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**Executive Board
First Regular Session**

Rome, 8–11 February 2010

POLICY ISSUES

Agenda item 5

For consideration

WFP'S ROLE IN THE HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE SYSTEM

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NOTE TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

This document is submitted to the Executive Board for consideration.

The Secretariat invites members of the Board who may have questions of a technical nature with regard to this document to contact the WFP staff focal points indicated below, preferably well in advance of the Board's meeting.

Director, Multilateral and NGO Relations Division:	Mr P. Larsen	tel.: 066513-2601
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Should you have any questions regarding matters of dispatch of documentation for the Executive Board, please contact Ms I. Carpitella, Administrative Assistant, Conference Servicing Unit (tel.: 066513-2645).

WFP

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At its First Regular Session of 2009, the Secretariat was requested to prepare a document on WFP's role in the humanitarian system as it has evolved since the Humanitarian Response Review, for presentation to the Board at its First Regular Session of 2010.

Following the recommendations made by the Humanitarian Response Review, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee undertook humanitarian reforms in 2005 and 2006 addressing these three areas:

- ➤ improved humanitarian response capacity, leadership accountability and predictability in sectors/areas of response through the cluster approach;

- ➤ adequate, timely and flexible humanitarian financing; and

- ➤ improved humanitarian coordination and leadership through the Humanitarian Coordinator system.

The Global Humanitarian Platform – which is not an Inter-Agency Standing Committee initiative – was created in 2006 to cultivate more effective partnerships between United Nations and non-United Nations humanitarian actors.

WFP is actively involved in the humanitarian cluster system: it is the leader of the logistics and emergency telecommunications cluster, and is engaged in the other clusters. While a global food cluster was not established, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee reaffirmed WFP's global lead of the food sector in the humanitarian context and 19 of the 21 local food clusters created by country teams have been led or co-led by WFP.

WFP is active in the Humanitarian Financing Working Group, whose overall objective is to strengthen the Central Emergency Response Fund, country-based pool funds and other humanitarian funding mechanisms. WFP has been the largest recipient of the expanded Central Emergency Response Fund since the Fund was established in 2005. In 2009, WFP received US$163 million or 38 percent of the total funding to agencies in support of new emergencies or under-funded operations. Common humanitarian funds and other funds pooled at the country or regional level also financed WFP humanitarian operations.

Progress to strengthen the humanitarian coordinator system accelerated in 2009. WFP has been engaged in shaping the procedures surrounding the Humanitarian Coordinator pool and, as part of the Humanitarian Coordinator assessment panel, is active in the selection of Humanitarian Coordinator candidates. WFP is building the leadership capabilities of its staff through targeted training programmes that also prepare staff for the Humanitarian Coordinator role.

WFP participates in Global Humanitarian Platform meetings and contributes to the humanitarian system through the provision of services such as the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service and engagement in activities such as joint needs assessments, inter-agency emergency preparedness, pandemic preparedness and humanitarian policy engagement.

DRAFT DECISION*
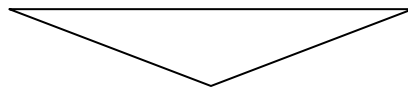
The Board takes note of "WFP's Role in the Humanitarian Assistance System" (WFP/EB.1/2010/5-C).

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* This is a draft decision. For the final decision adopted by the Board, please refer to the Decisions and Recommendations document issued at the end of the session.

BACKGROUND

1.   At its First Regular Session of 2009, the Secretariat was asked to prepare a document on WFP's role in the humanitarian system, in particular as it has evolved since the Humanitarian Response Review was commissioned in 2005.[1]

2.   This document is intended to provide the information requested and to give an opportunity for the Secretariat to seek the Board's support for WFP engagement in humanitarian reform, particularly with respect to further development of the cluster system.

THE CHANGING HUMANITARIAN SYSTEM: HUMANITARIAN REFORM

3.   Following recommendations made by the Humanitarian Response Review and with the aim of improving the humanitarian system's ability to respond to all humanitarian crises, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) undertook humanitarian reforms in 2005 and 2006 that address these three areas:

   ➢   improved humanitarian response capacity, leadership accountability and predictability in sectors/areas of response through the cluster approach;

   ➢   adequate, timely and flexible humanitarian financing; and

   ➢   improved humanitarian coordination and leadership through the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) system.

