

2020 Nobel Peace Prize: positive for multilateralism (expert opinion)



The UN World Food Programme has received the 2020 Nobel Peace Prize.
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Photos: AFP

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The Norwegian Nobel Committee has awarded the [2020 Nobel Peace Prize](#) to the [UN World Food Programme](#) (WFP).

As in other years, **nominations** for the **prestigious award** were **abundant**. However, this time, their number exceeded expectations.

318 were registered, of which **211 were individuals** and **107 organizations**. All of them were related to current issues and important in their commitment to promoting the values of **peace, freedom, and peaceful coexistence**.

A leading humanitarian organization in the fight against hunger around the world, the **World Food Programme** “*is the first to intervene worldwide on the front line of food insecurity,*” a hardship that **millions of people around the world** suffer from every day.



By distributing **15 billion** food rations a year, which benefit more than **86 million people** in **83 countries** around the world, the WFP’s **aim is to provide food in emergencies** and work “*with communities to improve nutrition and build resilience*”.

Since its inception in 1961, the work of the WFP has been underpinned by the vision that food and food-related support breaks the vicious circle of **hunger and poverty**.

Its activity focuses on **four areas**: support in emergencies (such as civil conflicts, wars, droughts, natural disasters, floods, etc.); relief and rehabilitation; development

aid; and special operations.

Almost two-thirds of its work takes place in **war-torn countries** where, according to the agency, people are **three times more likely** to suffer from **malnutrition** than in conflict-free regions.

It is important to note that, in armed conflicts, **food** can acquire **political overtones** and become a **lethal weapon of war**.



At the end of emergencies, WFP relief and rehabilitation projects help communities rebuild their lives and livelihoods, while seeking to *“strengthen the resilience of individuals and communities affected by protracted crises by applying a developmental view to its humanitarian response.”*

Development projects focus on **nutrition, aimed primarily at mothers and children** from conception to two years of age, and subsequently through school

lunch projects.

The awarding of the **Nobel Peace Prize** to the **World Food Programme** took place in a landmark year for the UN, which celebrates the 75th anniversary of its founding in a world battling both the **coronavirus pandemic** and an emerging criticism and rejection of the multilateralism that has given identity, meaning, and direction to the work of the global organization.



It is this which has allowed the **post-war** international system to flourish, based on the principle of cooperation.

As the **coronavirus pandemic** threatens to expose millions of people to famine due to the economic impact of the health crisis, **the UN's international institutions** are being questioned about their scope, efficiency, and funding.

These organizations are the essence of **multilateralism** and address diverse global issues including finance, humanitarianism, development and peace, as well as health, employment, environment, education, science, culture, and childhood.

One example of the threat is President **Donald Trump**, whose government has withdrawn from the [WHO](#) (World Health Organization) and [UNESCO](#) (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), decisions which have had a severe impact on international cooperation.

To have awarded the **2020 Nobel Peace Prize** to the UN World Food Programme represents, without a doubt, **a strategic recognition** of the **humanitarian** and **cooperative** work of the global organization, and **encouragement** for the **multilateralism** that it represents.

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