POLICY ISSUES

Agenda item 4

For approval

EXITING EMERGENCIES

Programme Options for Transition from Emergency Response

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NOTE TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

This document is submitted for approval by the Executive Board.

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, Strategy, Policy and Programme Support Division (PDP):	Mr S. Samkange	tel.: 066513-2767
Senior Policy Analyst, Emergencies and Transitions Unit (PDPT):	Mr N. Crawford	tel.: 066513-3122

Should you have any questions regarding matters of dispatch of documentation for the Executive Board, please contact the Supervisor, Meeting Servicing and Distribution Unit (tel.: 066513-2328).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Knowing how to end an emergency response can be as important as knowing when to begin one. WFP needs to be sure that its strong capacity for emergency intervention is accompanied by appropriate exits. When and how WFP moves out of an emergency response depends on a range of factors, and exit may take a number of forms. For WFP, an exit from an emergency response means either (i) a phase-out – that is, withdrawal of WFP assistance from an emergency operation or from a country, or (ii) a shift to longer-term programmes to protect and improve livelihoods and resilience.

An exit strategy is a plan for withdrawal of WFP emergency resources; it should include possible indicators, or "triggers", for exit, monitoring systems for measuring progress towards exit conditions and identification of capacities to be built and left behind when WFP emergency assistance ends. Exit strategies are important because WFP can achieve better outcomes for food-insecure communities when the exit is strategically planned with partners.

The paper sets parameters to guide WFP in developing exit strategies for emergency operations. These are based on: (i) WFP's experience in transitioning out of emergency operations in a number of countries, (ii) the policies, exit strategies, practices and experiences of other organizations, (iii) current thinking on the relationship between relief and development programming and (iv) case studies that looked at different "types" of exit in more depth. The paper recommends good practices in exiting emergencies to guide future WFP practice.

In its emergency and recovery operations, WFP often has the potential to make a positive longer-term impact on food security, even as it phases down assistance. The strongest exit strategies for WFP emergency interventions look beyond providing food for immediate, life–saving needs – they also help to develop the capacity of recipient populations and governments to deal with future crises.

DRAFT DECISION[*]
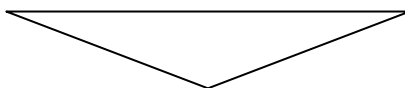
The Board endorses "Exiting Emergencies" (WFP/EB.1/2005/4-B) and requests that the following statement be added to the policy compendium:

"WFP recognizes that a realistic and deliberate exit strategy, planned with partners and clearly stated at the beginning of an emergency operation, can help to facilitate more effective country responses after the initial stage of an emergency. "Exiting" for WFP means either (i) the withdrawal of WFP assistance from an emergency operation or from a country, or (ii) a shift to a longer-term programme to protect and improve livelihoods and resilience. WFP will endeavour to ensure that exit strategies become part of its emergency responses, and that principles of good exiting guide future practice.

For most WFP emergency interventions, the most appropriate moment to exit is when household access to food is restored to pre-emergency levels. The goal of an exit strategy from emergencies is to withdraw WFP support without compromising communities' regained ability to meet their own food needs. Emergency response, particularly in relation to recurrent shocks, is more effective when it is carried out in the context of a longer-term strategy for capacity-building and resilience."

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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.

OVERVIEW

1. At the Board's Third Regular Session in 2003, WFP agreed to undertake a review of its emergency policies. As part of the review, the concurrently presented papers "Definition of Emergencies" (WFP/EB.1/2005/4-A) and "Exiting Emergencies" (WFP/EB.1/2005/4-B) examine whether the general context of WFP's emergency interventions is correct and what strategies WFP follows to ensure that it exits from emergencies effectively and at the right time. The two papers should be read together.

2. The review process for the paper considered (i) WFP's experience in exiting or transitioning out of emergency operations (EMOPs) in a number of countries, (ii) the policies, exit strategies, practices and experiences of other organizations, (iii) current thinking on the relationship between relief and development programming and (iv) case studies that looked at different "types" of exits in more depth.[1]

3. WFP's support after the initial stage of an emergency is more effective when it has planned an exit strategy, but there is a gap in policy guidance on how to do this. The objective of this paper is to set parameters to guide WFP in developing flexible but deliberate exit strategies for emergency interventions. WFP's ultimate goal is to be able to exit countries in a way that leaves behind increased community and individual capacity to deal with future needs and crises; this paper is intended to contribute to achieving that goal.

