

برنامج
الأغذية
العالمي



Programme
Alimentaire
Mondial

World
Food
Programme

Programa
Mundial
de Alimentos

**Executive Board
Second Regular Session**

Rome, 27–30 October 2008

POLICY ISSUES

Agenda item 4

*For information**

E

Distribution: GENERAL
WFP/EB.2/2008/4-E
14 October 2008
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

PROGRESS REPORT ON ENDING CHILD HUNGER AND UNDERNUTRITION

* 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.

This document is printed in a limited number of copies. Executive Board documents are available on WFP's website (<http://www.wfp.org/eb>).

NOTE TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

This document is submitted to the Executive Board for information.

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.

Coordinator, Child Hunger and Ms D. Costa Coitinho tel.: 066513-2245
Undernutrition Initiative

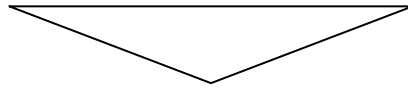
Policy Officer, OEDP* Ms S. Laughton tel.: 066513-3505

Should you have any questions regarding matters of dispatch of documentation for the Executive Board, please contact Ms C. Panlilio, Administrative Assistant, Conference Servicing Unit (tel.: 066513-2645).

* Policy, Planning and Strategy Division



DRAFT DECISION*



The Board takes note of “Progress Report on Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition” (WFP/EB.2/2008/4-E).

* This is a draft decision. For the final decision adopted by the Board, please refer to the Decisions and Recommendations (document WFP/EB.2/2008/15) issued at the end of the session.



INTRODUCTION

1. This document is prepared in accordance with the Board's decision at its 2007 First Regular Session (2007/EB.1/3) authorizing WFP to continue developing the Ending Child Hunger Initiative with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); the text of the decision is given in Annex I. It reports on progress and the outlook for WFP's work, in partnership with UNICEF and other agencies, on ending child hunger and undernutrition.

BACKGROUND

2. Undernutrition is the underlying cause of 3.5 million child deaths per year and 11 percent of disease worldwide. Lack of access to adequate food and health care by the world's poorest people undermines countries' development potential and threatens public health and security. It is increasingly clear that the targets of Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 1 to reduce extreme poverty and hunger will not be achieved without decisive and integrated work by partners to address the underlying causes of undernutrition. The Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition Initiative (ECHUI) was established to intensify and sustain actions to address the challenge. The recent rise in food prices threatens to exacerbate undernutrition and increases the need for decisive efforts.
3. Following its discussion of the document "Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition Initiative" (WFP/2007/EB.1/5-A), the Board approved WFP's role in the 2007–2008 ECHUI work plan and authorized WFP to continue developing ECHUI jointly with UNICEF. Board members emphasized that: country ownership is the fundamental building block for ending child hunger; the main role of ECHUI should be to support national policies and programmes; and there is a need for a range of partners to be engaged in the work.
4. Since February 2007 WFP has worked with partners to realign the ECHUI strategy in light of feedback from the Board and the experience accumulated by WFP and UNICEF in several countries. An inter-agency team was established in December 2007 to develop ECHUI, devoting special attention to these issues. The result of this work was a re-orientation of ECHUI from global-level advocacy and mobilization to country-level operational work, through the following actions:¹
 - refining promoted interventions according to new evidence;
 - developing methods and tools to support countries in scaling up proven interventions;
 - launching pilots in the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Mauritania to demonstrate that significant, immediate impact on undernutrition is possible;
 - creating knowledge products capturing lessons learned for implementing interventions at scale;²
 - developing a vision for knowledge-sharing among countries about what works in addressing undernutrition, and how countries can replicate successes;
 - developing an initial costing model for country-level planning and budgeting; and
 - convening key partners to coordinate international and regional nutrition efforts.

¹ Annex I provides a summary of progress in these areas.

² In this context "at scale" means to cover a target group nationally, rather than in only some areas of a country, with a high level of coverage.



5. Also in line with feedback from the Board, the inter-agency team concluded that ECHUI needed to emphasize how it supported and built on what WFP and partners already did: a renewed – rather than a new – effort to address child hunger and undernutrition was needed. To reflect this renewed effort to end child hunger, it was proposed to rename it “REACH: ending child hunger and undernutrition”. The name is intended to signal a new phase of action that is country-led and focused on solutions, building on existing structures and experience; and that gives impetus and a framework to joint efforts to address child hunger. The goal of ending child hunger and undernutrition remains unchanged: to halve by 2015 the proportion of people who suffer from hunger (MDG 1, Target 1.C), as measured by the prevalence of underweight among children under 5; and beyond 2015, to achieve a sustainable acceleration of reduction in the prevalence of underweight.
6. In late 2007, the heads of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) joined UNICEF and WFP in committing themselves and their organizations to REACH. The inter-agency team mentioned above includes staff from FAO, UNICEF, WFP, WHO and NGO partners.