4.   The Global Humanitarian Platform (GHP) was created in 2006 to cultivate more effective partnerships between United Nations and non-United Nations humanitarian actors. The GHP is not an IASC initiative.

UNITED NATIONS HUMANITARIAN CLUSTER SYSTEM

5.   The cluster approach or system is one of the most important humanitarian reforms. It was created to address gaps in the immediate response to humanitarian crises, aiming to improve the accountability of leadership and predictability in the delivery of assistance in situations where the population has been internally displaced.

6.   The cluster approach is based on a two-tier system. At the global level, clusters focus on developing standards and normative guidance, building capacity to improve response, and the provision of operational support through preparedness and advocacy activities. At the country level, clusters seek to support a coherent and effective humanitarian response, limit overlap and facilitate the prioritization of available resources amongst all humanitarian actors contributing to a specific area of need.

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[1] In 2005, the Emergency Relief Coordinator at the time launched an independent review of the global humanitarian system to assess the humanitarian response capacities of the United Nations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement and other major humanitarian actors to identify gaps and make recommendations to address them. The review, conducted between February and June 2006, considered complex emergencies and natural disasters and sought to establish benchmarks for accountability and performance, preparedness and response capacity, coordination and financing.

7.   The approach is in accordance with WFP's Strategic Plan 2008–2013,[2] which clearly states that WFP's partnerships with United Nations agencies, NGOs and other partners are central to all its work. Furthermore, the Strategic Plan emphasizes that WFP will continue to contribute to effective partnerships and coordination at country level to identify gaps and avoid overlap. WFP supports and is an active member of the cluster system.

8.   It was agreed that WFP would assume leadership roles for the global logistics and emergency telecommunications clusters, established to support country-level clusters and address gaps in country-level responses.

9.   In 2006, the cluster approach was introduced in emergencies in Lebanon, Pakistan and the Philippines. The application of the cluster approach has since become more systematic, and it has been agreed in the IASC to apply the approach in all situations where there is a Humanitarian Coordinator.

Global Logistics Cluster

10.   Logistics clusters led by WFP responded to eleven new emergencies in 2006–2007 (Bangladesh, Central African Republic, Ghana, Madagascar, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Uganda), nine new emergencies in 2008 (Chad/Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Georgia, Haiti, Kenya, Mozambique, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Tajikistan) and four new emergencies in 2009 (Benin, Gaza, Pakistan and Zimbabwe). These field clusters made use of the 167 logisticians from 30 different organizations that WFP trained for deployment as part of a logistics cluster response.

11.   WFP has always recognized the fundamental role that the logistics function plays in carrying out humanitarian operations. This awareness led the Programme to build, maintain and constantly seek ways to improve its ability to efficiently and effectively deliver assistance. To capitalize on its logistics capacity, WFP was assigned a number of inter-agency mandates: in 2000 the Secretary-General designated it the manager of the United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot (UNHRD) network and in 2003 the High-Level Committee on Management selected it as the provider of humanitarian air services. These decisions culminated in the decision of the IASC to give WFP the responsibility to lead the logistics cluster and to provide logistics services to United Nations and non-United Nations partners in the humanitarian community.

12.   To provide field clusters with guidance on strategy and policy, training, mobilization support and/or surge capacity for start-up operations and ongoing humanitarian projects, a Global Logistics Cluster Support Cell (GLCSC) was established in 2006. Positioned within WFP's Logistics Division, the GLCSC now consists of a group of logisticians with many skills, drawn from seven United Nations and non-United Nations humanitarian organizations such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), World Vision International (WVI), *Action contre la Faim* (ACF, Action Against Hunger) and the Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE).

13.   WFP also offers free storage services to United Nations agencies, governments and NGOs through the UNHRD network. While these activities are funded through a channel separate from that of the logistics cluster, the core principles of the service provided by the network are very much in line with those of the cluster approach, and the network is closely linked to activation of clusters.

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[2] WFP Strategic Plan (2008–2011) was extended until 2013 as per Board decision 2009/EB.A/3.