4. WFP addresses emergency situations through EMOPs or a combination of EMOPs and protracted relief and recovery operations (PRROs). Both categories are flexible; either instrument may have both relief and recovery elements. The paper therefore focuses on exiting from an emergency *response* rather than exiting from a particular category of project.

DEFINITION OF "EXIT" AND "EXIT STRATEGY"

What "Exit" Means to WFP

5. WFP exits from an emergency response in one of two ways: it phases out, withdrawing resources from an operation or from a country, or it transitions from an emergency response to longer-term programmes that protect and improve livelihoods and increase resilience. Both types of exit involve withdrawal of financial, human or food-aid emergency resources. In terms of WFP's project categories, this shift often – but not always – coincides with ending EMOP assistance and moving to a PRRO.

6. A review of EMOPs during 2000–2002 shows the typical evolution of a WFP emergency response.[2] During this period, 85 separate emergency responses were initiated;

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[1] Five countries were selected as case studies for this paper: Côte d'Ivoire, Kosovo, the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), Mozambique and Namibia. Teams visited all the countries except Kosovo. Additional country experiences were reviewed as part of a desk study. Countries were selected to represent different types of exits. Mozambique was selected as an example of a country where numerous discrete EMOPs are implemented in the context of a longer-term development programme; when each emergency is over, EMOPs are phased out. Namibia and Kosovo were selected as examples of countries from which WFP phased out completely following major emergency operations. Côte d'Ivoire and Laos were selected as examples of countries in which WFP is shifting from operations under an EMOP to PRROs.

[2] This review is based on information retrieved from standard project reports (SPRs) and project documents during 2000–2002.

27 percent of EMOPs approved during the period led to further EMOP assistance, either through an extension or a follow-on EMOP, before being phased out or transitioned to a PRRO; 46 percent of emergency responses begun with an approved EMOP were phased out. In 2 percent of cases, phase-out meant WFP withdrawal from the country; 21 percent of EMOPs led to longer-term operations under PRROs, or to country programmes in a few cases.[3]

Definition of "Exit Strategy"[4]

7.   An exit strategy is a plan for withdrawal of WFP emergency resources from a region or population while ensuring that achievement of the goals of the emergency response is not jeopardized. Exit strategies should contain the following:

➢   criteria for exit;

➢   measurable benchmarks for assessing progress toward meeting the criteria;

➢   steps for reaching the benchmarks, and identification of those responsible for taking these steps;

➢   periodic measures for the assessment of progress towards criteria and possible modifications based on analysis of potential risks; and

➢   a flexible timeline specifying when these benchmarks will be reached and when the assessments will be conducted.

THE GOAL OF AN EXIT STRATEGY

8.   The goal of exit strategies generally is to ensure that the objectives of an intervention, once achieved, are not compromised by the fact or means of exit. Clarity in the objectives of an operation helps to determine how and when to exit. The appropriate outcome for most WFP emergency operations is to restore household access to food to pre-emergency levels. WFP's entry into an emergency response usually entails an effort not only to save lives but also to assist target populations to regain the ability they had before the shock to feed themselves – that is, their pre-crisis livelihoods. Most emergency responses, whether supported through an EMOP or a PRRO, should have this recovery of what was lost as an overall objective.[5]

9.   If recovery is an objective, then sustained community access to food at pre-emergency levels is a signal for exit from most emergency responses. The goal of an exit strategy for a WFP-supported emergency, therefore, is to withdraw support without compromising communities' regained ability to meet their own food needs. Efforts by WFP to collect more complete baseline information for crisis-prone countries should help in establishing pre-crisis levels of access to food.

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[3] Four percent of emergency interventions were also suspended.

[4] The information presented in this paragraph draws on Rogers, B. and Macias, K. 2004. *Program Graduation and Exit Strategies: Title II Program Experiences and Related Research.* Washington DC, Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance Project (FANTA); and Levinger, B. and McLeod, J. 2002. *Hello, I Must Be Going Ensuring Quality Services and Sustainable Benefits through Well-Designed Exit Strategies.* Newton, MA, USA, Education Development Center.