UPDATE ON PROGRESS

Country Pilots and the Proposed Package of Interventions

7. REACH promotes scaling up interventions that are known to be effective, always taking local contexts into account. It focuses on five areas: i) improving the feeding of infants and young children; ii) increasing micronutrient intake; iii) improving hygiene and parasite control; iv) treating severe acute malnutrition; and v) increasing the availability and accessibility of food. The basis for REACH’s promotion of these interventions is evidence from *The Lancet* showing that these have a significant effect on reducing undernutrition.³ REACH proposes a joint commitment by all players at the country level to work together to ensure that effective interventions are delivered at scale. (See Annex II for interventions promoted by REACH.)
8. Experience confirms the importance of coordination in emphasizing maternal, infant and child nutrition in national agendas. REACH partners are testing innovative approaches to coordinated analysis and planning this year in the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Mauritania. Specifically, these approaches are for country-led situation and readiness analysis; prioritization of interventions; and action planning, including costing. Strategies are also being developed for nationally led resource mobilization, advocacy and results tracking. The purpose is to support the scaling up of nutrition programmes and enhance the position of nutrition in United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs). REACH seeks to strengthen national planning, coordination, communication, delivery and monitoring mechanisms; it does not promote new ones.
9. The pilot projects in the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Mauritania are each supported by an expert from The Boston Consulting Group (BCG) whose experience in project and change management helps the REACH teams to facilitate multi-agency analysis and planning in support of national nutrition policy development and action

³ Victora C.G., Adair L., Fall, C., Hallal, P., Martorell, R., Richter, L., Sachdev, H.S and [group of authors] for the Maternal and Child Undernutrition Study Group. 2008. Maternal and child undernutrition: Consequences for adult health and human capital. *The Lancet*, 371(9609): 340–357.



against child hunger. The BCG experts are seconded to the United Nations Resident Coordinators' offices for one year.

10. The pilot projects began in June and July 2008 with a comprehensive analysis and mapping of activities, stakeholders and delivery structures already in place, through which gaps and opportunities are to be identified for scaling up interventions. In each country a multi-partner team led by the government and including the United Nations, civil society and the private sector was formed to undertake this work collaboratively. By June 2009, the teams will have developed an action plan that prioritizes a set of interventions for scaling up, outlines responsibilities of each organization in carrying out this plan and identifies the resources required for implementation. A preliminary version of the action plan will be available by early 2009, along with a plan for nationally led resource mobilization and advocacy. First visible successes, particularly government and donor commitment to providing additional resources, are expected by early 2009.
11. The pilot projects are expected to provide proof that joint, coordinated efforts can lead to rapid progress in the fight against child undernutrition. The two countries were selected because they offer the opportunity to demonstrate success in two very different contexts, in addition to the fact that they both have high undernutrition rates, clear government commitment to addressing nutrition and strong United Nations country teams (UNCTs) that requested REACH.
12. The above activities are part of the core business of WFP and its partners FAO, UNICEF and WHO; the action planning exercise will highlight the relevance of country offices' existing work. Indeed, many country offices are already engaged in inter-agency efforts to expand nutrition programmes to national scale, and REACH should build upon and strengthen that work. In other countries REACH is an opportunity to bring coherence and synergy with UNCT efforts to promote and support government action on nutrition. For WFP, REACH can strengthen impact by helping to ensure that WFP activities are conceived and implemented as part of a broader, national-level strategic framework to address the various dimensions of undernutrition in a coherent manner.
13. While REACH builds on the existing work of WFP and the other agencies, its coordinated, solution-oriented approach represents a change from business as usual. Currently, most assistance programmes are oriented toward a "single product", with each agency focusing on its own interventions. REACH turns this around. It starts with the overall objective and focuses on how each partner can contribute to a common, government-led solution. Moreover, REACH provides a platform and process for in-country coordination and, with the combined influence of all United Nations agencies and partners, is a potentially powerful platform to raise awareness of the problem of undernutrition and of solutions. Consistent messages and approach are expected to enhance the cost-effectiveness of all participants' investment, and focus efforts on the same, most vulnerable populations.
14. The REACH focus on building national capacity to deliver needed interventions at scale will also strengthen emergency preparedness and response, when needed. The REACH approach – making sure that interventions are delivered together to the people who need them most, facilitating in-country coordination and better sharing of critical information on food security and nutrition – create a firm basis for coordinated emergency response. Most importantly, scaling up proven interventions not only addresses undernutrition, but also helps prevent it, and will make communities less vulnerable to shocks when they occur.
15. WHO is leading efforts to analyse national capacity and readiness to scale up nutrition action in Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Ghana, Guatemala, Madagascar, Peru, South Africa



and Viet Nam. REACH is building on the results of these studies; assessments have been carried out in collaboration with national partners in Burkina Faso, Ghana and Madagascar.

