian Summit and the Grand Bargain, particularly with a view to more effective financing and effectively addressing protracted crises.

Canada consistently provides multi - year flexible funding to its two main food assistance partners - WFP and the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. In addition, Canada provides multi - year funding for the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), which supports, inter alia, food assistance response both in rapid onset situations and those that are underfunded. Canada is providing CAD147 million in unearmarked funding between 2016 and 2020, with CAD 29.4 million allocated in 2017. WFP continues to be the largest recipient of CERF funding – with over USD 143 million provided in 2017.

Canada recognises the importance of strong partnerships for more effective assistance. Canada has undertaken joint discussions with UNICEF and WFP to push for better partnership and practice on the ground, recognising the existing MoU between the two organizations is insufficient. WFP and UNICEF are undertaking a strategic review of their partnership with a view to creating a “joint framework” on nutrition partnership. Canada will continue to provide strategic guidance and advice on the development of the framework, and help ensure continued progress towards a strengthened nutrition partnership.

In July 2017, Canada announced an innovative Resilience Initiative, valued at CAD 50 million over five years which will be implemented through a partnership between the WFP, the FAO, and the IFAD in the DRC, Niger and Somalia. Through a complementary and flexible mix of interventions these organizations will meet immediate food needs, and address longer - term challenges (i.e. adaptation to climate change, livelihood interventions), with the ultimate aim of decreasing dependence on humanitarian assistance.

Canada’s most notable policy announcement came in June 2017, with the release of its Feminist International Assistance Policy. Canada committed to champion the importance of addressing gender equality and empowerment of women across all international assistance. Canada sees this approach as central to good programming, and gender - responsive humanitarian action is essential to saving lives. This new policy gives a stronger voice to advocate for gender equality. However, Canada cannot do this alone and needs to work collectively, including with FAC members and other food assistance partners, to ensure the needs of women, men, boys and girls are addressed consistently and systematically in every response.

As with all of Canadian humanitarian funding, Canada recognizes the value and expertise its partners bring in determining how best to meet beneficiary needs. While Canada fully supports cash - based responses, where appropriate, Canada give full flexibility to its partners to provide

assistance according to the modality they deem most appropriate, whether cash - based transfers, vouchers or in - kind food aid.

**The EU** attaches great importance to the link between humanitarian aid, as a rapid response measure in crisis situations, and more medium and long-term development action. The humanitarian-development nexus requires increased coordination – leading to joint humanitarian-development approaches and collaborative implementation, monitoring and tracking progress. Operationalising the nexus with a systematic establishment of common outcomes is the current focus of the EU. Six pilot countries (Chad, Iraq, Myanmar, Nigeria, Sudan and Uganda ) have been identified followed by the organisation of the first nexus workshops in each pilot country to discuss options on how the EU and its member states work together to reduce humanitarian needs, protracted forced displacement and longer-term fragility and contribute to stabilisation. The EU continued to step up cooperation in 2017 based on a common approach to resilience-building, which aims to ensure greater coherence with other EU-funded projects, better complementarity with local systems and EU development co-operation, and a clearer portrayal of the EU's added value. The humanitarian and development services of the EU work closely together to ensure that the emergency response is accompanied by preparedness actions and followed by strengthening of the long-term food security and resilience-building activities in the most affected countries.

DG ECHO further advanced its global Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) efforts. DRR activities were mainstreamed in 65 % of all humanitarian operations in 2017, up from 57% in 2016. DG ECHO's Disaster Preparedness programme (DIPECHO) was fully integrated in the Humanitarian Aid Financing Decision, and targeted the enhancement of local preparedness capacities so that early action could be taken to reduce the impacts of hazards, safeguard assets and limit human losses and humanitarian needs.

**United States:** Since 2010, USAID's Food for Peace Office has used a variety of approaches to meet global emergency food assistance needs quickly and cost-effectively. These approaches include cash transfers, food vouchers, and in-kind food aid, either procured in the United States or in local or regional markets (known as LRP). Today, USAID is the largest donor of funds for emergency food assistance and also the largest donor of cash-based programming for food assistance.

In 2016, USAID commissioned Technical Assistance to Non-Governmental Organizations International (TANGO) to conduct a review of Market-Based Emergency Food Assistance Programs. The review, which will be published later this year, evaluates USAID market-based emergency food assistance activities from 2010-2016, with four objectives: (1) to establish a historical narrative about the evolution of USAID market-based emergency food assistance; (2) to review program design and implementation processes; (3) to analyze program cost-efficiency trends; and (4) to qualitatively assess the effects of USAID food assistance on local economies and market actors.

The review draws on seven case studies, an e-survey, program documents from USAID and its implementing partners, and an expansive body of literature relevant to emergency food assistance programming. Case study examples were selected to represent ongoing USAID programming around the world, including a mix of slow-onset crises, acute crises and regional

emergencies (e.g., Ebola epidemic; Syria conflict). The review team observed lessons in multiple countries.

The evolution of USAID market-based programming has occurred in parallel with the expansion of cash-based programming on the global humanitarian stage. Therefore, this review should contribute to the larger community of practice as well as to technical experience and learning inside USAID.