[5] Although there is no clear distinction between "emergency" and "recovery", recovery generally begins after the acute phase of a crisis, when households begin to make investments and undertake their usual livelihood activities again; it ends when they have regained what was lost.

10.   There are, however, cases in which the restoration of pre-crisis food conditions may be an unsatisfactory outcome, or an unrealistic objective for an emergency response. Where an emergency occurs in a context of chronic food insecurity, for example, re-establishment of pre-crisis conditions through an emergency response should be accompanied by longer-term WFP or partner interventions that tackle the root causes of hunger. Similarly, in emergencies characterized by extremely high HIV/AIDS prevalence, pre-crisis levels of food access may not be reached for many years. In such cases, longer-term WFP approaches should be clearly distinguished as separate interventions outside the scope of an emergency response.

11.   Exit strategies are important because better outcomes for food-insecure communities are more likely to be achieved if WFP exits are strategically planned with partners in advance. They facilitate better outcomes by encouraging better planning with other actors for post-emergency assistance. This is especially important in the context of post-crisis rehabilitation and recovery programmes, in which WFP food aid may not be the most important input. The purpose of an exit strategy is not to hasten exit – exit is not valuable for its own sake – but to do it better.

WHEN TO EXIT: "TRIGGERS"

12.   WFP and other agencies understand in general terms what constitutes an emergency situation, but there is no definition of the moment when an emergency is over. Identifying the appropriate time to exit involves identifying context-specific exit criteria or indicators that will trigger a decision to exit.

13.   The indicators that generate a WFP decision to phase out emergency support in a particular situation should be defined transparently and early, so that implementing partners and beneficiaries can anticipate the exit. These indicators should be developed in consultation with stakeholders, including local government and regional bodies, who have a clear understanding of historical trends in the region. In situations of recurrent shocks or uncertainty, these conditions can help to determine when an opportunity exists for a transition from an emergency to a recovery programme, or when volatile conditions might signal the need to shift back to emergency mode.

14.   Triggers for exit should ideally be contextual or programmatic, and related to improvement in the overall humanitarian situation or progress towards project goals such as reduced malnutrition. A population's recovery from a shock is one such trigger for exit. Improved government capacity to meet needs is another, systemic, trigger for exit. As results-based management (RBM) systems are strengthened, the ability to measure progress towards the conditions that signal an opportunity for a WFP exit should improve. Other factors unrelated to the programme itself, however, may trigger a programme's exit. These factors also need to be considered in developing a realistic exit strategy. Box A summarizes current triggers that commonly contribute to WFP's decisions to exit.

BOX A	
Type of trigger	**Triggers**
Programmatic	Progress towards objectives.[6]
Contextual	Improvement in the overall humanitarian situation.
	Refugee return (<5 000 remaining).
	Security constraints making effective aid provision impossible.
Systemic	Government capacity to meet needs and for emergency response.
External	Diminished donor contributions.
	Commitment by other donors to fund recovery programmes.

15.   Development, recovery and relief needs shift back and forth in the most vulnerable and insecure settings. Monitoring systems for emergency programmes should help to inform staff of when and whether a shift from an emergency to longer-term interventions such as safety-net support is appropriate, or vice versa. In situations where emergencies recur in the context of an ongoing WFP programme, for example in Côte d'Ivoire and Mozambique, safety-net programmes targeting chronically vulnerable populations have been scaled up to respond to emergencies. In these situations, information systems that monitor food-security indicators such as those managed by vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM) should help to identify context-specific triggers for scaling up or scaling back the emergency response. Finally, indicators should help to determine if and when targeted populations have recovered from a shock.

16.   However clearly indicators are defined, it is sometimes difficult to know for certain that an exit is appropriate. Triggers must be part of an exit strategy that is flexible and allows discussion, qualitative appraisal and informed judgments by WFP and partner staff.

