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Acronymes

CIL	Care in Luxembourg
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
COHAFA	Council working party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid
DREF	Disaster Relief Emergency Fund
ECHO	European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
FAC	Food Assistance Convention
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FCL	Fondation Caritas Luxembourg
GHD	Good Humanitarian Donorship
IASC	Inter Agency Standing Committee
IDP	Internally displaced person
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IHA	International Humanitarian Assistance – Global Affairs Canada
IHL	International humanitarian law
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
KIRS	Serbian Commissariat for Refugees and Migrants
MAEE	Ministère des Affaires étrangères et européennes (Luxembourg Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs)
MLEVSA	Serbian Ministry for Work, Employment, Veterans and Social Affairs
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PBF	Pooled Based Funding
PLW	Pregnant and Lactating Women
RUSF	Ready to Use Supplementary Food
RUTF	Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SPAs	Strategic Partnership Agreements
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation
WHS	World Humanitarian Summit

Food Assistance Convention 2019 Annual Narrative Report Luxembourg

Overall assistance

In 2019 the Luxembourg Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs (herein referred to as “Luxembourg MFEA” or “Luxembourg”) allocated more than 46.5 million EUR in its response to humanitarian interventions. Throughout 2019, Luxembourg together with its civil society partner organisations and multilateral partners maintained a needs-based and principled humanitarian assistance for vulnerable populations affected by protracted humanitarian crises in countries across the Middle East, the Sahel, the Horn of Africa, and Asia, among others.

In 2019 Luxembourg made substantial funding available to support the humanitarian operations carried out by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and United Nations (UN) entities such as the World Food Programme (WFP) and the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), as well as to support Luxembourg’s non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to implement emergency projects.

Luxembourg thus continued to support humanitarian interventions in various contexts, particularly in “forgotten” or underfunded crises, and in the three phases of a humanitarian crisis as defined in Luxembourg’s humanitarian action strategy: emergency, transition and disaster prevention, and resilience.¹

Luxembourg’s commitment under the Food Assistance Convention (FAC) for 2014 was 6 million EUR. Ever since, Luxembourg’s financial contribution to nutrition-related interventions has remained consistent and as in 2019, for the year 2019, it exceeded its FAC commitment comfortably. Luxembourg’s food assistance was implemented via multilateral and national partners, such as the WFP and NGOs such as “Care in Luxembourg” (CIL), “Fondation Caritas Luxembourg” (FCL) and “Eng open Hand fir Malawi”.

Food assistance in 2019

In 2019, Luxembourg maintained support for people affected by protracted crises, food insecurity and displacement in numerous contexts across the Middle East, the Sahel, and Asia, among others.

With Luxembourg’s multi-annual contribution to WFP in 2019, WFP was able to provide emergency food assistance targeting conflict- and crisis-affected populations in Yemen, Mali, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Bangladesh and the Central African Republic (CAR). Additionally, Luxembourg supported WFP’s School Meals programs in Mali, Senegal and Nicaragua, where WFP provided nutritious meals to primary school children to encourage school attendance while supporting the national governments with capacity strengthening support to reinforce this vital social safety net.

Luxembourg’s flexible contributions to WFP support the latter’s mission to save lives in emergencies, particularly with the help of innovative food assistance tools, including community-based nutritional support, school meals, supplementary nutrition activities and cash-and-voucher programmes. In the same vein, Luxembourg places an emphasis on the potential of innovative approaches to attend to the needs of food insecure populations, especially in the context of disasters, protracted conflicts and ever-growing

¹ Emergency: 75% of its annual humanitarian budget, transition and disaster prevention: 20% of its annual humanitarian budget and resilience: 5% of its humanitarian action budget, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction adopted in March 2015.

funding challenges. Luxembourg thus also promotes innovative tools for food assistance by supporting WFP in its implementation of cash-based transfer programmes in the humanitarian field as an effective tool to promote empowerment, dignity and security.

Additionally, Luxembourg contributed 500,000 EUR to WFP for its nutrition activities in West Africa (this is a multi-annual contribution). Given the fragility and susceptibility to natural disasters, insecurity and conflicts in the West African region, it is key to preserve nutrition assets, to promote community-level resilience and to develop safety nets and social protection mechanisms alongside immediate life-saving assistance. By providing funding for the implementation of nutrition activities in West Africa, Luxembourg's support to the WFP in 2019 enabled addressing the needs of the most vulnerable by strengthening their capacity to design and implement nutrition programmes. Moreover, as last year, Luxembourg made a contribution of 500,000 EUR to the Immediate Response Account (IRA) of WFP in 2019.

