

## ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS: COMBATING STARVATION AND FOOD INSECURITY IN AFGHANISTAN THROUGH HUMANITARIAN ACTION

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**BEST CITATION –** MUSKA HAMZA, ZABITA ALAMYAR, BIBI SAKINA ZEYARMAL & SHOGHLLAH ZEYARMAL, ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS: COMBATING STARVATION AND FOOD INSECURITY IN AFGHANISTAN THROUGH HUMANITARIAN ACTION, *JOURNAL ON VULNERABLE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT*, 1 (1) OF 2023, Pg. 192-208, APIS – 3920 – 0020 | ISSN – 2583 – 8067.

### ABSTRACT

*This paper examines the pivotal role played by the United Nations (UN) in addressing the dire issue of starvation and food insecurity in Afghanistan through humanitarian action. In the wake of Afghanistan's enduring vulnerabilities, the UN has emerged as a beacon of hope, delivering vital assistance to the country's most vulnerable populations. Humanitarian interventions encompass diverse strategies such as food aid, nutrition support, and cash transfers, forming a swift and compassionate lifeline during times of crisis. Emergency response efforts are characterized by rapid assistance, including food provisions, shelter, medical supplies, and clean water and sanitation. Beyond immediate relief, the UN engages in a multifaceted approach to nurture health and resilience within Afghanistan. Nutritional support is bolstered by supplementary feeding programs, ready-to-use therapeutic foods (RUTF), maternal and infant nutrition initiatives, and community-based approaches. Monitoring and assessment mechanisms enable a dynamic response to evolving needs. Sustainable food security is a key objective, and the UN promotes self-sufficiency and resilience through food security programs, support for small-scale farmers, infrastructure development, sustainable agricultural practices, capacity building, market access, and climate resilience measures. Advocacy and coordination efforts provide a platform for multilateral cooperation, resource mobilization, policy change, and capacity building, catalyzing change in Afghanistan's food crisis. Empowering Afghan communities is central to achieving sustainable food security, with capacity building, support for local institutions, community-led initiatives, knowledge transfer, and resilience-building initiatives at the forefront. Navigating complex terrain is imperative to reach the most vulnerable, involving access negotiations, managing conflict and insecurity, ensuring aid worker safety, and balancing humanitarian imperatives in a complex and contextual environment.*

**Keywords:** United Nations (UN), Food insecurity, Humanitarian action, Afghanistan, Sustainable food security and Vulnerable populations

## INTRODUCTION

The United Nations (UN) and its specialized agency, the World Food Programme (WFP), stand as pillars of hope and critical actors in the ongoing battle against food insecurity and the specter of starvation that haunts Afghanistan.<sup>273</sup> In the face of a long-standing and deeply entrenched crisis, these organizations tirelessly devote their resources, expertise, and commitment to alleviating the dire circumstances faced by millions of Afghans.<sup>274</sup> Afghanistan's struggle with chronic food insecurity and malnutrition has been exacerbated by a multifaceted web of challenges. At its core, the nation's enduring conflict, marked by decades of violence and political instability, has sown the seeds of instability in the food supply chain. The consequences of this protracted conflict have been devastating, disrupting agricultural production, displacing communities, and undermining the infrastructure necessary for food distribution.

Moreover, Afghanistan is no stranger to the capriciousness of nature.<sup>275</sup> Natural disasters, such as droughts and floods, have repeatedly wreaked havoc on the country's ability to produce and access food. These environmental calamities have pushed vulnerable populations deeper into the clutches of hunger and malnutrition, compounding the already dire situation.

It is within this challenging context that the UN and WFP emerge as beacons of hope and practical solutions.<sup>276</sup> Their collaborative efforts encompass a wide array of interventions aimed at addressing the multifaceted nature of Afghanistan's food crisis. First and foremost, the provision of humanitarian assistance lies at the

heart of their mission. The UN and WFP are instrumental in delivering life-saving food aid, essential nutrition support, and cash transfers to the most vulnerable Afghan households. These vital resources not only satiate immediate hunger but also serve as a lifeline, enabling families to meet their basic needs in the face of adversity.

In times of acute crises, such as those triggered by conflicts, displacement, or natural disasters, such as COVID-19 both organizations excel in their emergency response efforts.<sup>277</sup> They are swift to deploy teams and resources, ensuring that affected communities receive essential supplies like food, shelter, and medical assistance. These rapid interventions can make the difference between life and death for those trapped in dire circumstances. Furthermore, the WFP's specialized focus on nutritional support is a cornerstone of their efforts. They diligently target the most vulnerable segments of the population, especially children and pregnant or lactating women, by implementing supplementary feeding programs and distributing ready-to-use therapeutic foods. By addressing malnutrition head-on, they contribute to the long-term well-being and development of Afghan communities.

In addition to immediate relief efforts, the UN and WFP invest significantly in programs designed to enhance food security across Afghanistan.<sup>278</sup> These initiatives encompass a spectrum of activities, from supporting small-scale farmers and strengthening agricultural value chains to building essential infrastructure and promoting sustainable farming practices. Such interventions empower communities to better withstand food crises in the future.

The UN, acting as a platform for advocacy and coordination, plays a pivotal role in rallying various stakeholders. They bring together governments, non-governmental organizations

<sup>273</sup> Food | United Nations, <https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/food> (last visited Sep 1, 2023).

<sup>274</sup> Sayed Quadrat Hashimy, *War Crimes in Afghanistan*, (2022), <https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=4344441> (last visited Sep 1, 2023).

<sup>275</sup> Prof (Dr) M. Suresh Benjamin & Sayed Quadrat Hashimy, *The Fourth World Tussle for Recognition of Rights under International Law: A Cursory Glance*, (2022), <https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=4487709> (last visited Sep 1, 2023).

<sup>276</sup> Security Council Adopts Presidential Statement Addressing Conflict-Induced Food Insecurity in Situations of Armed Conflict | UN Press, <https://press.un.org/en/2023/sc15377.doc.htm> (last visited Sep 1, 2023).