CONTEXTUAL FACTORS TO CONSIDER WHEN PLANNING TO EXIT

Nature of the Shock or Crisis

17.   The nature of a shock or crisis will largely determine the type of exit needed in the post-crisis situation. In many places, exit is complicated by multiple or recurrent shocks as well as challenges for particular populations that may come from a variety of unrelated sources. It is probably easier to exit from responses to infrequent shocks such as a ten-year drought than from recurrent shocks or complex emergency environments. Exit from recurrent-shock environments is possible, as in Mozambique, but is unlikely to be permanent unless efforts are made in the context of a longer-term programme to improve people's resilience to future shocks. The suddenness of onset is also relevant: in Mozambique, sudden-onset floods and cyclones cause widespread damage to household assets and infrastructure but are of short duration with clearly defined end points. In contrast, flood disasters in the Lao PDR are slow-onset: communities may have time to protect household assets such as livestock, but the impact on food security is longer-term.

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[6] Progress as measured by agreed indicators, which may include Sphere project or specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound (SMART) indicators.

18.   Uncertainty in relation to shocks should also be considered: a high level of uncertainty about the length or timing of the shock makes planning for an exit more difficult. This is particularly relevant for complex emergencies or protracted crises of a neither-war-nor-peace nature, as in Côte d'Ivoire, where it is unrealistic to develop meaningful plans for exit or transition because of high levels of insecurity and uncertainty about future events.

Vulnerability of the Population

19.   Understanding a population's vulnerability to a shock must also be considered in exiting. Resilience is an important concept here: it refers to the ability of an individual, household or community to respond to a crisis and to recover from stress or shocks. Exit from the emergency response is appropriate when households affected by a shock have been assisted to the point where they have recovered from it.

20.   An exit strategy also requires a conceptual distinction between chronic vulnerability to food insecurity and transitory vulnerability. Chronic vulnerability to food insecurity denotes persistence over time. Transitory vulnerability to food insecurity involves a temporary inability to meet food needs or smooth consumption levels.[7] In instances of transitory vulnerability, the population is more likely to be ready sooner for an exit from emergency assistance. It is beyond the scope of most emergency operations to address chronic food insecurity that existed in the affected area prior to a shock. A large number of chronically food-insecure households are affected by shocks, however, and exit strategies in such cases require a smooth transition to longer-term programmes to address the chronic vulnerability. WFP's exit from Timor Leste, for example, turned out to be temporary because the chronic vulnerability, including food insecurity, of many EMOP beneficiaries was not addressed.

Types of Assets Depleted

21.   It is important when planning an exit strategy to distinguish the type of assets depleted during a crisis. Depletion of assets may include destroyed community assets or the sale of household assets. Both types of assets are depleted during macroeconomic shocks, high prevalence of HIV/AIDS, civil conflict, droughts and floods. In the case of HIV/AIDS, human assets are enormously depleted. Understanding loss or divestment of assets is fundamental to understanding the recovery of different population groups. Chronic vulnerability, for example, is strongly associated with lack of assets; transitory vulnerable households are often able to rely on their access to assets, among other resources, to cope with shortfalls in the short term. These coping strategies themselves have a decisive effect on phasing out emergency programmes: the more WFP assistance works to enhance people's capacities while meeting their immediate needs, the more likely it is that recovery will be achieved and an exit made possible.

Regional Context

22.   A fourth contextual factor to be considered is the regional dimension of conflict and crisis. Regional conflict, HIV/AIDS and macroeconomic shocks can complicate exit strategies. For example, a symptom of the complex emergency in Côte d'Ivoire is massive population displacement, both internally and into neighbouring countries. Cross-border migration is a common coping strategy for populations facing long-term poverty, conflict

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[7] Ellis, F. 2003. *Human Vulnerability and Food Insecurity.* Forum for Food Security in Southern Africa theme paper. London, Overseas Development Institute.

or detrimental changes in the political or macro-economic situation; this is particularly problematic in a region with high rates of HIV/AIDS, such as southern Africa. Understanding the regional context and cross-border population mobility is also an issue for a country such as the Lao PDR that has low rates of HIV/AIDS relative to neighbouring countries; current economic changes and infrastructure development linking the Lao PDR to bordering nations increase the risk of the spread of AIDS in the country. Successful exit planning is based on a realistic appraisal of the factors that may facilitate exit and those that may complicate or hinder it; regional factors will require a regional approach to exit planning.