Key Responses

N.B. In 2019, with the support of Luxembourg's contributions, WFP was leading L3 operations in Yemen and Syria.

Yemen

In response to the humanitarian crisis in Yemen in 2019, Luxembourg contributed 1 million EUR to WFP to help it respond effectively to the world's largest humanitarian crisis, where 80 percent of the population – 24 million people – needed humanitarian assistance or protection. Thanks to support from Luxembourg and other donors, WFP could reach over 3,7 million people in July 2019 and provide 64,146 children under 2 for a 3-month cycle, with Plumpy Doz, used for the prevention of moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) for children under 2 in 165 priority districts across Yemen.

Furthermore, in 2019, Luxembourg also supported a project implemented by Care in Luxembourg, specifically providing general food assistance through cash-based assistance.

In addition, in 2019 Luxembourg contributed to the Common Humanitarian Fund for Yemen, managed by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

Syria (and neighbouring countries/Syrian Refugees)

With regard to the Syrian crisis, Luxembourg contributed 500,000 EUR to WFP. In 2019, WFP reached 6,7 million girls and boys, women and men across its activities in Syria. Internally displaced people (IDPs) remained the largest single beneficiary group, and overall, women and girls represented more than half of WFP's beneficiaries. With Luxembourg's contribution to Syria in 2019, the operation was able to provide nutritional support to 67,200 children as part of its prevention of acute malnutrition programme. Malnutrition prevention activities also included capacity strengthening of national stakeholders and social and behavioural change communication to beneficiaries and caregivers on dietary diversity, nutrient intake and infant and young child feeding.

Furthermore, in 2019 Luxembourg supported the Fondation Caritas Luxembourg (FCL) to cover complementary costs for food distribution activities that were co-funded by other donors². The food assistance consisted of warm meals cooked by a field kitchen, and cash support was also provided to families who partly used this support for food aid. Luxembourg also supported FCL regarding the structural costs necessary to implement the distributions and the VAT incurred in Turkey.

In addition, in 2019 Luxembourg contributed to the Syria Humanitarian Fund, managed by OCHA.

² N.B. The financial report from FCL does not list the contributions from other donors (i.e. ECHO, OCHA, the Canadian Government (IHA) through Caritas Canada, the German Government (through Welthungerhilfe) and Caritas Germany).

South Sudan

Thanks to the Luxembourg MFEA's support in 2019, FCL delivered food aid in camps for internally displaced persons in South Sudan, reinforced food security through capacity building on more diversified and sustainable agricultural practices, and increased local knowledge on the use of better practices in nutrition. FCL's latest innovative approach consists in distributing starter seeds and building the capacity of selected farmers to multiply high-quality seed of improved varieties. This represents a crucial step in transforming farmers' lives, helping them to more independent and enabling them to generate an income. It also contributes to the food security of communities – local seed availability means that communities will no longer need to rely on seeds received or bought from foreign aid and private firms each season. FCL's work on strengthening cooperatives is also key to ensuring the longer-term negotiation power and access to market of local farmers. With a view toward long-term impact and sustainability, FCL collaborates closely with State services, especially the Directorate of Cooperatives, which supported the project. FCL also collaborates with the State Ministry of Health, which participates in the reinforcement of communities' knowledge on nutrition (diversity, screening of malnourished children, good hygiene practices, etc.), and with the County Director of Agriculture on trainings and seed distribution. Crucially, Luxembourg's support has allowed FCL to continue its successful partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to strengthen farmers' cooperatives, livestock rearing, and seed multiplication. It also allowed FCL to attract WFP financing starting in 2019 to support smallholder farmers and to strengthen local marketing mechanisms for agricultural products. In addition, in 2019 Luxembourg contributed to the Common Humanitarian Fund for South Sudan, managed by OCHA.

Mozambique

After the cyclone Idai in March 2019, FCL started implementing emergency response activities in Mozambique. Through the funding received from the Luxembourg MFEA, 700 households in five villages around Dombe area benefited from food distribution during three months. The food distribution process was carried out with the help of a voucher system and in close collaboration with the community leaders. The food distribution activity was part of a more comprehensive project led by Caritas Switzerland that also included the distribution of kitchen kits, clothes and school material as well as seeds and farming tools. Luxembourg also supported a project by Care in Luxembourg, which specifically targeted livelihood activities.

