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WFP's support to the Philippine Government's initiatives in achieving Zero Hunger by 2030

The Philippine Inter-Agency Task Force on Zero Hunger

The World Food Programme's presence in the Philippines is constantly evolving. From initially re-establishing in 2006 to support the peace process in Mindanao, providing life-saving food assistance in emergencies and disasters, improving the nutrition of tens of thousands of vulnerable populations, to development programmes that seek to improve the overall quality of life of the people it serves. Throughout all these activities, improving the food security and nutrition of the Filipino people was at the very core and the beating heart of its programming.

In 2020, the President of the Philippines signed Executive Order 101 creating an Inter-Agency Task Force on Zero Hunger (IATFZH). The Task Force endeavors to put an end to hunger in the country by 2030, in line with UN Sustainable Development Goal #2: Zero Hunger. As a staunch partner advocating zero hunger and informing policies on food security and nutrition in the country, WFP was a natural partner to this undertaking.

Together with other United Nations agencies such as the United Nations' Children's Fund (UNICEF), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and World Health Organization (WHO), WFP had been selected by the Government to support the

Being the world's largest humanitarian agency that ensures food security and nutrition, WFP supports the Philippine National government achieve it through:

- Promotion of a country-wide production and distribution of **Iron-Fortified Rice** through school feeding in its pilot project in Maguindanao.



Rice fortification is cost-effective in preventing micronutrient deficiencies and help children achieve their full potential. Local production is feasible, possible and sustainable

- Implementation of **Forecast-based Financing (FBF)** in calamity prone areas intended to trigger and fund anticipatory humanitarian actions; Analysis of Climate Change and its Effect on Livelihood to sustain food security and nutrition.



Early Emergency Preparedness saves lives and supports food security and nutrition

- Organization of the **Scaling Up Nutrition Business Network (SBN)** in the country in February 2020 and currently has 13 active members from the private sector (businesses and corporations). The SBN aims to engage and mobilize business at a global and national level to act and invest responsibly in improving nutrition.



Collaboration and Partnership are key to better food security and nutrition outcome

WFP supports the BARMM achieve food security and nutrition through:

- Research on **Social Behavioral Change Communication (SBCC)** to determine social-cultural barriers of the community's access for adequate and nutritious food. The result will support the objectives and help design communication strategy of the National Food Policy



Community behavioral transformation improves attitude and practices of people to access and utilize adequate and nutritious food

- The design of **BARMM's first ever Food Security and Nutrition Roadmap**, with the engagement of major stakeholders



A clear regional vision and road map towards achieving Food and Nutrition Security is paramount for a comprehensive development



Cabinet Secretary Karlo Nograles, Zero Hunger Task Force and EPAHP Steering Committee Chairman, says, “the overarching goal here is to ensure that all these programs tie-up with other government food and nutrition programs so that they are more efficient and are maximized. These feeding programs, for example, should source their produce and food items from local farmers, and the DA can facilitate that. This is just one of many ways EPAHP utilizes a whole-of-nation approach to beat hunger.”

Zero Hunger Task Force in developing the National Food Policy and achieve the goals of the Task Force.

The Zero Hunger Task Force, led by the Cabinet Secretary, had set out six key results areas (KRA), each with their working group, disaggregate the priorities and assigned niche experts to ensure that each is on track to be achieved by 2030. WFP is currently providing technical assistance across all six KRAs which are as follows:

- 1) *Review and Rationalization of Existing Policies, Rules, Regulations related to the EO*
- 2) *Ensure Available and Affordable food*
- 3) *Secure Nutrition Adequacy*
- 4) *Secure Food Accessibility and Safety*
- 5) *Ensure Resiliency and Food Stability for Emergencies*
- 6) *Ensure Information, Education, Awareness and People Participation*

WFP’s wide array of experience in the food security and nutrition area will allow the agency to lend its expertise to the Government. In particular, lessons learned from projects – which include the iron-fortified rice pilot, stunting prevention programme, agricultural livelihood support in Mindanao, disaster preparedness and response, integration of food security and nutrition into local plans, and an upcoming social behavioral change communication project – enables WFP to provide extensive, specialized, and well-informed guidance in the development and popularization of the National Food Policy launched during World Food Day, 16th of October 2020.

Enhanced Partnership Against Hunger and Poverty

In line with the country’s aspirations of achieving zero hunger by 2030, the Enhanced Partnership Against Hunger and Poverty (EPAHP) is another initiative that seeks to contribute to this goal through synergistic means. This is the flagship programme of the country that demonstrates the activities under the Zero Hunger Task Force. EPAHP envisages doing this by converging together the essential services of government ministries that specifically address hunger and poverty and promote inclusive social and economic growth.

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In December 2019, national government agencies involved in this collaborative effort signed a memorandum of agreement. WFP and FAO were invited as witness, being technical experts in the field. The agreement aims to set a framework that will help “mitigate hunger, ensure food and nutrition security, and reduce poverty in urban and rural communities, including the marginalized.”

In 2013, WFP invited Filipino officials to its Center of Excellence in Brazil, linking school feeding initiatives to local agricultural systems, to draw on the country’s experiences in fighting hunger, particularly to multiply knowledge and policy innovations. This fruitful tour of duty became a model and guide as to how WFP can provide support to the EPAHP. WFP and FAO, as advisers



Photo courtesy of the [Landbank of the Philippines](#)

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to the EPAHP, will provide technical assistance in designing rural extension services, credit, and insurance to smallholder farmers; feeding programmes, procurement, and community hub management; monitoring and evaluation methodologies; and public policy design.