Access to Partnerships

23.   The type and level of available partnerships with United Nations organizations, government structures, donors or non-governmental organizations (NGOs) plays a major role in defining an exit strategy. The resources and coverage of these partners are relevant in planning when to exit: if partners have invested significant resources in local programmes, it may be appropriate for WFP to exit or withdraw food aid at an earlier date. If little or no other programmatic support is in place, it may be difficult to withdraw the emergency food aid intervention.

24.   Box B highlights different WFP partnership approaches that vary by context and partner capacity. In each case, enhancing partner capacity to respond to and facilitate recovery has been an important component of exit. Emphasis has been on (i) strengthening assessment and analysis capacity, (ii) developing food-security strategies, (iii) mitigating and responding to disaster, (iv) targeting and referral, (v) programme design and (vi) implementation, food aid management and monitoring.

BOX B: WFP Partnership Approaches

Case 1: In **Mozambique**, WFP partners with the Government and NGOs. Emergency responses implemented over the past ten years have integrated training and institutional support for the national institute responsible for coordinating disaster response (*Instituto Nacional de Gestão das Calamidades* (INGC)) and other government units. INGC has developed strong capacity and effective relief mechanisms at the national and provincial levels. WFP continues to support INGC preparedness and contingency planning. NGO partners have broader development goals: when emergencies occur, they mobilize resources for response and then return to their longer-term objectives, supporting populations who remain vulnerable as a result of emergency in the context of ongoing, longer-term programmes. NGOs provide credit and other non-food inputs as activities shift from relief to recovery.

Case 2: In the **Lao PDR**, WFP recognized limited government capacity as a serious constraint to emergency response and achievement of national food security. To strengthen this capacity, WFP has pursued a coalition approach, engaging the Government at all levels through training and on-the-job support. Building capacity in all aspects of assessment and implementation is a core component of the most recent EMOP, and an effective departure from previous EMOPs that channelled resources through NGO or government implementing partners without long-term support.

Case 3: WFP works with a variety of partners in **Côte d'Ivoire**, including local government, United Nations agencies and international NGOs. Limited capacity among partner agencies has been a major constraint affecting the EMOP strategy and shift to recovery programming. The context for capacity-building for the Government has been limited to date by lack of clear structures; WFP has focused capacity-building efforts on one engaged and responsive government partner.

RECOMMENDATIONS

25.   In its emergency interventions, WFP has the potential to make a positive impact on food security in ways beyond the immediate provision of food aid, even as it phases down its assistance. WFP has been able to use its resources to contribute to or catalyse processes that make exit possible and that lead to better outcomes for food-insecure communities. Effective planning for exit requires a strategy: exit has been most effective when the strategy has been to look beyond food aid, linking emergency food aid with strategies to improve capacity at the household, community and institutional levels to deal with crises more effectively in future.

26.   The short time-frame of many emergency responses and associated funding can constrain implementation of some best practices in exiting. WFP's emergency responses, particularly when they aim to contribute to building capacity to address future shocks, are more effective when carried out in the context of a longer-term country strategy and more predictable resource commitment.

Plan for Exit from an Early Stage

27.   Exit strategies should be formulated early in the life of an emergency response. It is not realistic to plan for exit at the beginning of an acute crisis, but strategic planning is possible and desirable from an early stage. In Côte d'Ivoire and Mozambique, WFP staff felt that they were prepared conceptually from an early stage to move towards longer-term responses. WFP should consider including exit objectives as a component of logical frameworks developed for EMOPs during formulation, and certainly for PRROs.[8] EMOP objectives should provide an end point for the emergency response consistent with the scope of emergency interventions in general – that is, to restore communities' access to food to pre-crisis levels. Most EMOP and PRRO evaluations to date have not made a focused effort to assess exit strategies; future evaluations should assess the relevance and coherence of exit strategies.

Communicate the Plan

28.   Communication is a central element in an effective exit strategy.[9] WFP should communicate clearly with all stakeholders, including communities and beneficiaries, about plans for exit and the factors that will influence its nature and timing. WFP loses an opportunity to advocate for improved outcomes for food-insecure communities if stakeholders are not aware of when and how an emergency response will come to an end. Communication with donors is crucial when support for successor transition programmes is required. The Kosovo experience showed that partners' realization that WFP was serious about exiting was fundamental to successful withdrawal.