Sahel

In light of the deteriorating humanitarian situation in central Sahel, Luxembourg's support in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger has aimed to address as well as prevent a further worsening of the food and nutritional security of vulnerable communities.

Mali

In 2019 Luxembourg allocated 500,000 EUR to WFP to support WFP's humanitarian operations in Mali. With the support of Luxembourg in 2019, WFP Mali was able to support the Government of Mali in reaching over 570,000 of the most vulnerable people with life-saving food and nutrition assistance, including conflict-affected populations, host communities and over 185,000 IDPs. Moreover, Luxembourg supported WFP's School Meals programme in Mali with an additional 500,000 EUR.

Niger

In 2019 Luxembourg allocated 250,000 EUR to WFP to support the emergency response in the country. Thanks to Luxembourg's support, WFP was able to reach 25,000 children aged between 6 and 23 months with malnutrition prevention interventions in the regions of Diffa, Maradi, Tahoua and Tillabéry, while over 20,000 pupils benefited from emergency canteens in Diffa. WFP continued to provide support to refugees, IDPs and vulnerable host communities and when conditions allowed, implemented conditional activities in emergency areas through Food for Assets (FFA), as part of a longer-term strategy to strengthen livelihoods and contribute to social cohesion.

In 2019 Luxembourg also supported a project implemented by the Fondation Caritas Luxembourg. The « cash-for-food » approach adopted by FCL to support vulnerable households in Niger is to provide beneficiaries with funds for the purchase of food. The reasons for using this approach include the fact that beneficiaries can buy food of their own choice, at their own convenience and whenever they need to. Moreover, this approach favours the reduction of partner implementation working time and the speed with which the beneficiaries are stocked (time spent looking for grain suppliers, organizing the distribution of stocks, etc.), and promotes transparency in the delivery of funds.

With funding from the Luxembourg MFEA, FCL supported 1,880 households, including 1,000 households in Diffa (IDPs, refugees and host households), 600 households in Tillabery (IDPs, refugees and host households) and 280 IDPs and host households in Tahoua, covering their food requirements for four months (July to October 2019) through unconditional cash transfers.

Furthermore, in 2019, Luxembourg also supported a project by Care in Luxembourg, specifically targeting direct food distribution as well as livelihood activities.

Burkina Faso

In 2019 Luxembourg allocated 500,000 EUR to WFP to support its humanitarian operations in the country. Luxembourg's support enabled WFP to assist 7,500 vulnerable people with food assistance in the centre and north of Burkina Faso. Thanks to the flexibility provided by Luxembourg, WFP was able to use its internal advance financing mechanism to preposition food and be ready for the distribution before the rainy season. Without this support, vulnerable communities would have had no choice but to resort to negative coping strategies such as selling their assets to meet their basic needs.

Bangladesh/ Myanmar (Rohingya Crisis)

In 2019, Luxembourg contributed 250,000 EUR to WFP for its operations in Bangladesh and thereby supported WFP in providing technical assistance to the Government of Bangladesh to scale up rice fortification, leveraging the increasing role of the private sector with the commercialization of fortified rice. Moreover, with the support from Luxembourg and other donors, WFP provided food assistance to 854,704 Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar through either in-kind food distributions or an e-voucher scheme. WFP scaled up e-voucher assistance, increasing the number of e-voucher outlets from six (14 shops) to 12 (27 shops) by December 2019. The number of households receiving e-vouchers doubled in 2019, reaching almost half of the refugee population by December. In total, WFP transferred food commodities to its beneficiaries using e-vouchers. WFP also moved forward with streamlining nutrition activities by integrating nutrition centres in the refugee camps.

In addition, in 2019 Luxembourg contributed to the Common Humanitarian Fund for Myanmar, managed by OCHA.

Forgotten crises / Other contexts

Central African Republic

In 2019, Luxembourg made a contribution of 350,000 EUR to WFP for its humanitarian operations in CAR. In addition, in 2019 Luxembourg contributed to the Common Humanitarian Fund for CAR, managed by OCHA.

