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ENDING CHILD HUNGER AND UNDERNUTRITION INITIATIVE: GLOBAL FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

Summary Note

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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.

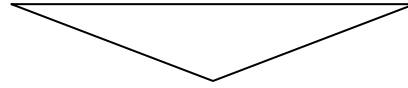
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Should you have any questions regarding matters of dispatch of documentation for the Executive Board, please contact Ms C. Panlilio, Administrative Assistant, Conference Servicing Unit (tel.: 066513-2645).



DRAFT DECISION*



Having considered the document on “Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition Initiative: Global Framework for Action”, (WFP/EB.2/2006/4-A) the Board:

- a) welcomes the Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition Initiative (ECHUI), and the Global Framework for Action for that initiative;
- b) recognizes the initiative’s potential contribution to achieving the first Millennium Development Goal, and the catalytic role of WFP and UNICEF, working through their respective mandates and established Memorandum of Understanding, in mobilizing the global partnerships required to end child hunger;
- c) recognizes that the initiative focuses on the 350 to 400 million hungry children in the developing world, particularly the estimated 146 million undernourished children under 5 years of age;
- d) encourages WFP, with UNICEF, to lead the initiative effectively by mobilizing a broad range of partners to support national efforts in this critical area, with the goals of:
 - (i) increasing awareness of child hunger and undernutrition, and increasing understanding of potential solutions;
 - (ii) strengthening national policies and programmes;
 - (iii) increasing country capacities for direct community action; and
 - (iv) increasing the effectiveness and accountability of global efforts to reduce child hunger and undernutrition; and
- e) requests WFP, with UNICEF, to provide periodic information and analysis on progress of the initiative, including results, constraints, opportunities and lessons learned.

* This is a draft decision. For the final decision adopted by the Board, please refer to the Decisions and Recommendations document (document WFP/EB.2/2006/16) issued at the end of the session.



I. BACKGROUND

1. Undernutrition is implicated in more than half of the 10.5 million preventable deaths of children under 5 years that occur in low- and middle-income countries each year. The consequences of child hunger and undernutrition are extreme for the individuals and families affected and the communities and nations concerned. More than 50 percent of young children's deaths from infectious diseases such as malaria, pneumonia, diarrhoea and measles have undernutrition as an underlying cause.
2. In 2000, 189 countries endorsed the eight United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The first MDG is to halve the proportion of the world's poor and hungry by 2015. Six years later, hunger and undernutrition remain among the most urgent challenges facing the international community; a determined global effort is needed to reduce them.
3. There is now less than a decade left to achieve all the MDGs. Success of at least five of the remaining seven MDGs also depends on bringing an end to hunger and undernutrition – MDG 2, universal primary education; MDG 3, gender equality; MDG 4, reducing child mortality; MDG 5, improving maternal health; and MDG 6, combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.
4. The United Nations Millennium Declaration and the MDGs provide the background for WFP's work in fighting hunger and the United Nations Children's Fund's (UNICEF's) role in combating undernutrition. The 2005 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between WFP and UNICEF commits the two organizations "to the elimination of Child Hunger and Undernutrition".
5. In November 2005, the Executive Board directed the Secretariat to collaborate with partners and experts to design and develop a global implementation framework for the initiative. Since then, WFP and UNICEF have led a multilateral, multi-track effort aimed at drafting a *Global Framework for Action*, which is presented today for the Board's consideration and review.
6. The design and development process has been broad, consultative and inclusive. Consultations have been held with many United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society organizations, foundations and potential private sector partners.
7. Regional and country needs and outlooks were addressed at consultations convened by WFP and UNICEF in Southern Africa, Western Africa, Asia and Latin America. The *Global Framework for Action* was designed, developed and drafted by three inter-agency technical working groups led by WFP and UNICEF with technical inputs from the World Bank, the United Nations Standing Committee on Nutrition (SCN), the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) and others.

II. GLOBAL FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION – SUMMARY OF MAIN DOCUMENT

8. Hunger and undernutrition have an acute negative impact on economic development by slowing growth and perpetuating the cycle of poverty through three principal routes: direct losses in productivity from poor physical status; indirect losses from poor cognitive function and deficits in schooling; and losses caused by increased health care costs. The



SCN estimates that the direct cost of *not* addressing child hunger and undernutrition is between US\$20 billion and US\$30 billion per year.