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[8] "WFP Emergency Operations Good Practice Review" (internal draft, 2002) and "Summary Report of the Evaluation of Emergency Operations in East Timor" (WFP/EB.3/2001/6/5).

[9] Rogers and Macias, 2004.

Keep a Flexible Timeline

29.   Timeframes should be realistic: there are risks not only in exiting too late, but also in exiting too soon.[10] The time frame established for a WFP exit should be clear, realistic and flexible, with decisions based on regular assessments. The reality of WFP's work in many emergency environments is that forward planning may be exceedingly difficult. Goals, timing and the planned method of exit may need to be modified according to circumstances and country office judgment. In Kosovo, periodic assessments of food needs led to phase-down and appropriately timed phase-out. There should also be room for a partial exit – that is, exit from parts of an emergency operation where objectives have been attained.

Link Emergency Response to a Longer-Term Strategic Framework

30.   When possible, WFP should develop a long-term country strategy for managing risk that would include emergency responses and development programming and illustrate how programmes interact. As demonstrated in the Lao PDR, Mozambique and Namibia, development of a long-term strategic framework that uses a livelihoods approach is more effective than sequentially implementing discrete EMOPs (see Box C). A longer-term approach was also considered more effective in Guatemala to address nutritional needs that had previously been addressed through an emergency response. The need to conceive of WFP's exit strategy in a long-term perspective, including replacing short-term with more structured measures to address food insecurity, was also highlighted in Ethiopia.[11] A long-term strategy improves WFP's analysis of (i) risk and vulnerability, (ii) populations' response capacity, (iii) partnering and (iv) capacity-building efforts,[12] all of which contribute to transition and exit.

31.   Emergency response in recurrent-shock contexts should ideally be linked to safety nets and development activities in a broader framework of risk management,[13] or "asset strategies".[14] WFP programmes that support and link with government-led safety nets, as in Ethiopia or Sierra Leone, have the potential to bring about conditions under which WFP may be able to avoid doing the same work in future that is needed today.[15]

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[10] *Exit Strategy for Humanitarian Actors in the Context of Complex Emergencies*, Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), www.iasc.org. The recent "Thematic Evaluation of the PRRO Operational Category" (WFP/EB.1/2004/6-A) also highlighted the danger of WFP moving out of relief more quickly than the situation warranted, and more quickly than it was possible to implement recovery programmes responsibly and fully.

[11] Development Researchers' Network (DRN). 2004. *Joint Evaluation of the Effectiveness and Impact of the Enabling Development Policy of the World Food Programme, Ethiopia Country Study*. Ref. 120-E7110-309, pp. 63–64. Rome.

[12] As noted in "Building Country and Regional Capacities", an ad hoc approach is insufficient for WFP gradually to hand over programme activities to government agencies. Considerable investment in sustainable systems, including training and other forms of capacity-building, is necessary to ensure expertise. Such investments need to be part of a programme strategy that has a longer-term perspective than the duration of an EMOP, and that would need to be funded and staffed accordingly.

[13] This programme approach linking relief and development interventions with food security, a strategic focus on risk reduction and efficient safety nets is also called "developmental relief".

[14] Webb, P. and Rogers, B. 2003. *Addressing the "In" in Food Insecurity*. USAID Occasional Paper No.1. Washington DC, USAID.

[15] "WFP and Food-Based Safety Nets: Concepts, Experiences and Future Programming Opportunities" (WFP/EB.3/2004/4-A) identifies three models for WFP's engagement with national safety nets.

> **Box C: Importance of a Strategic Framework: The Case of WFP Lao PDR**
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> Throughout the 1990s, WFP Lao PDR operated a series of one-off EMOPs to provide relief assistance to households affected by flood and drought. In 2000, WFP developed a strategic framework drawing on the lessons of the previous decade, VAM and regional experience. A formal country programme was never established, but WFP Lao PDR developed a longer-term development relief framework. In Lao PDR, WFP seeks to address chronic food insecurity in the most vulnerable areas and support the Government's capacity in early warning and developing an effective food-assistance strategy. A contingency to provide timely assistance to households affected by flood and drought that face short-term food-insecurity is integral to this strategy. In this framework, the EMOP complemented other development programmes to support internal staff capacity, develop communications and infrastructure capacity, invest in meaningful partner relationships, develop vulnerability analysis tools and enhance response capacity.