Nicaragua

In 2019 Luxembourg allocated 1 million EUR to the School Meal Programme in Nicaragua. Thanks to Luxembourg's support, WFP reached over 180,000 schoolchildren in some of the poorest areas of the country and thereby ensured a key social protection mechanism to guarantee access to food, and promote a sustainable and human development. The food that was procured in 2019 was sourced from smallholder farmer organizations and over 300 female and male farmers, thereby supporting the local economy as well as the localization of assistance.

Senegal

In 2019, with the support of Luxembourg's contribution of 500.000 EUR, WFP was able to reach over 50,000 schoolchildren in 236 schools in the semi-arid region of Matam and provide them with daily nutritious meals through electronic food vouchers. This cash injection boosted the local economy and empowered community members including women, affiliated to canteens operations. Building on the 2018 successful achievements and innovations, WFP continued to scale up an integrated approach to homegrown school feeding. This included developing school gardens to grow vegetables and fruits, community fields to provide cereals and helping schools acquire poultry, for consumption and sale.

It is worth noting that in 2019, Luxembourg also contributed to the Common Humanitarian Funds for Iraq, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria and Ukraine, all managed by OCHA.

Coordination among donors

World Humanitarian Summit (WHS), Grand Bargain, and Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD)

In 2019, Luxembourg remained committed to providing humanitarian assistance in the framework of commitments made at the World Humanitarian Summit and in compliance with the Grand Bargain initiative. In the face of growing humanitarian needs, Luxembourg also continued to draw particular attention to the importance of a coordinated and integrated approach to implementing the humanitarian-development nexus as well as to the so-called "triple nexus".

Furthermore, in 2019 Luxembourg's humanitarian action and its approach to improving the effectiveness of aid delivery was guided by the principles of « Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) », complying with international standards and best practices in terms of providing predictable and flexible funding, and promoting the respect for international humanitarian law (IHL).

In 2019 Luxembourg actively participated in various technical and high level meetings of the Grand Bargain as well as the GHD.

COHAFA

Luxembourg is an active member of and contributor to the monthly meetings of the Council working party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA) as the main forum within the European Union for strategic and policy discussions on humanitarian assistance between the EU Member States and the European Commission. At these meetings, the European Commission's Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid

Operations department (ECHO) and the EU Member States exchange information on humanitarian crises and assess humanitarian needs. They also seek to improve the coherence of aid efforts at both the EU level and global level.

Policy initiatives

Fundamental humanitarian principles/European Consensus and international humanitarian law

In accordance with its international commitments, Luxembourg is dedicated to maintaining and promoting the fundamental humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence and well as the respect for international humanitarian law (IHL), which are fundamental for the provision of a needs-based and principled humanitarian assistance, especially in humanitarian contexts that have become increasingly politicized.

WHS and Grand Bargain

At the WHS in 2016, Luxembourg had subscribed to all the fundamental commitments underlying the « Agenda for Humanity » and had made 45 national commitments. Since 2016, Luxembourg has been working towards fulfilling these commitments and has also continued to follow the « Grand Bargain » initiative, an agreement between implementing agencies and donors to make humanitarian aid more effective, including by making funding more predictable.

Road to 2030 and Humanitarian Action strategy

Besides Luxembourg's General Development Cooperation strategy "Road to 2030" from 2018 which pathed the way for a more integrated and multi-sectoral approach to development cooperation and humanitarian action, Luxembourg's humanitarian assistance is guided by its Humanitarian Action strategy from 2013 which fully aligns itself with the fundamental humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence. The strategy will be updated in 2020/2021 in order to accommodate the growing humanitarian challenges and needs into Luxembourg's strategic outlook regarding humanitarian action.

Multilateral funding support (contributions to various funds)

In view of the growing importance of predictable, un-earmarked and flexible funding and in line with Luxembourg's commitment taken at the WHS to this regard, Luxembourg provided, as in previous years, an annual contribution to the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) in 2019. The contribution increased from 4,75 million EUR in 2018 to 5 million EUR in 2019. In addition, as described above under "Key responses", Luxembourg made contributions of 350,000 EUR respectively (up from 300,000 EUR in 2018) to various funds managed by OCHA, namely to the Humanitarian Fund for Syria and the Common Humanitarian Funds (CHF) for Yemen, Iraq, South Sudan, CAR, DRC, Nigeria, Myanmar and Ukraine. The increase in contributions to these funds also corresponds to Luxembourg's quest to strengthen and promote localization of humanitarian assistance.