9. The geographical distribution of child undernutrition is highly uneven. More than 70 percent of the world's 146 million underweight children under 5 live in just ten countries, with more than 50 percent located in South Asia alone.
10. The causes of child hunger and undernutrition are predictable and preventable, and can be addressed through affordable means. Dramatic improvements are possible even in the absence of economic growth. The Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition Initiative (ECHUI) is a global partnership that focuses attention on the problem of child hunger and undernutrition, its causes and effects. It aims to mobilize support for national actions and build awareness of the available solutions for addressing the issue on a global scale.
11. ECHUI supports MDG 1, which seeks to “eradicate extreme poverty and hunger”. The initiative’s operational focus is MDG 1 target 2 – “to halve the proportion of people who suffer from hunger” by 2015. Its key impact indicator is MDG 1 target 2’s first measure of progress – prevalence of underweight children under 5, as established by the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF.
12. The **objective** of the initiative is to mobilize the political, financial, technical and other resources required by developing countries to address child hunger and undernutrition, with the **overall goal** of dramatically reducing child hunger and undernutrition within a generation. As a first step, ECHUI supports countries’ efforts to double their average annual reduction rates for underweight children under 5.
13. Globally, trends in child undernutrition rates are positive but insufficient; there are significant variations among regions and countries. South Asia has by far the highest levels of underweight, affecting 46 percent of all under-5 children in the region. In sub-Saharan Africa, 28 percent of children are underweight children; the lowest prevalence rates are in Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States at 5 percent, and Latin America and the Caribbean at 7 percent.
14. During the last decade, the overall child undernutrition rate in terms of the number of underweight children under 5 has decreased by approximately 1.7 percent per year. This rate of decline needs to accelerate significantly to achieve MDG 1 target 2.
15. ECHUI helps to ensure that the rate of progress is increased, through global action to support national child hunger efforts with four intended outcomes:
 - (i) increased awareness of hunger and undernutrition and increased understanding of potential solutions among the public in industrialized and developing countries and among development and funding decision-makers;
 - (ii) strengthened national policies and programmes affecting hunger and nutrition;
 - (iii) increased capacities for direct action in communities facing child hunger and undernutrition;
 - (iv) increased efficiency and accountability of national governments and development organizations in their efforts to reduce child hunger and undernutrition.
16. These measures complement and will be promoted in strong synergy with a range of other efforts to address hunger and undernutrition, including in the areas of family food security, food production and livelihoods, basic education, maternal and child health, HIV/AIDS prevention and social protection (see also paragraph 23).



17. **An essential package of interventions.** Practical measures that address the immediate causes of child undernutrition include an "essential package" of health, hygiene and nutrition education and promotion, which emphasizes exclusive breastfeeding, complementary feeding and treatment with oral rehydration therapy. The package also contains key commodity-linked interventions including micronutrient supplementation, household water treatment, hand-washing with soap, parasite control measures – particularly deworming – and situation-specific household food security interventions.
18. **Partnership approach.** ECHUI aims to forge strong alliances among national governments, international agencies, the private sector and other sectors of civil society, including technical, educational, charitable and community-oriented – including faith-based – organizations. It seeks to strengthen linkages across disciplines, institutions, sectors and countries, building solidarity, exchanging experience and mobilizing resources for the ultimate goal of ending child hunger and undernutrition. The roles of WFP and UNICEF in this process will be as catalysts to increase synergies within the alliance of collaborators and partners.
19. **Operational approach.** ECHUI aims to strengthen national capacity for integrating and scaling-up delivery of an essential package of anti-hunger interventions to the most vulnerable children and families through the most direct delivery channels, including community organizations; to adapt delivery and financing strategies to different settings; and to support and facilitate large-scale coordination and logistics operations to address the countries and districts with the highest burdens of child hunger and undernutrition. Efforts will be made at the household, community, national, regional and international levels.
20. **Advocacy approach.** ECHUI will adopt an integrated policy and programme approach to hunger reduction; to conduct a global campaign to increase understanding of the problem and awareness of available solutions; and to harmonize advocacy and communications with complementary initiatives and programmes. SCN will provide technical support and policy guidance on the initiative, given its mandate to promote cooperation among the United Nations system and other partners in efforts to eliminate undernutrition in this generation.
21. **Costing the "essential package".** The average cost for an essential package of health, hygiene and nutrition interventions is initially estimated at US\$79 per household. Total global incremental direct costs are broadly estimated at an annual US\$7.9 billion, based on 100 million households requiring targeted interventions. For countries with underweight prevalence greater than 10 percent, the immediate resource gap is estimated at approximately US\$1 billion, corresponding to 85 million households. This gap is the difference between what countries have the capacity to spend on undernutrition interventions, and what they can currently resource themselves. The resource gap is expected to rise to US\$2 billion annually as countries' capacity to expand programme coverage increases over the next several years. Costs would then decrease as interventions become more comprehensive and effective, matched by more effective investments at the family and community levels.