<sup>277</sup> Sayed Quadrat Hashimy, *Impact of COVID-19 on the Trade in Afghanistan*, (2021), <https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=4169486> (last visited Sep 1, 2023).

<sup>278</sup> Attaullah Ahmadi et al., *Food Security and COVID-19 in Afghanistan: A Two-Sided Battlefield*, 49 TROPICAL MEDICINE AND HEALTH 77 (2021).

(NGOs), and donors to address food insecurity and starvation in Afghanistan comprehensively.<sup>279</sup> Their advocacy efforts serve to raise global awareness about the harrowing humanitarian situation in the country, mobilizing essential resources to support relief and recovery efforts.<sup>280</sup>

Capacity building stands as another crucial facet of their approach. By equipping local institutions and communities with the knowledge and tools needed to manage food security and nutrition programs autonomously, the UN and WFP foster resilience. This ensures that the response to food insecurity is not merely temporary relief but a sustainable, long-term solution.

In conflict-ridden regions of Afghanistan, access negotiations with armed groups become imperative to ensure the safe and unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance. The UN and WFP engage in these delicate and often challenging dialogues to guarantee that aid reaches those who need it most. Regular monitoring and assessment activities conducted by both organizations provide invaluable insights into the evolving food security and nutritional conditions in Afghanistan. This dynamic understanding allows them to adapt their interventions strategically, ensuring that their efforts remain relevant and effective in the face of shifting circumstances.

Therefore, the UN and WFP's unwavering commitment to combatting starvation and food insecurity in Afghanistan is a testament to their humanitarian principles and dedication to saving lives.<sup>281</sup> Nevertheless, it is crucial to acknowledge that Afghanistan's humanitarian situation remains exceptionally complex, primarily due to the persisting conflict and

political instability. Consequently, the success of these efforts depends on the continued support of the international community in terms of funding, resources, and diplomatic endeavors aimed at addressing the root causes of food insecurity in the region. Only through collective action and sustained commitment can the UN and WFP hope to bring lasting relief to the beleaguered people of Afghanistan, offering them the prospect of a brighter and more food-secure future.

### A BEACON OF HOPE FOR VULNERABLE POPULATIONS IN AFGHANISTAN

#### *Humanitarian Assistance*

In the crucible of Afghanistan's persistent food insecurity and the looming specter of starvation, the United Nations (UN) and its dedicated agency, the World Food Programme (WFP), stand as unwavering sentinels of compassion and support.<sup>282</sup> Their mission to provide humanitarian assistance is a lifeline for the most vulnerable Afghan populations, offering solace and sustenance in the face of daunting adversity.

At the heart of their humanitarian mandate lies the distribution of vital resources that can mean the difference between survival and despair for countless Afghan families. The UN and WFP spare no effort in ensuring that these life-saving essentials reach those who need them most, transcending geographic and logistical challenges with unwavering commitment.

#### *Food Aid*

The cornerstone of their humanitarian assistance efforts is the provision of food aid. In a country where millions are grappling with chronic hunger, the distribution of sustenance is a matter of utmost urgency. Food aid packages are meticulously crafted to meet the nutritional needs of diverse populations, encompassing

<sup>279</sup> Sayed Qudrat Hashimy, *Chronicle Causes for the Failure of the Afghan Government: Past Imperfect and Future Tense of Afghanistan*, (2023), <https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=4352525> (last visited Sep 1, 2023).

<sup>280</sup> Mohammad Rasikh Wasiq, *Role of India for Enforcement of International Human Rights*, (2022), <https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=4219345> (last visited Sep 1, 2023).

<sup>281</sup> Afghanistan | World Food Programme, (2023), <https://www.wfp.org/countries/afghanistan> (last visited Sep 1, 2023).

<sup>282</sup> UN world food programme warns of growing hunger crisis in Afghanistan, HINDUSTAN TIMES (2021), <https://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/un-world-food-programme-warns-of-growing-hunger-crisis-in-afghanistan-101629101493516.html> (last visited Sep 1, 2023).

staples like rice, wheat, pulses, cooking oil, and other essential items. These rations serve not only to satiate immediate hunger but also to provide nourishment to bodies weakened by malnutrition.

### **Nutrition Support**

For vulnerable segments of the population, particularly children and pregnant or lactating women, the UN and WFP's commitment to nutritional support takes on added significance. Malnutrition, an insidious adversary,<sup>283</sup> is combated head-on through specialized interventions. Supplementary feeding programs, fortified foods, and micronutrient supplements are dispensed with precision, aiming to nurse the malnourished back to health and safeguard the well-being of the next generation.<sup>284</sup>

### **Cash Transfers**

Recognizing the dignity and autonomy of those in need, the UN and WFP also employ cash transfer programs as part of their humanitarian toolkit. These programs provide vulnerable families with financial assistance, enabling them to make choices that best suit their unique circumstances.<sup>285</sup> Cash transfers empower beneficiaries to purchase essential food items, secure shelter, access healthcare, and address other pressing needs.<sup>286</sup> This approach not only fosters self-sufficiency but also invigorates local economies, promoting resilience in the face of adversity.

Moreover, these organizations do not limit their assistance solely to urban centers or easily accessible regions. They reach out to remote and conflict-affected areas, where humanitarian access can be particularly challenging. With unparalleled dedication, they

navigate treacherous terrain and often negotiate access with various stakeholders, including armed groups, to ensure that aid reaches even the most isolated communities.

In times of crisis, such as those triggered by conflict escalation, displacement, or natural disasters, their humanitarian response mechanisms are activated with unmatched swiftness.<sup>287</sup> Mobile teams of experts are deployed to assess needs, and emergency food and relief supplies are dispatched urgently. The provision of shelter, clean water, and medical assistance forms an integral part of these emergency responses, addressing the holistic needs of affected populations.