14. The UNHRD network provides a level of flexibility to operational response by inter-linking five hubs in five continents – Europe: Brindisi (Italy); Africa: Accra (Ghana); the Middle East: Dubai (United Arab Emirates); Southeast Asia: Subang (Malaysia); Latin America: Panama City (Panama) – to cover the entire globe. The hubs hold standardized stocks that are governed by common protocols and standard operating procedures applicable to all UNHRDs and are centrally managed. They offer the entire humanitarian community standard services free of charge and special services such as non-food items, service procurement and transport upon request on a full-cost-recovery basis. To date, 30 United Nations agencies, international organizations and NGOs have signed agreements with WFP for use of the UNHRD network.

Emergency Telecommunications Cluster

15. Since 2007, the global emergency telecommunications cluster (ETC) has provided coordination and technical support in emergency telecommunications in all major emergencies, including:

   ➢ 2007: Algeria, Bangladesh, Ghana, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Peru and Uganda;

   ➢ 2007/08: the southern African region (Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe);

   ➢ 2008: Chad, the Comoros, DRC, Haiti, Kenya, Myanmar and the Occupied Palestinian Territory; and

   ➢ 2009: Afghanistan, DRC, Indonesia, Pakistan and the Philippines.

16. At the inception of the cluster approach, three agencies were designated with lead responsibilities for the ETC global cluster. UNICEF and WFP were service providers for data communications and security telecommunications, with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) as process owner. Since then, UNICEF and WFP have recognized that a single service provider would make emergency response more efficient and effective than two providers. On 1 June 2009, UNICEF and WFP finalized the agreement to streamline responsibilities, unify services and consolidate the provision of security and data communications under the sole leadership of WFP.

17. WFP also took a lead role in information technology issues through the development and delivery of a comprehensive two-week information technology emergency preparedness and response management training programme for the humanitarian community. By the end of 2009, 99 emergency information and communications technology professionals from 20 different organizations (United Nations, NGOs and standby partners as well as WFP) successfully completed the course. The training was made possible through an innovative partnership with private-sector donors that began in 2006.

18. Under the new United Nations policy on security risk management, minimum operating safety standards and the guidelines for determining acceptable risk developed by the United Nations Department of Safety and Security, WFP as ETC global cluster lead was designated as the focal point for security telecommunications issues. As such, WFP advises the security management network on policy and implementation of security telecommunications standards and services.

WFP's Involvement in the Overall Cluster System

19. WFP is actively engaged in other clusters at both the global and country level, including:

   ➢ education – led by UNICEF and Save the Children-UK;

   ➢ water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) – led by UNICEF;

> ➤ health – led by the World Health Organization (WHO);
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> ➤ nutrition – led by UNICEF;
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> ➤ protection – led by UNICEF and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR);
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> ➤ early recovery – led by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP);
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> ➤ emergency shelter – led by UNHCR and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC); and
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> ➤ agriculture – led by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).[3]

20.   Under the umbrella of the global nutrition cluster, WFP has been involved in several initiatives, including: an evaluation of the targeted supplementary food programme in Ethiopia; a review and revision of the WFP/UNHCR guidelines for selective feeding programmes in emergency situations, elaborated in 1999; development of a harmonized training package for nutrition in emergencies; an update of "Nutval", a web-based tool that helps calculate the nutritional value of food rations; the creation of a joint rapid initial assessment tool for three clusters (nutrition, health and WASH); and the revision of the Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transitions (SMART) package for collection and analysis of nutrition and mortality data in emergencies.

21.   WFP is a leader in standardizing needs assessment and monitoring and evaluation tools among stakeholders in the global education cluster. The exercise aims to facilitate the collection and dissemination of assessment information and guide emergency response in the area of education.

22.   In the global protection cluster, WFP contributes to protection assessment and training tools intended for assistance agencies rather than the traditional protection-mandated agencies such as UNHCR and UNICEF. Under the auspices of the global cluster and with funding channelled through it, WFP produced a package of protection training tools for assistance agencies. The protection training tools provide programming support for work with vulnerable populations. At the field level, this has meant providing protection training and workshops at more than 100 sites in 20 countries – often with the participation of cluster colleagues as participants and resource people.