III. STRATEGIC POSITIONING OF THE INITIATIVE

22. **The need for a renewed global effort.** The international community's current strategies have not made adequate progress in addressing hunger and undernutrition. Without urgent focused efforts, many developing countries will not reach the MDG 1 target of halving hunger by 2015. Focusing on child hunger prevents irreversible damage to human development, and helps achieve MDG 1 and the other MDGs related to child mortality, maternal health, primary education, gender equality and HIV/AIDS. A focus on child hunger also brings cohesion to the various initiatives and efforts in nutrition, children, education and health. A broad-based global campaign reinforces and multiplies the impact of these initiatives, and creates the leverage needed to have a deep and lasting impact on hunger. Global efforts will be underpinned by periodic monitoring through existing instruments, including the Progress for Children report card, as new international data become available.
23. **Harmonization with other ongoing, relevant initiatives.** The international initiatives and partnerships most relevant to ECHUI include the International Alliance Against Hunger (IAAH), Integrated Management of Childhood Illness, the Partnership on Child Development, Focusing Resources on Effective School Health (FRESH), the Schistosomiasis Control Initiative, the Global Public-Private Partnership for Hand-Washing with Soap, the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI), the Unite for Children, Unite Against AIDS campaign, the International Network to Promote Household Water Treatment and Safe Storage, GAIN, the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health and – of course – the Millennium Project and the Millennium Campaign. ECHUI will work synergistically with this range of existing and related efforts. It will add value by promoting greater priority for child hunger and nutrition challenges in national policies through social mobilization and by promoting interventions that strengthen families and communities. Success in these approaches would increase the effectiveness of the wider range of initiatives that bear upon child hunger and undernutrition.
24. **Harmonization with United Nations and national development planning processes.** ECHUI provides collaborating United Nations agencies with an important instrument to advance a more coherent approach to addressing child hunger, food security and undernutrition through the various harmonized United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) processes, including the Common Country Assessment and joint programme initiatives and annual work plans supported by members of the United Nations Country Team. Collaboration with World Bank and regional development bank country operations will be intensified. Partners in the initiative will encourage the alignment of United Nations country cooperation and joint programmes around key causal factors and will encourage more cohesive national priority actions related to child hunger and nutrition, in particular those incorporated in Poverty Reduction Strategies and other national development frameworks.
25. **The “Three Ones” principle.** Following the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, related initiatives and the global response to HIV/AIDS, the international community is increasingly committed to strengthening the capacity of national authorities to lead and coordinate efforts in all MDG areas. This commitment is embodied in the “Three Ones” principle, devised to help countries achieve effective and efficient resource use, rapid action and results-based management. On the basis of this principle, periodic assessment of the initiative at the country level will include its effectiveness in encouraging all stakeholders to work towards the establishment and operation of:



- (i) one agreed country action framework for addressing child hunger and undernutrition, linked to the national development framework and providing the basis for coordinating the work of all partners;
 - (ii) one national coordinating authority, with a broad-based multisectoral mandate; and
 - (iii) one agreed country-level and locally anchored monitoring and evaluation system.
26. **Supporting national policies and programmes.** ECHUI will aim to stimulate, enable and help national governments to prioritize the aims of eliminating child hunger and reducing undernutrition and to reflect these in their policies, budgets, legal frameworks and poverty reduction programmes. It will support national institutions' efforts to analyse the situation of children in the country, build consensus on priority interventions, and obtain information on policy approaches and actions that have successfully reduced child hunger and undernutrition internationally.
27. Local analysis and evidence will inform priorities and actions at the sub-national level. Wider consensus on child hunger and nutrition issues will promote intensified, better-targeted, adequately prioritized and budgeted interventions, including in municipal, provincial and district programmes. It will also help to raise awareness and support informed action by civil society.