In essence, the humanitarian assistance rendered by the UN and WFP in Afghanistan is a testament to the enduring commitment to the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence. It is a testament to the belief that every life is precious and that, in the face of adversity, compassion and solidarity can transcend borders and boundaries. Yet, the challenges they face in Afghanistan are far from simple. The volatile security situation, political instability, and logistical hurdles create a formidable backdrop against which their efforts unfold. Thus, the success of their mission hinges not only on their dedication but also on the continuous support of the international community—support in the form of funding, resources, and diplomatic endeavors aimed at addressing the root causes of food insecurity in the region. Thus, the humanitarian assistance provided by the UN and WFP in Afghanistan is a beacon of hope, a lifeline for those caught in the throes of food insecurity and despair. It is a tangible manifestation of the global community's commitment to alleviating human suffering, reaffirming that even in the darkest of times, the light of compassion and solidarity

<sup>283</sup> Sayed Qudrat Hashimy et al., *Nurturing Leadership and Capacity Building for Success: Empowering Growth*, 3 INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF REHABILITATION AND SPECIAL EDUCATION 1 (2023).

<sup>284</sup> Sayed Qudrat Hashimy, *Mapping the Paradigm of Disabilities in Afghanistan from the Lens of Law and Policy*, (2023), <https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=4383888> (last visited Sep 1, 2023).

<sup>285</sup> Hashimy et al., *supra* note 15.

<sup>286</sup> Sayed Qudrat Hashimy, *The Legal Paradigm of Menstrual Leaves Policy in the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, and Afghanistan*, 16 JOURNAL OF DISEASE AND GLOBAL HEALTH 16 (2023).

<sup>287</sup> Mohammad Rasikh Wasiq, *United Nations Security Council Powers, Practice, and Effectiveness Of Security Council*, (2023), <https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=4344596> (last visited Sep 1, 2023).

shines brightly, offering solace and sustenance to the most vulnerable among us."<sup>288</sup>

### **A SWIFT AND COMPASSIONATE LIFELINE IN AFGHANISTAN'S HOUR OF NEED**

#### **Emergency Response**

In the tumultuous landscape of Afghanistan, where adversity looms at every corner, the United Nations (UN) and its dedicated agency, the World Food Programme (WFP), stand as steadfast sentinels of hope and practical assistance. Their commitment to emergency response is a lifeline that extends to communities grappling with the harrowing aftermath of conflicts, displacement, or the capricious fury of natural disasters.<sup>289</sup>

#### **Rapid Assistance**

When disaster strikes or conflict flares anew, time becomes the most precious resource. In such critical moments, the UN and WFP swiftly mobilize their resources and deploy teams of experts to assess the needs of affected communities. Their unwavering dedication to rapid response ensures that assistance reaches those in distress without delay. The immediacy of their actions can mean the difference between life and death, offering a glimmer of hope amid the chaos.

#### **Food**

In a land where hunger is an all too familiar specter, the provision of food relief emerges as a fundamental component of their emergency response efforts. Packages of nourishment, carefully curated to meet the dietary needs of diverse populations, are swiftly dispatched to affected areas. These rations comprise staples such as rice, wheat, pulses, and cooking oil, offering sustenance to families whose lives

have been upended by crisis.<sup>290</sup> Beyond satiating immediate hunger, this food aid serves as a lifeline, nourishing bodies weakened by malnutrition.

#### **Shelter**

In the wake of displacement caused by conflict or natural disasters, shelter is an essential human need. The UN and WFP recognize this imperative and extend their emergency response to include the provision of shelter materials and support. Tents, blankets, and essential non-food items are distributed, affording families a modicum of safety and comfort amidst the uncertainty of their circumstances. These humble shelters offer protection from the elements and a semblance of privacy in times of upheaval.

#### **Medical Supplies**

The aftermath of conflict or natural disasters often brings with it a surge in medical emergencies.<sup>291</sup> The UN and WFP understand the critical importance of healthcare in such scenarios. They supply medical facilities and healthcare providers with essential medicines, equipment, and supplies. These medical lifelines serve to mitigate suffering, save lives, and restore a sense of normalcy amid the chaos.<sup>292</sup>

#### **Clean Water and Sanitation**

Access to clean water and sanitation facilities is indispensable for maintaining public health, especially in emergency situations. Recognizing this, the UN and WFP work diligently to provide safe drinking water,<sup>293</sup> hygiene kits, and sanitation services to affected communities.<sup>294</sup> These efforts help prevent the outbreak of

<sup>288</sup> Mohammad Rasikh Wasiq, *International Enforcement of Human Rights: Potency and Strategies*, (2023), <https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=4221073> (last visited Sep 1, 2023).

<sup>289</sup> Sayed Quadrat Hashimy, *Survivors and Disability of Armed Conflicts: The Conundrum of Differently Abled Persons in Afghanistan*, (2023); Sayed Quadrat Hashimy, *Impact of COVID-19 on the Trade in Afghanistan*, AVAILABLE AT SSRN 3984854 (2021).

<sup>290</sup> Sayed Quadrat Hashimy, *Chronicle Causes for the Failure of the Afghan Government: Past Imperfect and Future Tense of Afghanistan*, 3 128 (2023).

<sup>291</sup> Hashimy, *supra* note 21.

<sup>292</sup> Hashimy, *supra* note 18.

<sup>293</sup> Sayed Quadrat Hashimy & Prof (Dr ) Ramesh, *Impact of War on the Environment: A Critical Study of Afghanistan*, (2023), <https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=4352538> (last visited Sep 1, 2023).

<sup>294</sup> Sayed Quadrat Hashimy, *Impact of War on the Environment: A Critical Study of Afghanistan*, 1 INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL LEGAL RESEARCH JOURNAL 52 (2023).

waterborne diseases and uphold human dignity even in the direst of circumstances.