23.   In the early recovery cluster, WFP promotes the incorporation of early recovery in emergency needs assessments and response, and the use of inter-agency early recovery networks at the country level. WFP is helping develop guidance for post-disaster needs assessments (PDNAs), led by the early recovery cluster; and for post-conflict needs assessments (PCNAs), led by the United Nations Development Group/Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs Working Group on Transitions.

24.   WFP continues to engage with the WASH cluster. In some situations the WASH cluster may request the global logistics cluster to provide in the short term immediate delivery of potable water at the onset of an emergency. The WFP-led logistics cluster is working to formalize that agreement with the WASH cluster.

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[3] http://www.humanitarianreform.org/humanitarianreform/Default.aspx?tabid=217. Agriculture is listed as a sector but included in the cluster list.

IASC Cluster Evaluation

25.   The first cluster evaluation was completed in late 2007. It recognized that the cluster approach improved coordination, allowed for better engagement with the humanitarian community and led to more predictability in emergency response; it also generated additional work in coordination and reporting. Recommendations were made to enhance the clarity of roles and responsibilities and strengthen agency commitment. The report noted that the ETC cluster was considered one of the most productive of the global clusters, and also noted WFP's expertise in the logistics cluster. The evaluation proposed that WFP and its partners consider a global food security cluster, possibly with the co-leadership of FAO.

26.   The second cluster evaluation, which takes into account other humanitarian reform mechanisms, is currently underway. WFP is active in the process and on the steering committee. Emphasis has been placed on assessing the extent to which cluster modality implementation has resulted in improved meeting of beneficiary needs. The evaluation report will be issued in March 2010.

Food Sector

27.   When the cluster approach was launched, rather than creating a global food cluster, the IASC reaffirmed WFP's global lead of the food sector in the humanitarian context.

28.   At the field level, many country teams decided to establish food clusters. In 2009, 21 of the 25 countries with an HC created food clusters; of these, 9 were led solely by WFP;[4] 9 were co-led with FAO;[5] 1 was co-led with UNICEF;[6] and 2 were led solely by FAO.[7]

Future Engagement in the Cluster Approach

29.   Global cluster responsibilities have provided the impetus to make the necessary investments in humanitarian facilities mechanisms, with the essential support of donors. These have resulted in an increase in the global response capacity and operational support, and strengthened WFP's role as provider of last resort. Work toward the cluster approach objectives of filling gaps, avoiding duplication and ensuring the provision of cost-efficient services can be sustained only if steady funding is available.

30.   WFP has demonstrated its commitment to mainstreaming cluster management and operational support functions by including the necessary cost items in the Biennial Management Plan (2010–2011).

31.   WFP continues to support the cluster approach through the IASC, including the second IASC-led cluster evaluation, and global cluster coordination meetings. It will continue to emphasize the importance of focusing on effective and efficient humanitarian responses, which must remain the basis for improved coordination; and of ensuring that cluster work strengthens the predictability, comprehensiveness and quality of humanitarian response.

32.   The cluster system is an increasingly common mechanism of humanitarian response. Together with its IASC partners, WFP is considering whether to establish a global food cluster.

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[4] Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Georgia, Haiti, Kenya, Liberia, Myanmar, Nepal and Niger

[5] Afghanistan, Burundi, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, DRC, Guinea, Iraq, the Sudan and Uganda

[6] Indonesia

[7] Burundi and the Central African Republic

HUMANITARIAN FINANCING

33.   WFP has been the largest recipient of the expanded Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) since the Fund was established in 2005. In 2009, WFP received US$163 million or 38 percent[8] of the total funding to agencies in support of new emergencies or under-funded humanitarian operations.

34.   WFP is active in the Humanitarian Financing Working Group, under the auspices of the IASC. The overall objective of the working group is to strengthen the CERF, country-based pool funds and other humanitarian funding mechanisms.

35.   The CERF contributes significantly towards coordination and support services, including logistics, emergency telecommunications and humanitarian air services, for which the CERF is often the largest donor. Contributions are usually small in amount, but because they arrive early they provide a critical foundation for common services to initiate deployment. For instance in Pakistan – in a situation described as the largest and fastest displacement of people in the last 15 years – a US$200,000 CERF contribution in May 2008 enabled WFP to ensure that adequate storage facilities for humanitarian agencies were available to provide support for 2 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) fleeing conflict in the North West Frontier Province.