IV. OPERATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

28. During the planning of ECHUI, WFP and UNICEF sought to catalyse international action by incorporating their joint work into the mainstream of their organizations and strategic plans at the Headquarters, regional and country levels. Spontaneous requests to be associated with planning of the initiative were received through WFP and UNICEF regional offices in Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean. Joint actions have been initiated or interest expressed in 32 countries where WFP and UNICEF are present; most of these countries participated in regional consultations.
29. All three tiers of participation – country, regional and Headquarters – have been made possible by improved programme and management efficiency, including assessment and analysis of child and maternal undernutrition issues that are more closely linked to maternal and child health issues, and more exacting analysis of cross-sectoral inputs on, for example, education for children and gender equality. Planning activities are also better coordinated and integrated into multiple-purpose mission travel, achieving economies of scale and purpose for both organizations.
30. As the initiative's planning phase moves into the implementation phase in 2007, a principal aim will be continued integration of tasks and exploration of areas where efficiency and effectiveness are possible at all levels, with existing resources. For example, it will be possible to integrate planning and review exercises for a range of child and maternal health, education and other components, thus precluding the need for separate consultations devoted to ECHUI alone. This has already been demonstrated in Latin America and the Caribbean, where a joint regional management team meeting covered the initiative, United Nations reform and linkages between the two. A further example is the linkage of the initiative with investments in areas such as basic education and school feeding, which address the inter-generational transmission of poverty.



31. The approved and forthcoming country cooperation programmes of WFP and UNICEF, which are part of the UNDAF process led by national partners, will continue to be the primary vehicles for support to national initiatives and frameworks relating to hunger and undernutrition.
32. As the first year of ECHUI implementation proceeds, the consultation process between the United Nations country teams and national and international partners will make it possible to consider more fully whether additional resources will be needed, particularly for country programmes where collaboration has already begun.
33. Cost estimates can be broken down into two broad categories: (i) costs of funding a small, joint execution team to support the initiative's work; and (ii) estimated costs of reorienting and refocusing internal units/divisions in each organization within the framework of their strategic plans, to contribute to addressing the following ECHUI goals:
- A) Providing leadership to the initiative:** A small, joint execution team of WFP and UNICEF personnel drawn from other responsibilities will be required to support the initiative and service both the Steering Committee – two Executive Directors of WFP and UNICEF and the Chair of the Partners' Group – and the Partners' Group. Other responsibilities will include:
- management of partnership development processes;
 - best practice and “how to” documentation;
 - joint policy guidelines;
 - establishment and maintenance of strategic partnerships;
 - development of community approaches;
 - costing and resource tracking work.
- The estimated costs of approximately US\$3 million per annum are expected to be provided by supporting foundations, the private sector and/or other partner organizations.
- B) Reorientation of internal organizational units/divisions to contribute to achieving the ECHUI goals:** WFP and UNICEF will call on internal departments or divisions to enhance or reorient their focus on the initiative. Some of these costs could be absorbed internally, but others may require additional funding. These latter include: information technology (IT) capacity; enhancement of vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM) or monitoring and evaluation (M&E) capacities to meet defined information system requirements; advocacy and communications capacity; staff training and orientation; additional regional office capacities for resource mobilization; new partnerships; strategy development; capacity to assist countries developing new country plans; a fellowship programme; and support in countries where WFP and UNICEF are not present or currently collaborating. As implementation of the initiative begins, these costs will be incorporated within the existing strategic planning frameworks of each agency and in their regular budget and programme submissions.
34. For WFP, these improvements will not only contribute to ECHUI goals, but will also add value to WFP's own operations, significantly enhancing, for example, the emergency preparedness and response capacity of WFP and its partners.
35. WFP and UNICEF will not themselves seek to channel wider resources to meet the estimated US\$1 billion resource gap for national action (see paragraph 21). Their role will



focus on advocacy and leveraging of resources with decision-makers at the national and international levels to promote increased and more effective investments.

V. NEXT IMMEDIATE STEPS

36. The Secretariat seeks the Executive Board's support for implementation of the *Global Framework for Action*, including operations, actions and activities specific to WFP.
37. Following consideration by the Executive Board of the global framework, WFP, UNICEF and other partners will develop and finalize a detailed work plan for the initiative, including an annual results matrix, and will regularly update and integrate their agency work plans to take the initiative forward. The plans will ensure that monitoring and accountability are part of ECHUI's management structure. The two organizations will also provide the Executive Board with periodic information and analysis on progress of the initiative, including results achieved, constraints, opportunities and lessons learned.

ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

ECHUI	Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition Initiative
FRESH	Focusing Resources on Effective School Health
GAIN	Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition
GNI	gross national income
HIV/AIDS	human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome
IAAH	International Alliance Against Hunger
IT	information technology
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	non-governmental organization
OED	Office of the Executive Director
SCN	Standing Committee on Nutrition
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNGEI	United Nations Girls' Education Initiative
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VAM	vulnerability analysis and mapping
WHO	World Health Organization