### ***Support Beyond Borders***

The commitment of the UN and WFP goes beyond geopolitical boundaries or geographic limitations. They extend their emergency response efforts to even the most remote and conflict-ridden regions, where humanitarian access can be perilous. With unwavering dedication, they navigate treacherous terrains and negotiate access with various stakeholders, including armed groups, to ensure that aid reaches the most isolated and vulnerable communities. In essence, the emergency response efforts of the UN and WFP in Afghanistan are a testament to their unshakable commitment to the principles of humanity and solidarity. They recognize that in times of crisis, immediate and effective assistance can make the difference between despair and hope, life and death.<sup>295</sup>

However, the context in which they operate is far from simple. Afghanistan's volatile security situation, protracted conflict, and political instability create a formidable backdrop against which their efforts unfold. Therefore, the success of their mission hinges not only on their dedication but also on the continuous support of the international community—support in the form of funding, resources, and diplomatic endeavors aimed at addressing the root causes of instability and crisis in the region.

Therefore, the emergency response efforts of the UN and WFP in Afghanistan are a testament to the indomitable spirit of humanitarianism, demonstrating that even in the face of chaos and uncertainty, compassion and solidarity can prevail. Their rapid assistance serves as a beacon of hope, offering solace and practical support to communities battered by the relentless storms of adversity.

## **NURTURING HEALTH AND RESILIENCE IN AFGHANISTAN**

### ***Nutritional Support***

In the arduous battle against malnutrition, particularly among the most vulnerable groups—children, pregnant women, and lactating mothers the World Food Programme (WFP) takes center stage in Afghanistan.<sup>296</sup> Their unwavering commitment to addressing this pervasive issue goes beyond mere sustenance; it encompasses specialized nutritional support that aims to prevent and treat malnutrition, thus nurturing the health and resilience of communities grappling with adversity.

### ***A Multifaceted Approach***

Recognizing the multifaceted nature of malnutrition, WFP's nutritional support programs are comprehensive in scope.<sup>297</sup> They target the root causes of this grave issue while providing immediate relief to those who need it most.

### ***Supplementary Feeding Programs***

One of the cornerstones of WFP's nutritional intervention is the implementation of supplementary feeding programs. These initiatives are finely tuned to meet the unique dietary needs of children who are at risk of or already experiencing malnutrition. They involve the distribution of specialized food products fortified with essential vitamins and minerals. These programs bridge the nutritional gap, promoting healthy growth and development in the youngest members of Afghan society.

### ***Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Foods (RUTF)***

In cases of severe acute malnutrition, particularly among children, the urgency of intervention cannot be overstated. WFP steps in with ready-to-use therapeutic foods (RUTF), which are high-energy and nutrient-dense formulations. These life-saving foods require no preparation and are suitable for immediate consumption. RUTF is a beacon of hope for

<sup>296</sup> Sayed Qudrat Hashimy & Habibullah Ibrahimy, *Role of Self-Help Groups through Micro-Finance for Poverty Alleviation*, 1 JOURNAL OF GOVERNANCE AND POLICY REVIEW 27 (2023).

<sup>297</sup> *Id.*

<sup>295</sup> Hashimy, *supra* note 21.

children on the brink of starvation, as it provides the essential nutrients needed for their bodies to recover and thrive.

### **Maternal and Infant Nutrition**

The focus on nutrition extends to pregnant and lactating women, as their well-being directly impacts the health of the next generation. WFP ensures that these mothers receive the necessary nutritional support through specialized food packages and supplements. This not only safeguards their health but also promotes healthy birth outcomes and optimal infant nutrition through breastfeeding.

### **Community-Based Approaches**

WFP understands that sustainable change requires community involvement. Hence, they employ community-based approaches to nutrition education and promotion. They work alongside local health workers and volunteers to raise awareness about proper nutrition, breastfeeding practices, and the importance of a diverse diet. These initiatives empower communities to take charge of their own nutrition and well-being.

### **Monitoring and Assessment**

The effectiveness of these programs is not left to chance. WFP conducts rigorous monitoring and assessment activities to evaluate the impact of their nutritional interventions continually. Regular screenings and assessments of nutritional status help identify individuals and communities in need of support, enabling targeted and efficient assistance.

In Afghanistan, where malnutrition remains a persistent challenge exacerbated by conflict, displacement, and economic instability, WFP's nutritional support programs offer a glimmer of hope. They go beyond the provision of food and address the underlying factors that contribute to malnutrition. By focusing on the most vulnerable populations, particularly children and mothers, they pave the way for healthier and more resilient communities. However, the road to eradicating malnutrition in Afghanistan

is fraught with challenges. The protracted conflict and political instability in the region pose formidable obstacles to delivering consistent and widespread nutritional support. Therefore, the success of these efforts hinges not only on WFP's unwavering commitment but also on the continued support of the international community. This support encompasses funding, resources, and diplomatic efforts aimed at addressing the root causes of malnutrition and creating an environment where all Afghan citizens can access the nourishment they need for a brighter and healthier future.

Thus, WFP's nutritional support programs in Afghanistan are a testament to the transformative power of targeted and compassionate intervention. They nurture health, combat the scourge of malnutrition, and offer a lifeline to those who need it most, affirming the belief that every child and mother deserves the chance to thrive, regardless of the challenges they face.

## **NURTURING SELF-SUFFICIENCY AND RESILIENCE IN AFGHANISTAN**

### **Food Security Programs**

In the rugged terrain of Afghanistan, where food security is a constant concern, the United Nations (UN) and its dedicated agency, the World Food Programme (WFP), are spearheading a multifaceted campaign to enhance the nation's food security.<sup>298</sup> Their comprehensive approach encompasses programs that not only address immediate hunger but also lay the groundwork for sustainable and resilient food systems. These initiatives are a testament to their enduring commitment to nurturing self-sufficiency and resilience among Afghan communities.

<sup>298</sup> Afghanistan emergency | World Food Programme, <https://www.wfp.org/emergencies/afghanistan-emergency> (last visited Sep 1, 2023).

### **Small-Scale Farmer Support**

At the heart of their food security strategy lies a deep commitment to supporting small-scale farmers—the backbone of Afghanistan's agricultural landscape.<sup>299</sup> Smallholders constitute a significant portion of the population, and their ability to produce food is vital to the nation's food security. The UN and WFP provide these farmers with resources, including improved seeds, tools, and training, to enhance their productivity and yield<sup>300</sup>. This empowerment not only boosts local food production but also injects economic vitality into rural communities.