36.   In May 2008, the magnitude of the food crisis and the sharp increase in demand for CERF funds led the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) to announce that a reserve of US$100 million from existing resources would be set aside for rapid response for "immediate life-saving activities in sectors directly linked to the effect of this crisis, namely food, food security, agriculture, health and nutrition".

37.   Upon request of the CERF Secretariat, WFP seconded a senior staff member to the Secretariat beginning in 2008. WFP country office staff participate in regional training sessions organized by OCHA; WFP and FAO ensure that training sessions on the CERF take place in Rome each year.

38.   Common humanitarian funds (CHF) and other funds pooled at the country or regional level also finance WFP operations. While the cash CHF provide to WFP operations provides flexibility, the funds are too limited to cover humanitarian requirements in many situations – for example, DRC and the Sudan.

39.   Pooled funding mechanisms have helped WFP to harmonize responses, increasing sectoral coverage of needs, and improving field-level coordination. In 2009, WFP received US$122,967,700 from United Nations common funds, setting them among the top five donors to WFP.[9] Since the establishment of the CERF grant facility in 2005, significant progress has been made in the funding process. According to a 2007–2008 evaluation of CERF, challenges to be addressed include issues related to timeliness of disbursement of funds, NGO access to CERF funding and duration of the implementation period allowed under CERF rules.

40.   A transaction costs study, supported by Ireland and Norway and carried out in early 2009 by FAO, UNHCR, UNICEF, WHO and WFP, looked into the impact of pooled funds on the scope and nature of work carried out by recipient organizations. Some of WFP's

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[8] For statistics from the CERF website see:
http://ochaonline.un.org/cerf/CERFaroundtheWorld/CERFProjectsaroundtheWorld2009/tabid/5351/language/en-US/Default.aspx

[9] Weekly Information Report on Donors (WIRED) and key indicators on WFP's resourcing, 12 October 2009.

experiences, such as weaker funding predictability at the individual agency level, challenges in reconciling a participatory approach with strategic priorities, and the enhanced role of cluster leads in funding allocations are supported by the findings.

41.   It is important to bear in mind the successful internal financing mechanisms that facilitate prompt emergency response, such as WFP's Immediate Response Account (IRA) and Working Capital Financing (WCF). WFP's internal advance financing mechanisms rely on income forecasting, which is a challenging task for funding received through common funds.

HUMANITARIAN COORDINATOR SYSTEM

42.   Progress to strengthen the HC system accelerated in 2009. In the IASC and through the Humanitarian Coordinators' Issues Group, WFP supported the re-establishment of the second HC pool;[10] updated and developed guidance and terms of reference for the HC and the expanded country team/HC team; developed training modules for existing and future HCs; and improved collaboration with the Resident Coordinator (RC) system.

43.   The rejuvenated HC pool was launched in early 2009 with a call for applications by the ERC. As with the RC system, WFP has been engaged in shaping the procedures surrounding the HC pool and has been active in the selection process of HC candidates as part of the HC Assessment Panel. In June 2009, WFP hosted the Assessment Panel at WFP Headquarters.

44.   One of WFP's human resources objectives is to build the leadership capabilities of its staff. WFP is delivering a leadership training programme to assist emerging leaders in realizing their potentials. In addition, a combination of multiple approaches ("blended learning") is being designed to facilitate staff's learning processes. These ongoing efforts are essential in preparing staff to assume the role of HC.

45.   WFP endorsed the HC terms of reference, and is engaged in identifying ways for improved accountability of HCs through discussions at the IASC level. WFP will continue supporting OCHA's work in discussing and building an effective HC model (RC/HC; HC/Agency Representative; stand-alone HC).

GLOBAL HUMANITARIAN PLATFORM

46.   WFP's Executive Director and Deputy Executive Director have participated in the past two Global Humanitarian Platform (GHP) meetings, which bring together a large number of executive heads and senior advisors from NGOs, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, United Nations agencies and other inter-governmental organizations.