16. Interventions have also been scaled up in Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and the northern Sahelian countries, and more recently in Malawi; progress has been made in several Latin American countries and states in India. In Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger, where undernutrition among young children ranges from 32 percent to 44 percent, UNCTs are working with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and financing partners in support of national policies and programmes to address child hunger. FAO, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNICEF, WFP and WHO, supported by United Nations Resident Coordinators, are lead agencies in facilitating treatment and care of undernourished children, and a range of preventive measures.
17. These experiences will be used to support other countries with heavy burdens of child hunger and undernutrition and those where increasing food prices are contributing to higher rates of hunger and undernutrition.
18. A priority during 2009 will be to encourage the allocation of additional resources for implementing action plans and expanding the REACH-facilitated process to other countries, using existing agency investment as leverage. Various donors have indicated interest in funding countries to scale up interventions on the basis of multi-agency national action plans.

Global Support for National Work

19. During 2007 and 2008 it became clear that while detailed knowledge exists about which interventions are effective in improving nutrition, there is a gap in know-how on implementing them on a national scale. To address this, the REACH inter-agency team, supported by BCG and other experts, has developed knowledge products to support national efforts to scale up evidence-based interventions. The *Acting at Scale* series includes: i) technical primers: syntheses of why certain interventions are important and how they work, how cost-effective they are, and how to implement them; ii) case studies with lessons learned from experience in scaling up REACH-promoted interventions; and iii) a reference library of normative and operational guidance, training materials, technical references, articles and contact information for experts. The REACH team is also developing tools for situation and gap analysis, intervention prioritization and action plan costing at the national level.
20. The information products are the building blocks for a system to be developed during 2009 to help national practitioners share knowledge about implementing interventions proven to be effective at scale, in an integrated manner, in diverse settings. The tools are intended to increase national capacity to improve nutrition.

Partnerships and the Secretariat

21. Partnership is fundamental to REACH because it is impossible to have the necessary impact on undernutrition without it: having impact demands large-scale action to deliver a range of interventions and services to the same people at the same time – a task that no single actor can accomplish alone. Resources must be brought together, and operational synergies deliberately sought.
22. REACH is developing into a robust partnership: in late 2007 FAO, UNICEF, WFP and WHO committed themselves to it, and, as explained above, an inter-agency team has been formed to which these organizations and key NGOs dedicate staff time. The four heads of



those agencies will send a joint letter to their country and regional offices confirming the commitment to REACH and requesting that they support governments in developing a common nutrition strategy and ensure that food and nutrition interventions are mainstreamed in UNDAFs, PRSPs and in each agency's work with partners.

23. Numerous other United Nations, government and academic institutions and NGOs, as well as the private sector, are also partners in REACH. The 2008 annual meeting of the United Nations Standing Committee on Nutrition, held in Hanoi in February, called for governments to recognize the importance of maternal and child nutrition and to increase their contribution to development, recommending an approach similar to REACH's. REACH partners also met at WFP in June 2008 to build consensus on actions and priorities for 2008–2009 in terms of harmonizing country-level work; in her address to the meeting, the WFP Executive Director emphasized the urgency of the REACH agenda.
24. The work of the inter-agency team has been supported primarily through in-kind contributions by partners through such mechanisms as secondments, devotion of staff time and pro bono work. In-kind contributions are regarded as the appropriate approach to resourcing, but some funds are still required. Given the inter-agency nature of the initiative each participating agency is expected to contribute its share. The inter-agency team is developing the work plan and funding requirements for 2009 in response to the request by partner agencies that REACH be allocated funds from core budgets. To date, country-level work has been resourced largely through in-kind contributions from partners and locally mobilized financial contributions. WFP will continue to review financing mechanisms for REACH and will revert to the Executive Board with proposals at its First Regular Session in 2009.



ANNEX I**Decision by the Executive Board at its 2007 First Regular Session
(2007/EB.1/3)**