Moreover, Luxembourg made an annual contribution to the IRA. Contributions to the IRA being non-earmarked and flexible, they allow WFP to respond rapidly to emergencies. As it consists of multilateral funding, the IRA strengthens the principles of timeliness, predictability and flexibility.

Furthermore, the International Federation of Red Cross Societies' Emergency Disaster Relief Fund (DREF) was eligible for 150,000 EUR. In addition, Luxembourg contributed to the WHO Contingency Fund with 500,000 EUR. Luxembourg's contribution to the UNDP Peace Building Fund (PBF) also increased from 100,000 EUR in 2018 to 200,000 EUR in 2019.

In addition, in 2019 Luxembourg provided multi-annual funding to humanitarian operations of the ICRC, UNHCR as well annual core funding to the ICRC, UNHCR, OCHA, UNICEF and UNFPA, among others.

Innovative approaches in providing assistance

To further enhance the potential of innovation as an essential catalyst for an improved humanitarian response, Luxembourg entered into a new partnership in 2018 with the WFP Innovation Accelerator based in Munich. The Accelerator brings together internal WFP staff with experts from across the private sector and civil society to develop high-impact, human-centred innovations for a world with Zero Hunger (SDG 2). In 2019, Luxembourg remained keen to explore innovative solutions and pursued its partnership with the WFP Innovation Accelerator with a contribution of 500,000 EUR to the Special Account for Zero Hunger Acceleration Fund (Innovation Fund), half of which was transferred to the Tanzania Acceleration Fund.

In 2018, part of the Luxembourg financial contribution to the WFP Innovation Accelerator had been invested in the “Building Blocks” project in two Syrian refugee camps in Jordan aiming to strengthen new means of cash transfers to reduce costs and associated risks, while ensuring timely distribution of food assistance. It involves the use of blockchain, a type of distributed ledger technology, while expanding refugee choices in how they access and spend their cash assistance. In 2019, WFP used “Building Blocks” to make cash transfers more efficient, secure and transparent. Through this project, WFP continued to serve over 107,000 Syrian refugees in Jordan’s Zaatari and Azraq camps, saving 98 percent in financial transaction fees. Moreover, “Building Blocks” explored and set the foundations of expansion to Bangladesh in 2019, ultimately piloting building blocks with Rohingya refugees in Cox’s Bazar, reaching around 46,000 people. Also, Luxembourg’s contribution to the WFP Innovation Accelerator supported the “WFP X” project in the framework of which Oxford Rhodes AI Lab and WFP co-created AI ideas that contribute to Sustainable Development Goal 2: Zero Hunger, including food price prediction, safety of food supply transportation routes prediction, informal settlement mapping, local market accessibility, multilevel analysis of urban food insecurity and Locust/pest forecasting.

Best practices during 2019

With Luxembourg’s long-term commitment towards flexible humanitarian funding instruments, such as CERF, CHF and DREF, Luxembourg continued to support activities aimed at preventing food insecurity and famine, while at the same time building the capacity of national actors as first responders in crisis-affected countries, thus also reinforcing the localisation of the humanitarian response. Furthermore, Luxembourg continued to support its partners to meet the needs of vulnerable people, across the context of a coordinated and coherent humanitarian, development and peace nexus, while making sure however that a distinction among the three pillars is maintained in fragile contexts.

In 2019, Luxembourg was actively engaged in WFP’s consultative process for the formulation of its newly adopted School Feeding Strategy 2020-2030: “A Chance for Every Schoolchild” and its roll-out in West Africa and Central Sahel. Moreover, Luxembourg joined WFP in its commitment to promote gender equality in the context of food and nutrition security in Nicaragua. The support received is contributing to analyzing how gender aspects affect the food and nutrition security of women and men, including children, and identifying transformative actions.

N.B. Luxembourg was a Member of the Executive Board of the WFP in 2019.

Lastly, in its quest to improve and strengthen the impact and effectiveness of its humanitarian assistance, the humanitarian action service within the Luxembourg MFEA underwent a self-assessment in 2019, based on tools provided and validated by CHS Alliance. Luxembourg was among the first donors to complete this exercise, which has contributed to further enhance its engagement with partners and to adopt an even more comprehensive and impactful approach to humanitarian action.