Prioritize VAM

32.   Establishment of a VAM unit in the country office should be a priority, with government capacity-building as a main task, particularly when government capacity is limited or other agencies or systems such as the Famine Early-Warning System (FEWS) are not in place. Vulnerability analysis is critical for understanding the food-security context of an emergency, establishing indicators for exit and formulating longer-term strategies. In the Lao PDR, VAM has played a critical role in developing problem analysis and in framing emergency and recovery interventions in a longer-term strategy. Using flood response as an entry point, WFP Lao PDR has expanded the use of VAM to establish a relief, recovery and development dialogue with government counterparts, NGO partners, donors and other partners.

Work to Enhance Resilience in Areas Prone to Recurrent Shocks

33.   In general, projects for improving resilience and capacity in a community require a longer-term commitment; they should be distinguished from emergency responses that aim to re-establish the pre-crisis situation. Some emergencies, however, offer opportunities for contributing to longer-term capacity and resilience. Emergency responses in areas prone to recurrent shocks should strive to identify objectives and activities that contribute to reducing households' exposure to risk and increasing their resilience to future shocks. Examples of efforts to improve resilience in the context of an emergency response include food-for-work (FFW) programmes in southern Africa that support seed multiplication and cultivation of drought-resistant crops. In flood-prone areas of Mozambique, WFP's NGO partners have encouraged cultivation of crops on higher ground to reduce exposure to risk and enhance resilience when future floods occur. These are examples of good practice in which WFP can, within the scope of an emergency response, contribute to achieving more than the restoration of the pre-crisis situation.

Increase Institutional Capacity for Emergency Response

34.   Institutional capacity-building to plan for and respond to emergencies should be part of every exit strategy.[16] Some of the best exit criteria are based on the readiness of communities, government or other parties to take over emergency-response functions.

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[16] The findings of this review of exit strategies are in line with the recommendations for a systematic WFP approach to building national and regional capacities to reduce hunger in "Building Country and Regional Capacities" (WFP/EB.3/2004/4-B).

Assessments should be carried out to identify opportunities for capacity-building among non-governmental and governmental actors. To maximize return on its investments in capacity-building, WFP should aim to focus its efforts on actors identified as having the drive and potential to make change.

35.   There are many good examples of WFP contributing to increased government ability to manage future emergencies, even within the limitations of short-term programme budgets. In Mozambique and Namibia, WFP focused on strengthening the capacity of national emergency management units to plan for action in future emergencies and to coordinate the activities of donors, other government agencies and NGOs. The units in both countries have developed preparedness and response mechanisms at the national and provincial levels and have played important coordination roles in recent emergencies. In Mozambique, WFP has also worked with the unit to prepare annual contingency plans.

36.   When government involvement and resource contributions are lacking or superficial, it is more difficult for programmes to exit. Lack of government structure and capacity is particularly problematic in complex emergencies such as that in Côte d'Ivoire, where political divisions limit constructive involvement.

Box D. Linking capacity-building with exit

Namibia provides an example of the goal that WFP should be striving to achieve in countries that are prone to natural disasters: that the countries arrive at a point where they have the necessary institutional capacity and financial resources to (i) develop their own emergency preparedness plans (ii) develop the necessary logistics and management capacity to provide food aid and other kinds of assistance in emergencies and (iii) respond to smaller-scale emergencies internally, using local resources. When larger emergencies occur, food resources from WFP can be accessed, but these resources can be delivered through existing systems developed and operated by government agencies.

This example shows that there comes a time when most forms of WFP support should be withdrawn. WFP must determine with the national government the point at which the relevant institutions are able to manage without external support. This decision will depend on (i) the organizational structure and how this structure facilitates or inhibits coordination across administrative levels, line ministries and NGOs, (ii) management capacity, (iii) technical capacity and (iv) funding.