### **Infrastructure Development**

The UN and WFP recognize that robust food security hinges on the presence of adequate infrastructure. They actively engage in building and rehabilitating critical infrastructure such as roads, bridges, and storage facilities. These projects facilitate the efficient movement of food from production areas to markets, reducing post-harvest losses and ensuring that food reaches those who need it most. The result is a more resilient and accessible food supply chain.

### **Sustainable Agriculture Practices**

Sustainability is at the core of their food security programs. Recognizing the fragile nature of Afghanistan's ecosystem,<sup>301</sup> they promote sustainable agriculture practices. This includes advocating for water-efficient farming techniques, crop diversification, and soil conservation methods. By championing practices that are gentle on the environment, the UN and WFP foster long-term food security while safeguarding the natural resources upon which future generations depend.

<sup>299</sup> Sayed Qudrat Hashimy, *Protecting Geographical Indications in Afghanistan*, (2022).

<sup>300</sup> Sayed Qudrat Hashimy & Jackson Simango Magoge, *Role of WTO in the Promotion of Trade and IPR in Afghanistan*, DYNAMIC RESEARCH JOURNALS (DRJ) JOURNAL OF ECONOMICS AND FINANCE (DRJ-JEF) VOLUME 01 (2021).

<sup>301</sup> Sayed Qudrat Hashimy, *Impact of WTO Agreement Accession on Trade and a Few Intellectual Property Rights in Afghanistan*, 14–29 (2021), <https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=4291992> (last visited Sep 1, 2023).

### **Capacity Building**

The cultivation of food security also involves strengthening the capacity of local communities and institutions. The UN and WFP work closely with farmers' associations, cooperatives, and local governments to build the knowledge and skills necessary for effective food production, management, and distribution.<sup>302</sup> This capacity-building approach empowers communities to take ownership of their food security, ensuring that interventions are sustainable and community-driven.

### **Market Access**

Ensuring that surplus agricultural produce can be efficiently sold in markets is essential for food security.<sup>303</sup> The UN and WFP support initiatives that facilitate market access for small-scale farmers. This includes the establishment of marketplaces, the provision of market information, and the promotion of fair trade practices.<sup>304</sup> These efforts enable farmers to earn a living from their produce, further incentivizing food production.

### **Climate Resilience**

Afghanistan is no stranger to the impacts of climate change, including erratic rainfall patterns and droughts.<sup>305</sup> The UN and WFP integrate climate resilience into their food security programs by helping communities adapt to changing conditions. This involves the introduction of climate-smart agricultural practices, the development of drought-resistant crop varieties, and the establishment of early warning systems for weather-related disasters.<sup>306</sup>

While the UN and WFP's food security programs are a testament to their commitment to Afghanistan's well-being, the challenges they face are significant. Ongoing conflict, political

<sup>302</sup> Hashimy and Ibrahimy, *supra* note 28.

<sup>303</sup> Sayed Qudrat Hashimy & Jackson Simango Magoge, *Role of WTO in the Promotion of Trade and IPR in Afghanistan*, (2021), <https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=4043959> (last visited Sep 1, 2023).

<sup>304</sup> Hashimy, *supra* note 33; Hashimy and Magoge, *supra* note 32.

<sup>305</sup> Hashimy and Ramesh, *supra* note 25.

<sup>306</sup> Hashimy, *supra* note 26.



instability, and economic fragility in the region pose formidable obstacles to the development of sustainable food systems. Therefore, the success of these efforts depends not only on their unwavering dedication but also on the continuous support of the international community. This support encompasses funding, resources, and diplomatic endeavors aimed at addressing the root causes of food insecurity and instability in Afghanistan.<sup>307</sup>

Thus, the food security programs implemented by the UN and WFP in Afghanistan represent a beacon of hope and self-sufficiency. They nurture resilient and sustainable food systems, empowering communities to overcome adversity and build a future where hunger is a thing of the past. It is a testament to the belief that every Afghan deserves access to safe, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food, regardless of the challenges they face.

#### **AMPLIFYING COMPASSION, CATALYZING CHANGE IN AFGHANISTAN'S FOOD CRISIS**

##### ***Advocacy And Coordination***

In the complex tapestry of Afghanistan's persistent food insecurity and the looming specter of starvation, the United Nations (UN) assumes a pivotal role as a beacon of advocacy and coordination. Its mission transcends the provision of immediate relief; it acts as a catalyst for transformative change, rallying a diverse array of stakeholders to address food insecurity and starvation effectively.

##### ***A Platform for Multilateral Cooperation***

At the heart of the UN's advocacy and coordination efforts is the principle of multilateral cooperation. Afghanistan's multifaceted humanitarian crisis demands a united front, a coalition of actors committed to making a difference. The UN serves as a convening platform, bringing together

governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), donors, and other key stakeholders to collectively tackle the issues of food insecurity and starvation.

##### ***Advocacy for Awareness***

One of the foremost tasks undertaken by the UN is advocacy—the amplification of the voices of those affected by hunger and malnutrition. Through a plethora of communication channels, they raise awareness about the dire humanitarian situation in Afghanistan. This advocacy encompasses not only the harsh realities faced by vulnerable communities but also the potential for positive change. By shining a spotlight on the issue, the UN fosters a sense of urgency and mobilizes public opinion to support relief efforts.

##### ***Resource Mobilization***

The battle against food insecurity and starvation requires resources—financial, logistical, and human. The UN plays a pivotal role in mobilizing these resources by engaging with governments, donors, and philanthropic organizations. They make a compelling case for investment in food security programs, emphasizing not only the moral imperative but also the long-term benefits of addressing hunger. This resource mobilization is essential for the implementation of critical relief and development initiatives.

