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RESOURCE, FINANCIAL AND BUDGETARY MATTERS

Agenda item 6

*For information**

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INVESTIGATION ON WFP OPERATIONS IN SOMALIA

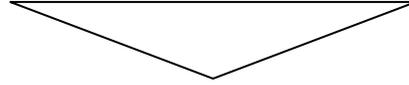
Conclusions of the Bureau Meetings Concerning Somalia Held on 12 and 17 March 2010

On 25 March 2010 the document “Conclusions of the Bureau meetings concerning Somalia held on 12 and 17 March 2010” was sent to Board members to approve the three recommendations it contained through a vote by correspondence. Approval was obtained on 31 March 2010, with 23 of 36 Board members voting and approving the recommendations.

* In accordance with the Executive Board’s decisions on governance, approved at the Annual and Third Regular Sessions, 2000, items for information should not be discussed unless a Board member specifically requests it, well in advance of the meeting, and the Chair accepts the request on the grounds that it is a proper use of the Board’s time.

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DECISION



On 31 March 2010, the Board approved, through a vote by correspondence, the three recommendations contained in “Investigation on WFP Operations in Somalia – Conclusions of the Bureau Meetings Concerning Somalia Held on 12 and 17 March 2010” (WFP/EB.A/2010/6-K/1).

Conclusions of the Bureau Meetings Concerning Somalia Held on 12 and 17 March 2010

Analysis of and Recommendations Concerning the Allegations Made by the United Nations Monitoring Group on Somalia Relating to WFP Management Methods in Somalia

Following the briefing convened by the Secretariat to inform members of the Board concerning allegations relating to WFP management in Somalia and the Secretariat's initial response to the United Nations Monitoring Group on Somalia (MGS); and after the Board had analysed senior management's actions and responses, reports by the Inspector General and the obstacles encountered to food distribution in that country, the Bureau held two meetings presided by the Ambassador of Colombia, H.E. Sabas Pretelt de la Vega (List C) and with the attendance of Mr Jiří Muchka, Representative of List E and Ms Harriet Spanos, Alternate Member of List D, H.E. Mohamed Ashraf Gamal Eldin Rashed, Alternate of List A and H.E. Javad Shakhs Tavakolian, Representative of List B. Also attending were the External Auditor and the Inspector General and Chief of the Oversight Office in order to provide more information on the situation so that the Bureau could propose immediate measures, to be consulted as an extraordinary measure with the Board, in accordance with the unanimous wish of the participants in the briefing. Ms Claudia von Roehl, Secretary of the Executive Board, was also in attendance.

After hearing all statements the Bureau recommended that:

1. Senior management, through the Executive Director, be asked to reply immediately in detail to each and every one of the affirmations made by the MGS. The replies should be totally objective and based on the continuous supervision of WFP in the country and on work carried out by internal and external audit, placing emphasis upon clarifying possible inaccuracies in the MGS report while obviously accepting the existing problems. At the same time it was emphasized that the requirements and risks of food distribution in Somalia must be known with greater certainty so that assistance continue to be extended wherever feasible, maintaining maximum transparency and the characteristics proper to WFP programmes, and taking any necessary additional measures. It was noted that the Secretariat sent a response to the MGS with Mr R. Lopes da Silva, Deputy Executive Director for External Relations, with copy to the membership.
2. The Bureau requested the External Auditor to: carry out an urgent but detailed review of procedures adopted by WFP for the contracting, delivery and logistics of food aid; transport systems; and the possible volume of losses in each case in Somalia.

The Bureau was aware that the term of office of the External Auditor would expire on 30 June 2010. On the basis of a request from the President, the External Auditor advised that it could provide, within two weeks, written advice to the Board drawing on its own work and that already completed by Internal Audit, on how to review the procedures and controls used by WFP in Somalia over contracting, delivery and distribution of food aid, with the objective of recommending improvements and enhancements as necessary.

The External Auditor was also asked to quickly draft suggestions or terms of references for improving and supervising in greater detail the measures and controls applicable to those issues. In response to this request the External Auditor expressed his willingness to be available (subject to reasonable notice) to discuss the written advice with the Bureau or Board as necessary. The cost for the advice and one consultation would be 4,600 pounds sterling; the Bureau considers that it should be approved.

3. The Bureau specifically asked WFP management, through the Inspector General, to perform more in-depth internal auditing work, which would allow for detailed supervision of procedures and controls by means of unannounced visits and analyses as well as the continuous appraisal of assets and food distribution methods. In this respect, it was emphasized that there should be greater certainty in the calculation of the estimated percentage of possible food and asset losses, on the basis of both experience and improved controls, as was the case in most public and private organizations that distributed food and at the same time managed a large logistics system for distribution.

On the other hand, the Bureau indicated that it agreed that United Nations management bodies should carry out such investigations deemed necessary relating to management of various agencies and programmes, and offered the full collaboration of WFP to this effect. The Bureau did not consider that in such circumstances the WFP governing bodies should be limited to awaiting the outcome of any such investigations; on the contrary, the initiatives for supervision, allegation and possible corrective measures should be continually driven by senior management, the Board and, when appropriate, the Bureau itself, as in the present case.

The three recommendations, as agreed to by the Executive Director and the President, are to be communicated electronically to members of the Board and, once approved, will become formal decisions of the Board, in accordance with Article IX, paragraph 8 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board.