



24 March 2021

Management Comments to the Internal Audit Report of the WFP Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean (AR/21/04)

WFP Management acknowledges the observations made by the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) in its internal audit report (AR/21/04) covering the period from 01 November 2019 to 31 October 2020.

WFP Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean (RBP) is based in Panama and provides direct support to 11 country offices in the region and an extension of the regional office with a representation in Barbados as a multi-country office for the English and Dutch Caribbean. WFP reached 4.8 million beneficiaries across the region in 2019 through a variety of activities and transfer modalities such as unconditional resource transfers to support access to food, school meals activities and institutional capacity strengthening. WFP is also providing technical assistance, capacity strengthening and policy support to host governments in areas such as social protection, Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR), sensitive nutrition, resilience and climate change, monitoring and evaluation as well as supply chain services when requested. RBP Management appreciates highlighting the success of the Bureau in deploying technical expertise across different geographies and programmatic areas.

WFP Management welcomes the audit's observations noting that numerous positive practices in the three pillars of the Regional Bureau¹ were identified: strong communal participation in regional planning, regular communication flows between the regional bureau management and functional units to monitor work progress, centralized tracking and monitoring of oversight and audit recommendations, the introduction of a joint cross-functional oversight mechanism, and the well-documented and functioning system of monitoring and support for EPR established by RBP which was coupled by the positive concurrence of the country offices surveyed about the support provided to them.

WFP Management acknowledges and agrees with the overall conclusion of partially satisfactory/some improvement needed. Out of the three observations, including one high priority and two medium priority actions, one of the medium priority actions has been already addressed with the implementation of a systematic approach to document, develop, and review unit workplans during the 2021 planning process, which links the APP with the management plan and resource allocations. The remaining two recommendations are being addressed through an action plan which includes measures and timelines to be completed before the end of 2021.

WFP Management is confident that the implementation of the remaining agreed actions by the end of September 2021 will strengthen the effectiveness of internal controls and provide robust assurance of the governance, internal control, and risk management processes at RBP.

In relation to the sole high priority observation on 1) provision of oversight, RBP Management commits to continue shaping and strengthening broader participation among RB units to identify and analyze country office-level risks which are duly embedded in the RBP planning process including risk and mitigation monitoring plans, performing country office capacity skills gap assessments and regularly monitoring the performance of country offices with a strong focus on risk management and compliance.

WFP Management would like to thank OIG for the collaborative and supportive approach to this audit and for its constructive and useful observations.

¹ Terms of Reference. WFP HQ and RBx (February 2019), 3 pillars: i) strategic direction and guidance; ii) technical support; and iii) management oversight.