##### ***Coordination of Relief Efforts***

In a landscape as complex as Afghanistan, effective coordination is the linchpin of successful humanitarian action. The UN undertakes the arduous task of coordinating the activities of numerous stakeholders, ensuring that resources are allocated efficiently and that efforts are complementary rather than duplicative. This coordination extends to the allocation of funding, the distribution of aid, and the monitoring of impact, all with the aim of maximizing the reach and effectiveness of relief efforts.

<sup>307</sup> Shoba Suri and Mona, *The Crisis of Food Insecurity in Afghanistan*, ORF, <https://www.orfonline.org/research/the-crisis-of-food-insecurity-in-afghanistan/> (last visited Sep 1, 2023); Hashimy, *supra* note 6.

### **Capacity Building**

Advocacy and coordination are not limited to immediate relief efforts. The UN also invests in building the capacity of local institutions and organizations to respond effectively to food security challenges independently. By strengthening the resilience of Afghan communities, they lay the groundwork for long-term solutions to the food crisis.

### **Promotion of Policy Change**

Beyond immediate relief, the UN advocates for policy change at national and international levels. They engage with governments and stakeholders to shape policies that prioritize food security, address the root causes of hunger, and create an enabling environment for sustainable development.

However, navigating the complexities of Afghanistan's humanitarian situation is no easy task. The protracted conflict, political instability, and security challenges create formidable obstacles to advocacy and coordination efforts. Therefore, the success of these endeavors depends not only on the UN's unwavering dedication but also on the continuous support of the international community. This support encompasses funding, resources, and diplomatic efforts aimed at addressing the underlying causes of food insecurity and instability in the region.<sup>308</sup>

Hence, the advocacy and coordination spearheaded by the UN in Afghanistan's food crisis are a testament to the transformative power of collective action. They exemplify the belief that, even in the most challenging circumstances, compassion, solidarity, and multilateral cooperation can drive positive change. By galvanizing a global community of actors, the UN works tirelessly to rewrite the narrative of hunger and starvation in

Afghanistan, offering a glimmer of hope and a promise of a brighter, food-secure future for all Afghans.

### **EMPOWERING AFGHAN COMMUNITIES FOR SUSTAINABLE FOOD SECURITY**

#### **Capacity Building**

In the dynamic landscape of Afghanistan's persistent food insecurity, the United Nations (UN) and its dedicated agency, the World Food Programme (WFP), have recognized the profound significance of capacity building. Their commitment extends beyond immediate relief; it encompasses empowering local institutions and communities with the knowledge, skills, and resources to independently manage food security and nutrition programs. This strategic investment not only builds resilience but also ensures a more sustainable and self-reliant response to the pressing issue of food insecurity.

#### **Empowering Local Institutions**

A cornerstone of capacity building is the strengthening of local institutions, which play a pivotal role in responding to food security challenges. The UN and WFP collaborate closely with government agencies, local authorities, and civil society organizations to enhance their capacity to design, implement, and monitor food security programs. This empowerment fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility, ensuring that solutions are contextually appropriate and sustainable.<sup>309</sup>

#### **Community-Led Initiatives**

Empowering communities to take the reins of their own food security is a central tenet of capacity building efforts. The UN and WFP engage in community-based approaches that encourage active participation in program design and implementation. This approach ensures that interventions are tailored to the specific needs and preferences of local

<sup>308</sup> Sayed Quadrat Hashimy, *Pakistan and Afghanistan Tussle over Durand Line*, (2023), <https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=4150964> (last visited Sep 1, 2023); Sayed Quadrat Hashimy, *Pakistan and Afghanistan Tussle Over Durand Line*, 27 WORLD AFFAIRS 100 (2023).

<sup>309</sup> Chapter 5: Food Security — Special Report on Climate Change and Land, <https://www.ipcc.ch/srcccl/chapter/chapter-5/> (last visited Sep 1, 2023).

populations, making them more effective and culturally sensitive.

### **Knowledge Transfer**

The transfer of knowledge and skills is a cornerstone of capacity building. Through training, workshops, and technical assistance, the UN and WFP equip local actors with the tools needed to effectively manage food security and nutrition programs. These initiatives cover a spectrum of topics, from sustainable agriculture practices and nutrition education to disaster risk reduction and climate resilience strategies.<sup>310</sup>

### **Promoting Self-Reliance**

Capacity building extends beyond immediate relief to instill a sense of self-reliance among communities. By imparting skills in agricultural techniques, food processing, and income-generating activities, the UN and WFP enable communities to break free from the cycle of dependency on external aid. This approach fosters a sense of dignity and empowerment among beneficiaries.

### **Resilience Building**

Building resilience against food security challenges is a central objective of capacity building efforts. Communities are trained in risk reduction strategies, preparedness for natural disasters, and adaptive agricultural practices.<sup>311</sup> This resilience-building approach not only helps communities weather the storm of adversity but also enables them to recover more quickly when crises strike.

### **Data and Information**

Informed decision-making is crucial for effective food security management. The UN and WFP support the establishment of data collection and information systems, enabling local institutions to monitor food security indicators and respond proactively to emerging

challenges. Timely and accurate data empowers communities to make informed choices about resource allocation and program prioritization.

However, the road to self-sufficiency and resilience is not without its challenges. In Afghanistan, the protracted conflict, political instability, and security concerns pose formidable obstacles to capacity building efforts. Therefore, the success of these endeavors hinges not only on the UN and WFP's dedication but also on the continuous support of the international community. This support encompasses funding, resources, and diplomatic endeavors aimed at addressing the root causes of food insecurity and instability in the region.

Therefore, capacity building efforts led by the UN and WFP in Afghanistan embody the spirit of sustainable development and resilience. They recognize that true transformation requires the empowerment of local actors, enabling them to take charge of their own food security and nutrition. Through knowledge transfer and community-led initiatives, the UN and WFP lay the groundwork for a future where Afghan communities stand strong and self-reliant in the face of food insecurity, offering a promise of long-lasting positive change.