Look Beyond Food Aid: WFP As an Advocate and Catalyst

37.   WFP should take action beyond delivery of emergency food aid to beneficiaries to bring about the conditions under which exit may be possible. In practice, this means identifying capacities and non-food inputs, including cash, that will be necessary as food aid is phased down and advocating for their availability. Food often becomes a less important resource as activities shift from relief to recovery and development, but lack of non-food resources may significantly slow this transition.[17] WFP is not usually able to provide these resources directly, but it can help to advocate these resource needs to donors. The experience in Kosovo provides a good example of WFP taking action beyond its immediate responsibility to bring about the conditions under which its exit was possible (see Box E). WFP should also advocate for resolution of political factors that may underlie or exacerbate food insecurity, causing protracted crisis and preventing exit.

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[17] In Mozambique, food aid became less central and increased cash resources were required as communities' recovery from the 2002 flooding progressed. NGOs in Mozambique identified credit as an outstanding need in transitioning to development programming.

Box E: Using WFP's influence in innovative ways

When the situation in Kosovo stabilized in 2002 and WFP phased out its assistance, it played an important role in supporting the development and funding of the Consortium for Inter-Ethnic Development (CID). The creation of CID, which comprised six local multi-ethnic NGOs, ensured that assistance to Kosovo's vulnerable population would continue. WFP advocated with donors to support CID projects, which included healthcare, agricultural development, inter-ethnic youth activities and social-welfare services to vulnerable groups. WFP also provided extensive training to CID staff in crucial skills such as warehouse management and food-aid monitoring. The establishment of CID in an area suffering from years of inter-ethnic strife is a positive legacy left by WFP when it closed its emergency food-assistance programme.[18]

Maintain Relationships After Exit

38.   Considering that countries from which WFP exits completely could slip back into a situation where food aid may be required, it is important that WFP consider how to continue to monitor the in-country food-security situation. When WFP exited Timor Leste, for example, WFP Indonesia remained responsible for periodic monitoring of the food-security situation there. Information from this monitoring eventually led to a decision to re-open an office in Timor Leste. Communication with a government should also continue after WFP phase-out, particularly in relation to national contingency planning for possible future scenarios that might require external assistance. An ongoing relationship might include continued technical assistance for capacity-building, as foreseen under WFP's Strategic Priority 5: Help governments to establish and maintain national food assistance programmes.

Plan for WFP Staff

39.   When planning for an exit that will involve releasing staff, WFP should try to ensure that staff are given the time and support necessary to look for alternative employment. Kosovo again provides an example of good practice: staff reductions were planned alongside the phase-down of programme activities, and the proactive assistance provided to local staff in finding alternative jobs before the end of their contracts contributed to maintaining high morale during WFP's phase-out.[19]

Integrate WFP plans with other United Nations and Donors' plans

40.   The WFP exit strategy should be an integral part of the strategic plan developed by United Nations system actors to provide assistance.[20] Where a transitional situation is likely following a conflict, "a single coherent strategy for all United Nations system actors is imperative and should undergird political and operational synergies…though the strategy need not necessarily imply the operational integration of United Nations system actors".[21]

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[18] "Summary Evaluation Report on Kosovo Regional Emergency Operation" (WFP/EB.2/2000/3/5) and "Kosovo: Conclusion of WFP Operations" (WFP/EB.3/2002/INF/26).

[19] WFP/EB.3/2002/INF/26.

[20] *Exit Strategy for Humanitarian Actors in the Context of Complex Emergencies*, IASC.

[21] "Transition from Relief to Development" (WFP/EB.A/2004/5-B).

ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

AIDS	acquired immune deficiency syndrome
CID	Consortium for Inter-Ethnic Development
DRN	Development Researchers' Network
EMOP	emergency operation
FANTA	Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance
FEWS	Famine Early-Warning System
FFW	food for work
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
INGC	Instituto Nacional de Gestão das Calamidades
NGO	non-governmental organization
PDR	People's Democratic Republic
PRRO	protracted relief and recovery operation
RBM	results-based management
SMART	specific, measurable, accurate, realistic and timely
SPR	standard project report
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VAM	vulnerability analysis and mapping