Together with the Philippine Government, WFP is all hands on deck in providing its specialized technical expertise in informing policies and co-introducing innovative solutions on the ground. With 2030 only ten years away, WFP and the Philippines are rolling up its sleeves, working smarter and harder to achieve inclusive socioeconomic progress for all Filipinos.

WFP Initiatives Aligned with the IATFZH and EPAHP Priorities

National

In 2018 WFP concluded a study called the [Fill the Nutrient Gap](#), which reviewed the nutrition situation in the Philippines using secondary data in combination with the results from linear programming from the Cost of the Diet (CotD) tool. Using the tool, it had sought to understand the barriers to adequate nutrition intake based on the country's context. The most important finding of the study was that almost all Filipino households can afford a diet that meets energy needs, but only a third of the total population meets nutritional needs.

The non-affordability of nutritious food is directly linked to high stunting prevalence in the country. This study was helpful in identifying barriers to nutrition in the Philippines and contributes as a basis to planning and developing nutrition programmes in the country. WFP also trained staff from the Food and Nutrition Research Institute on the use of the Cost of Diet tool used in the study. In relation to this, WFP is also providing technical

assistance to the Food and Nutrition Research Institute of the Philippines in the development of a web-based analysis tool in optimizing low-cost but nutritionally adequate diets for Filipinos.

WFP also provided technical and financial support to the Department of Social Welfare and Development and the Department of Education in developing the Implementing Rules and Regulations of the National School Feeding Law (Republic Act 11037) after its passing.

Presently, WFP continues to lend its technical expertise to the Government in the areas of food security and nutrition that are well-aligned with the ideals of the ZHTF. To mention some:

- WFP is providing technical support to the Government's post-distribution monitoring of its implementation of the Social Amelioration Programme – a cash-based support provided to families affected by COVID-19. WFP created a separate environment in its SCOPE platform – a digital solution that can register beneficiaries and track distribution of entitlements – for the Government's cash distribution.
- Through its comparative advantage in logistics and supply chain, WFP is supporting various government agencies in moving food, health items, and other non-food essentials amid the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Recognizing the link between food insecurity that immediately follows after a disaster, WFP is implementing a Forecast-based Financing (FbF) project in the country since 2015. FbF enables anticipatory actions for disaster mitigation at the community level using credible scientific forecasts. It aims to enable the release of government funding to vulnerable sectors before a natural hazard happens in order to manage the risks associated with it. Relevant to the aims of

FbF, WFP will also roll out Consolidated Livelihoods Exercise for Analyzing Resilience (CLEAR) to determine how food security is affected by climate risk.

- WFP and the Department of Information and Communications Technology are jointly developing the Government Emergency Communications Vehicles (GECS) Mobile Operations Vehicles for Emergencies (MOVE). The project will see the completion of six rapid deployable emergency communications systems that will provide ICT-enabled support to disaster-stricken areas. The project is currently in its first phase of completion.
- WFP developed local recipes for the school feeding programme and for managing acute moderate malnutrition among children age 6-59 months.
- Together with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the University of Philippines Los Baños, WFP is co-leading an urban food security study to better analyze food accessibility, affordability, and sustainability in urban areas.
- WFP is the global convener of the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Business Network (SBN) and assisted the National Nutrition Council in organizing SBN in the Philippines. SBN is a platform dedicated for the business and nutrition sector to come together and help in reducing malnutrition in all its forms by engaging and supporting businesses to act, invest, and innovate in responsible and sustainable actions and operations to improve nutrition. The Network launched last February 2020 with 15 member-companies but continue to expand to include more.

Bangsamoro Region

1,000 days of life, from the child's inception until she reaches age two. WFP provided ready-to-eat specialized nutritious food to pregnant and lactating women and children aged 6 to 23 months through the local health facilities. The project contributed to the reduction of stunting (low height for age) among children under five from 45.6 percent in 2015 to 39.9 percent in 2018.

In support of the Food Fortification Law, WFP assessed companies, organizations and cooperatives on their capabilities of delivering iron-fortified rice and iron-fortified kernels. In 2019, WFP concluded its own pilot of iron fortification project in the Philippines which demonstrated the possibility of delivering iron-fortified rice through the national school feeding programme.

Currently, WFP continues to engage various line agencies in the Bangsamoro region to create a positive change in reducing food insecurity and malnutrition in the region through the following ongoing activities:

- WFP will roll out an iron-fortified rice cost-benefit comparative analysis. Through this, WFP will design an optimized model tailored to the context of the country, develop policy recommendations on the adoption of the model by government agencies.
- To determine multi-level social and contextual dimensions of behaviour, WFP is conducting a Social Behavioural Change Communication Study in Maguindanao. This will also help understand why the demand for a more nutritious diet is less preferred, thus leading to different forms of malnutrition.
- To integrate food security and nutrition in the regional planning of the Bangsamoro region at an opportune time during its transition period, WFP co-authored the [Food Security and Nutrition Roadmap of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao](#) that is aligned to the National Food Policy of the Inter-agency Task Force for Zero Hunger.

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