## **NAVIGATING COMPLEX TERRAIN TO REACH THE MOST VULNERABLE IN AFGHANISTAN**

### **Access Negotiations**

In the tumultuous landscape of Afghanistan, marked by persistent conflict and insecurity, the United Nations (UN) and its dedicated agency, the World Food Programme (WFP), demonstrate their unwavering commitment to providing humanitarian assistance, including vital food aid, to those in dire need. However, the challenging reality of conflict zones requires more than just a steadfast dedication—it demands skilled negotiation and diplomacy to ensure safe and unimpeded access to the most vulnerable populations.

<sup>310</sup> Capacity Building and Knowledge Transfer the role in Nation Building, <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/capacity-building-knowledge-transfer-role-nation-samuel-odoi-laryea> (last visited Sep 1, 2023).

<sup>311</sup> Hashimy, *supra* note 21.

### ***Navigating Conflict and Insecurity***

Conflict-affected areas in Afghanistan are often marred by violence, insecurity, and the presence of various armed groups. These complex and challenging conditions pose significant barriers to delivering humanitarian assistance. Armed groups may control access routes, infrastructure, or entire regions, creating a perilous environment for aid workers and the communities they seek to support.

### ***The Role of Negotiations***

In the face of these formidable challenges, the UN and WFP employ the delicate yet crucial strategy of negotiations with armed groups. These negotiations are not merely a means to gain access; they are a lifeline that enables the delivery of life-saving aid to those who desperately need it. Such negotiations involve engaging in dialogue with armed groups to secure safe passage and operational space for humanitarian actors.

### ***Ensuring the Safety of Aid Workers***

Negotiations with armed groups encompass various aspects of safety and security. Humanitarian organizations work to establish protocols and agreements that protect aid workers and their assets. These negotiations aim to minimize the risks faced by personnel on the ground, enabling them to carry out their work with a reduced threat to their safety.

### ***Facilitating Unimpeded Access***

Beyond ensuring the safety of aid workers, negotiations also seek to secure unimpeded access to affected communities. This means that humanitarian convoys can move freely, humanitarian facilities are safeguarded, and aid distribution can occur without interference. Unimpeded access is critical to reaching those in remote or conflict-affected areas who may

have no other means of obtaining essential supplies.<sup>312</sup>

### ***Balancing Humanitarian Imperatives***

Negotiating access in conflict zones requires a delicate balance between upholding humanitarian principles and engaging with armed groups. Humanitarian actors must remain neutral and impartial, focusing on the humanitarian imperative of saving lives and alleviating suffering. Negotiations aim to persuade armed groups of the importance of allowing humanitarian aid to reach all those in need, regardless of their affiliations.<sup>313</sup>

### ***Complex and Contextual Negotiations***

Negotiations in Afghanistan are highly contextual and multifaceted.<sup>314</sup> They require a deep understanding of the local dynamics, the motivations of armed groups, and the ever-evolving security situation. Each negotiation is unique, often involving nuanced discussions that touch on issues beyond humanitarian access, such as local politics, ceasefire agreements, or broader peace processes.<sup>315</sup> However, it is important to acknowledge that negotiations with armed groups in conflict-affected areas are inherently risky and fraught with challenges. Humanitarian actors must navigate a fine line between delivering aid and compromising their neutrality or safety. Moreover, negotiations do not always guarantee success, and there may be instances where access remains restricted due to the volatile security situation.

Thus, access negotiations conducted by the UN and WFP in Afghanistan are a testament to their unwavering commitment to humanitarian principles and the well-being of vulnerable

<sup>312</sup> What is humanitarian negotiation? - Frontline Negotiations, <https://frontline-negotiations.org/what-is-humanitarian-negotiation/> (last visited Sep 1, 2023).

<sup>313</sup> Humanitarian negotiations: the backbone of access | Humanitarian Action, <https://humanitarianaction.info/article/humanitarian-negotiations-backbone-access> (last visited Sep 1, 2023).

<sup>314</sup> Mohammad Rasikh Wasiq, *Dynamic Role of the United Nations Security Council to Maintain Peace and Security in Asia Especially in Afghanistan*, (2023), <https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=4345061> (last visited Sep 1, 2023).

<sup>315</sup> Mohammad Rasikh Wasiq, *The Role of the UN Security Council in Its Peripheral Outlook in Maintaining Peace in Afghanistan*, (2023), <https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=4221077> (last visited Sep 1, 2023).

populations. They represent a tireless effort to navigate the complex terrain of conflict and insecurity, ensuring that humanitarian assistance, including food aid, reaches those who need it most. While fraught with challenges, these negotiations are a lifeline that offers hope and relief to communities caught in the crossfire of conflict, underscoring the enduring belief that even in the darkest times, humanity can prevail.

#### **NAVIGATING COMPLEXITY TO SAVE LIVES IN AFGHANISTAN**

##### ***Monitoring and Assessment:***

In the intricate web of Afghanistan's humanitarian challenges—characterized by persistent conflict, political instability, and a volatile security situation—the United Nations (UN) and the World Food Programme (WFP) employ a crucial tool for effective intervention: monitoring and assessment. These systematic processes are not just a routine exercise; they are indispensable mechanisms that allow these organizations to gauge the evolving food security and nutritional conditions in Afghanistan, adapt their interventions in real-time, and ensure that their efforts are effectively addressing the complex and multifaceted crisis.<sup>316</sup>

##### ***Regular Assessments***

Regularity is the hallmark of monitoring and assessment in Afghanistan. Both the UN and WFP conduct frequent and comprehensive assessments of the humanitarian situation. These assessments encompass a wide range of factors, including food availability, access, and utilization, as well as nutritional status among vulnerable populations. Through surveys, interviews, and data collection, they compile a detailed and accurate picture of the challenges faced by communities across the country.

##### ***Understanding Evolving Needs***

The dynamic nature of Afghanistan's humanitarian crisis demands an acute understanding of evolving needs. Monitoring and assessment serve as a vital compass that guides humanitarian responses. By tracking changes in food security and nutrition indicators, the UN and WFP can quickly identify emerging hotspots of need, enabling them to allocate resources and assistance where they are needed most urgently.

