

World Food Programme (WFP)

October 22, 2020

The climate change and the fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic is pushing millions to the brink of starvation. Without peace the global goal of zero hunger cannot be reached. World Food Programme (WFP) is one such organisation which is helping millions across the globe and is contributing for creation of a peaceful world.

In news: WFP has been awarded the 2020 Nobel peace prize.

Placing it in syllabus: International organizations

Dimensions

1. About the Organization
2. Activities
3. WFP and India
4. Criticisms

Content:

The Nobel Peace Prize 2020 was awarded to the World Food Programme (WFP) *“for its efforts to combat hunger, for its contribution to bettering conditions for peace in conflict-affected areas and for acting as a driving force in efforts to prevent the use of hunger as a weapon of war and conflict”* and its role in the wake of the Covid-19 outbreak.

Nobel Peace Prize:

- The Nobel Peace Prize is one of the five Nobel Prizes established by the will of Swedish industrialist, inventor, and armaments manufacturer Alfred Nobel.
- It is awarded annually since 1901 (not awarded on 19 occasions) to those who have “done the most or the best work for fraternity between nations, for the abolition or reduction of standing armies and for the holding and

promotion of peace congresses”.

- The recipient is selected by the Norwegian Nobel Committee, a five-member committee appointed by the Parliament of Norway.
- The Chairman of the Norwegian Nobel Committee presents the Nobel Peace Prize in the presence of the King of Norway (the only Nobel Prize not presented in Stockholm).
- Overall, the prize has been awarded to 135 laureates, including 107 individuals and 28 organisations.
- The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has been awarded the prize twice.
- So far, the youngest laureate is Malala Yousafzai, who was 17 years old when she won in 2014 and the oldest recipient was Joseph Rotblat who was given the award at the age of 87 in 1995.

About WFP:

- The WFP is the food-assistance branch of the United Nations.
- It is the **world's largest humanitarian organization**, the largest one focused on hunger and food security, and the largest provider of school meals.
- **Founded in 1961**, (at the behest of US President Dwight Eisenhower) after the 1960 Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Conference.
- It is **headquartered in Rome** and has offices in 80 countries.
- WFP launched its **first programmes in 1963** by the FAO and the UNGA on a three-year experimental basis, supporting the Nubian population in Sudan.
- **In 1965, the programme was extended to a continuing basis.**
- It is funded entirely by voluntary donations.

Structure:

- WFP is governed by a **36-member Executive Board**.
- The European Union is a permanent observer in WFP and, as a major donor, participates in the work of its executive board.
- The Logistics Cluster is an Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) humanitarian coordination mechanism whose primary role is supporting emergency responses.
- It **works closely with its sister organizations, the FAO and the International Fund for Agricultural Development**.
- WFP partners with more than 1,000 national and international NGOs to provide food assistance and tackle the underlying causes of hunger.
- The largest donors are the United States government followed by the European Union.

Activities:

- Two-thirds of its activities are conducted in **conflict zones**.
- In addition to emergency food relief, WFP offers **technical assistance and development aid**, such as building capacity for emergency preparedness and response, managing supply chains and logistics and promoting social safety programs.
- The agency is also a **major provider of direct cash assistance and medical supplies**, and provides **passenger services for humanitarian workers**.
- WFP is an **executive member of the United Nations Development Group**, a consortium of UN entities that aims to fulfil the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).
- WFP works with a **priority on achieving SDG 2 for “zero hunger” by 2030**.
- WFP development projects **focus on nutrition, especially for mothers and children**, addressing malnutrition from the earliest stages through programmes.
- The organisation **estimates hunger by the prevalence of undernourishment**.

- The UN defines undernourished or food-deprived people as ***those individuals whose food intake falls below the minimum level of dietary energy requirements.***
- According to current estimates, about 8.9 percent of the world's population or about 690 million people are hungry and as per WFP if the current trends continue, **by 2030 there will be 840 million hungry people.**

About UNDP:

- The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is the United Nations' global development network.
- It was formed on 22 November 1965 with headquarters in New York City.
- Parent organization – ECOSOC
- It promotes technical and investment cooperation among nations and advocates for change and connects countries to knowledge, experience and resources.
- It provides expert advice, training and grants support to developing countries, with increasing emphasis on assistance to the least developed countries.
- UNDP offers to help only if the different nations request it to do so.
- It is funded entirely by voluntary contributions from UN member states.
- It operates in 177 countries, where it works with local governments to meet development challenges and develop local capacity.
- It works internationally to **help countries achieve the SDGs.**
- The UNDP Human Development Report Office also publishes an annual **Human Development Report** (since 1990) to measure and analyse developmental progress.

It has the **status of an executive board within the UNGA.**

WFP's role in India:

- The WFP has been working in India since 1963 to improve the efficiency, accountability and transparency of India's own subsidized food distribution system, which brings supplies of wheat, rice, sugar and kerosene oil to around 800 million poor people across the country.
- To boost the nutritional value of the Government's Midday Meal school feeding programme, WFP is **pioneering the multi-micronutrient fortification of school meals.**
- It is helping to tackle malnutrition by fortifying food given to babies and young children in Kerala State.
- WFP uses its own **Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping software** to identify India's most food insecure areas, which allows policy and relief work to be targeted appropriately.
- WFP is also **supporting the government's Poverty and Human Development Monitoring Agency** in establishing a State-level Food Security Analysis Unit.
- It has proposed some unique initiatives like **Automatic Grain Dispensing Machine (Annapurti) and Mobile Storage Units** for the effective implementation of TPDS.
- It has completed a pilot on rice fortification used in the government's Mid-day Meals scheme in Varanasi.
- During COVID pandemic, WFP India has worked with the central and state governments. For instance, it signed an MoU with the Uttar Pradesh State Rural Livelihood Mission.
- Under the agreement, WFP will provide technical assistance for setting up supplementary nutrition production units in 18 districts for supply of quality food to about 33 lakh beneficiaries of the Anganwadi scheme.

Criticisms:

- Critics claim that the WFP to be harmful to the aided countries as the food aid increases corruption as local

politicians have the opportunity to steal some of the aid to bribe voters or to sell the aid in the black markets killing the local agriculture.

- WFP people as an organisation are in the absurd situation as it is being faced with unemployment where hunger is actually eliminated.
- There are unintended consequences such as increasing the duration of conflicts.
- Some surveys have shown internal culture problems at WFP, including harassment.

Mould your thought:

1. How has the World Food Programme (WFP) acted as saviour in combating hunger across the globe?

Approach to the answer:

- Write about organization's origin
- Write its activities
- Jot down the points about its role in India
- Conclusion