47.   The "Principles of Partnership" is one of the main products of the GHP process. They were endorsed at the GHP meeting in July 2007 and circulated to all WFP staff in 2007 and again in 2008. The Principles are aimed at enhancing equality, transparency, results orientation, responsibility and complementarity among humanitarian actors. The GHP has managed to publicize a strong message to the field calling for greater inclusiveness of

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[10] The HC pool was initiated in 2005. However, without thorough application and selection criteria and sufficient agency commitment it failed to have the intended impact, which was to provide a roster of strong HC candidates ready for deployment.

NGOs in the strategic decision-making processes at country level and the shift from a United Nations country team to a humanitarian country team that includes NGOs.

48.   WFP participates in the GHP task force, which is preparing the third and final GHP meeting planned for February 2010.

49.   WFP played a leading role in the regional GHP workshop held in May 2008 in Bangkok. It participated in workshops discussing best practices and challenges faced in working with the Principles of Partnership and improving how humanitarian agencies work together.

WFP Contributions to the Humanitarian System

⇒ *United Nations Humanitarian Air Services*

50.   The United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) flies humanitarian workers from United Nations agencies and NGOs, journalists and others to some of the most remote emergency operations in the world. It is run by WFP on behalf of the humanitarian community as requested by the High-Level Committee on Management in 2003; it is launched for an operation upon the request of country team or the HC.

51.   In 2009, UNHAS had a projected budget of US$160 million for nine operations, including Afghanistan, Chad, DRC, Ethiopia and the Sudan. The Sudan is the largest operation, with 120 aid agencies flying to 110 destinations on 23 aircrafts and a budget of US$84 million.

52.   In 2008, CERF was the largest donor to UNHAS, followed by the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Department, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Canada, Spain and the Netherlands. However, though CERF and other donors often provide initial funding, it is often insufficient to maintain a consistent air service. A sustainable funding mechanism still has to be found.

⇒ *Joint needs assessments*

53.   As part of the overall reform efforts, WFP has also contributed to inter-agency activities to streamline and consolidate agency needs assessments. Since 2006, WFP has joined a multi-agency effort to elaborate the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) initially developed by FAO in Somalia. The IPC is working towards a standardized way of classifying the severity of the food security situation at national and sub-national levels using a set of reference indicators and thresholds and consensus-based analysis. WFP is represented on the IPC steering committee and in the technical working group, and has appointed a dedicated focal point to continue to improve the methodology and support country teams. The IPC is used in 15 countries, mostly in the Horn of Africa and Central Africa.

54.   Two WFP vulnerability analysis and mapping staff are members of the reference group coordinated by OCHA to develop a tool to better consolidate needs assessments and other humanitarian information across clusters and sectors (a "humanitarian dashboard"). This initiative builds on the IPC approach and aims to offer a single framework to quickly consolidate humanitarian needs assessments and other information across sectors and in a consistent and easily accessible format. If successful, it could provide a boost to humanitarian decision-making and action. However, WFP anticipates difficulties in collecting data comparable in terms of geographical and population coverage and within and across sectors; and in defining severity levels. This points to the need to continue

enhancing governments' and agencies' capacities to conduct sectoral assessments and, when appropriate, to collaborate in joint multi-agency and multi-sector needs assessments.

55.   Progress made by WFP in recent years in food security analysis, and the guidance it has recently produced, enable WFP to provide important inputs to inter-agency activities. These include the work WFP does in development of guidance for PDNAs and PCNAs.[11] In the field, WFP staff have provided inputs to the PCNA in the Gaza Strip in early 2009, have participated in the Georgia PCNA (September 2008), the recent Namibia PDNA (June 2009) and in the PCNA in Pakistan (August/September 2009).

56.   WFP has also collaborated on the revision of guidance on joint assessment missions for refugee situations with UNHCR and on crop and food supply assessment missions (CFSAMs) together with FAO. For instance, a joint assessment mission was conducted in Namibia in July 2009 and CFSAMs in Madagascar and Zimbabwe in June 2009.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

57.   WFP plays a leading role in inter-agency emergency preparedness. WFP co-chairs with UNICEF the IASC Sub-Working Group on Preparedness and Contingency Planning, which produces guidelines and tools for identifying and preparing for emergencies.

58.   WFP also leads the development of a new inter-agency early warning system for forecasting humanitarian crises with its IASC preparedness partners UNHCR, UNICEF, OCHA and WHO.