##### ***Real-Time Adaptation***

Flexibility and adaptability are essential qualities in the realm of humanitarian assistance. Armed with up-to-date information from their assessments, the UN and WFP can swiftly adjust their interventions to respond to changing circumstances. Whether it's scaling up food distribution in a newly displaced community or pivoting to address a sudden spike in malnutrition rates, real-time adaptation is crucial to saving lives.<sup>317</sup>

##### ***Data-Driven Decision-Making***

Monitoring and assessment provide the foundation for data-driven decision-making. The wealth of information collected informs not only immediate relief efforts but also longer-term planning and policy development. It helps prioritize resources, tailor interventions to specific needs, and advocate for policy changes that address the root causes of food insecurity and malnutrition in Afghanistan.

##### ***Complexity and Challenges***

It is imperative to acknowledge the complexities and challenges inherent in monitoring and assessment in Afghanistan. Ongoing conflict, political instability, and security concerns can hamper access to certain regions and communities. Moreover, data collection can be hampered by logistical difficulties and the ever-changing nature of the

<sup>316</sup> Simran Chaudhri, Kristina Cordes & Nathan Miller, *HUMANITARIAN PROGRAMMING AND MONITORING IN INACCESSIBLE CONFLICT SETTINGS*:

<sup>317</sup> Security Council Adopts Presidential Statement Addressing Conflict-Induced Food Insecurity in Situations of Armed Conflict | UN Press, *supra* note 8.

crisis. Despite these hurdles, the UN and WFP remain resolute in their commitment to navigating these challenges to gather critical information.<sup>318</sup>

### **Continuous International Support**

The humanitarian landscape in Afghanistan is marked by its complexity and fragility, demanding sustained international support. The efforts of the UN and WFP to combat starvation and food insecurity in the country rely on consistent backing from the international community. This support extends beyond financial assistance to encompass diplomatic efforts aimed at addressing the root causes of food insecurity, conflict, and political instability.<sup>319</sup>

Henceforth, monitoring and assessment are the lynchpins of the UN and WFP's efforts to combat food insecurity and starvation in Afghanistan. These processes are more than mere data collection; they are lifelines that ensure that aid reaches the right people at the right time. In the face of the country's complex and challenging humanitarian situation, the UN and WFP's dedication to monitoring and assessment reaffirms their commitment to alleviating human suffering, offering hope to the most vulnerable in a land fraught with adversity.<sup>320</sup>

### **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the role of the United Nations (UN) in combating starvation and food insecurity in Afghanistan through humanitarian action is undeniably pivotal and commendable. This comprehensive analysis has illuminated the multifaceted nature of the UN's efforts to provide a beacon of hope for vulnerable populations in Afghanistan, particularly during times of crisis.

Through humanitarian assistance, including food aid, nutrition support, and cash transfers, the UN has established a swift and compassionate lifeline that extends beyond immediate relief. Emergency response initiatives have delivered crucial provisions such as food, shelter, medical supplies, and clean water and sanitation to those in dire need.<sup>321</sup>

The commitment to nurturing health and resilience within Afghanistan is evident through various programs, including nutritional support, supplementary feeding programs, ready-to-use therapeutic foods, and maternal and infant nutrition initiatives.<sup>322</sup> Community-based approaches and monitoring and assessment mechanisms have ensured a dynamic response to evolving needs.

Sustainable food security has been a key objective, with the UN actively promoting self-sufficiency and resilience through food security programs, support for small-scale farmers, infrastructure development, sustainable agriculture practices, capacity building, market access, and climate resilience measures.<sup>323</sup>

Advocacy and coordination efforts have played a crucial role in catalyzing change in Afghanistan's food crisis. The UN has served as a platform for multilateral cooperation, resource mobilization, policy change, and capacity building, amplifying compassion and fostering awareness of the challenges faced by Afghan communities.

Empowering Afghan communities remains central to achieving sustainable food security. The UN has championed capacity building, supported local institutions, promoted community-led initiatives, facilitated knowledge transfer, and focused on resilience building to foster self-reliance.

Navigating the complex terrain of Afghanistan, marked by access negotiations, conflict, and

<sup>318</sup> Security Council Emphasizes That Punitive Restrictions on Women's Rights, Escalating Hunger, Insecurity Taking Devastating Toll in Afghanistan | UN Press, <https://press.un.org/en/2023/sc15222.doc.htm> (last visited Sep 1, 2023).

<sup>319</sup> WFP appeals for greater support for Afghanistan as hunger increases | UN News, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/12/1106912> (last visited Sep 1, 2023).

<sup>320</sup> Mohammad Rasikh Wasiq, *The United Nation Mechanism for the Enforcement of Human Rights: An Exploration*, (2022), <https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=4221083> (last visited Sep 1, 2023).

<sup>321</sup> Sayed Qudrat Hashimy, *Exploring Menstrual Leave in Islamic Jurisprudence: Cultural and Religious Perspectives*, 6 3457 (2023).

<sup>322</sup> S. Q. Hashimy, *Menstrual Leave in Islamic Jurisprudence: A Classical Rhetoric*, (2020).

<sup>323</sup> Hashimy, *supra* note 31.

insecurity, has been a daunting task. The role of negotiations in ensuring the safety of aid workers and facilitating unimpeded access has been indispensable. Balancing humanitarian imperatives in a complex and contextual environment has required skillful navigation.

Monitoring and assessment have been at the heart of the UN's ability to understand evolving needs, adapt in real-time, and make data-driven decisions. The complexity and challenges of the situation have demanded continuous international support to sustain these humanitarian efforts.

In essence, the United Nations has demonstrated unwavering dedication in combating starvation and food insecurity in Afghanistan. Their commitment to saving lives and promoting sustainable development in one of the world's most challenging contexts is a testament to the power of humanitarian action and international cooperation. While the road ahead remains challenging, the UN's role as a beacon of hope continues to shine bright in Afghanistan's hour of need.

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