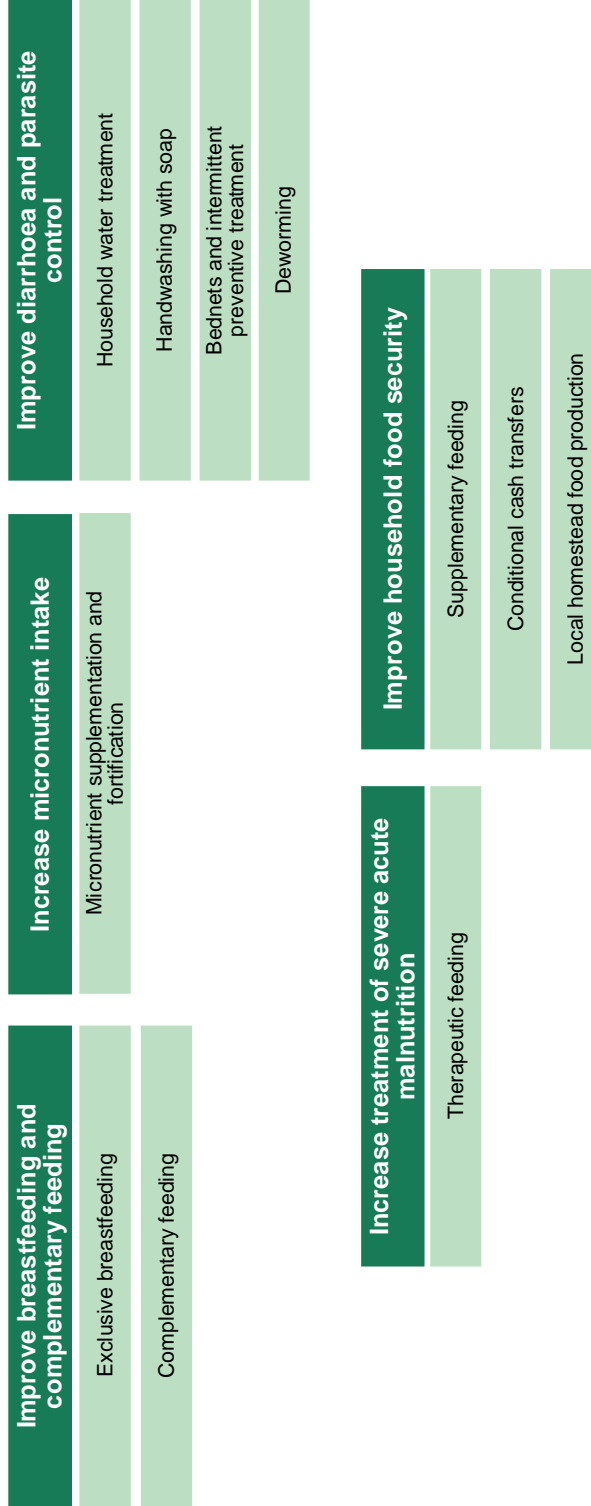
Having considered the document “Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition Initiative: Global Framework for Action” (WFP/EB.2/2006/4-A) and approved decision 2006/EB.2/2 and subsequently reviewed the document “Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition Initiative” (WFP/EB.1/2007/5-A), the Board, in recognizing the importance for ECHUI to support the national policies and programmes:

- noted the UNICEF Executive Board’s decisions of 18 January 2007, the status of the Partners Group, the milestones for 2007–2008, the corresponding timetable for developing the Partners Group work plan and responsibilities, the draft work plan for ECHUI, including the terms of reference for the Partners Group, the Steering Committee and the ECHUI secretariat;
- authorized the Secretariat to continue developing ECHUI as outlined in the Global Framework for Action (see Addendum WFP/EB.1/2007/5-A/Add. 1), including the minimum funding from non-PSA sources required for further refining of the work plan and milestones, for developing the Partners Group, and for preparing the ground for the Steering Committee and the Secretariat, recognizing UNICEF’s co-leadership role;
- approved WFP’s role in the 2007–2008 work plan with a first year budget for WFP of US\$1.31 million from non-PSA funds, contingent upon approval by UNICEF’s Executive Board of UNICEF’s participation in ECHUI with a matching contribution of funds for the joint Secretariat.

ANNEX II

The set of interventions promoted by REACH

Address five action areas



Nutrition education is a cross-cutting component of many interventions



REACH has made substantial progress in 2008

Progress in country activity, knowledge-sharing and partnership development

2008 accomplishments

- **Country action-planning facilitation**
 - Launched pilots in Lao PDR and Mauritania
 - Formed joint country teams
 - Began detailed stocktaking that will be completed in October
- **Knowledge-sharing**
 - Created the *Acting at Scale* series capturing lessons learned for implementing interventions at scale
 - Developed an initial integrated programme costing model
 - Developed a high-level knowledge-sharing vision, articulating key products and services, supporting platforms and implementation path
- **Financing and resource mobilization**
 - Entered into dialogue with potential donors to support country scale-up and communications
- **Communications and advocacy**
 - Synthesized evidence base and refined the cost of implementing REACH-promoted interventions
 - In process of developing return on investment business case for investing in integrated, at-scale nutrition interventions
- **Partnership development**
 - In process of issuing a joint letter to United Nations offices worldwide articulating support from agency heads
 - Convened key partners for a Partners Conference

ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

BCG	The Boston Consulting Group
ECHUI	Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition Initiative
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NGO	non-governmental organization
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PSA	Programme Support and Administrative (budget)
UNCT	United Nations country team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WHO	World Health Organization