59.   WFP helps organize and carry out contingency planning missions and trainings, such as a 2008 mission to DRC, simulations in the Islamic Republic of Iran and Yemen in 2008, and government capacity-building initiatives such as the 2008 training of the Emergency Disaster Management Unit of the Government of Rwanda.

60.   WFP participates in inter-agency initiatives on geospatial technology and remote sensing through the United Nations Geographic Information Working Group and the Geographic Information Support Team. WFP also leads the humanitarian sector of the European Union–Global Monitoring for Environment and Security project "Services and Applications for Emergency Response", which tests cutting-edge remote sensing technology in emergency response operations.

61.   WFP is active in the revision of the Sphere[12] handbook for 2010. The last version was issued in 2004 and significant changes have occurred since then. Recent developments such as the humanitarian reform process and the cluster approach will be taken into consideration. The revision process seeks a robust and widespread process of engagement. WFP and WVI appointed joint focal points for revision of the section on food aid; they lead a working group with representation from practitioners, international NGOs, United Nations agencies, government staff and donors. WFP and WVI have also undertaken several country-level consultations to collect recommendations for inclusion. WFP staff are also members of working groups for other sections of the handbook, including food security and nutrition.

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[11] See paragraph 23.

[12] The Sphere Project works on a humanitarian charter and minimum standards in disaster response

Pandemics

62.   Further to the declaration of a global influenza pandemic on 11 June 2009, WFP scaled up pandemic readiness activities by refining contingency planning guidance and tools and conducting logistics consultations.

63.   Through the UNHRD network, WFP has deployed anti-viral medication to 88 countries in Latin America and Africa on behalf of WHO. WFP engaged with IFRC, NGO partners and representatives from the African Union – among others – to initiate a high-level global dialogue to discuss civil–military cooperation and share expertise in areas of logistics, staff health and safety and contingency planning to prepare the humanitarian community for operational response in a pandemic.

64.   Since 2005, WFP has been engaged in a thorough planning and preparedness process to minimize the impact of an influenza pandemic on humanitarian operations. Under the United Nations Consolidated Action Plan for Avian and Human Influenza, WFP is charged with going beyond its existing life-saving operations to provide, where possible, humanitarian common services support for the wider United Nations system, particularly in the area of logistics. WFP's four major considerations for operations under pandemic conditions include the free movement of humanitarian supplies, pre-positioning of supplies, national action plans and the protection of staff. To meet these objectives, WFP continues to train staff for operations under pandemic conditions, develop programmes and plans for operational continuity and build partnerships that support emergency response to vulnerable populations.

Humanitarian Policy Engagement

65.   The dynamic geo-political environment of the past decade has led to rapid shifts in humanitarian contexts – notably in conflict settings and complex emergencies. To continue to meet the needs of the most vulnerable, WFP recognized that operations must evolve in parallel to field realities. In an effort to give a better understanding of these new realities in June 2009, a WFP conference brought together 60 experts, academics and practitioners to take stock of trends and theory with regard to conflicts and complex emergencies and to examine how humanitarian agencies respond to operational and programmatic challenges.

66.   A subsequent WFP-hosted IASC roundtable on the "Perceptions of Humanitarian Actors",[13] focused on trends and challenges related to humanitarian space, engagement with state and non-state actors and local perceptions. More than 50 colleagues from 30 organizations attended from NGOs, the IFRC, think tanks and United Nations agencies including the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Political Affairs. Participants identified challenges ranging from the need to build negotiation skills to how to better engage with communities and the growing number of actors in humanitarian action through greater understanding of local contexts.

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[13] This is one of the eight themes identified and proposed as roundtables by the informal IASC task force led by UNHCR and OCHA.

ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CHF	common humanitarian funds
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ERC	Emergency Relief Coordinator
ETC	emergency telecommunications cluster
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GHP	Global Humanitarian Platform
GLCSC	Global Logistics Cluster Support Cell
HC	Humanitarian Coordinator
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
NGO	non-governmental organization
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PCNA	post-conflict needs assessment
PDNA	post-disaster needs assessment
RC	Resident Coordinator
UNHAS	United Nations Humanitarian Air Service
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNHRD	United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WASH	water, sanitation and hygiene [cluster]
WHO	World Health Organization
WVI	World Vision International