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Agenda item 5

*For information**



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PROTRACTED RELIEF AND RECOVERY OPERATION APPROVED BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (1 JULY–31 DECEMBER 2003) — ALBANIA 10165.1

Assistance to Vulnerable Groups in the Construction of Community Assets

Number of beneficiaries	133,000
Duration of project	18 months (April 2004–September 2005)
Food quantity	10,470 mt
Cost (United States dollars)	
Total cost to WFP	4,711,036

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

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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.

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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).



1. Albania is one of the poorest low-income, food-deficit countries (LIFDCs) in Europe. Despite recent progress in economic stabilization, it still has one of the highest levels of poverty in Eastern Europe and is ranked 95th out of 175 countries on the 2003 Human Development Index.
2. Under the regional Balkans emergency operation, WFP provided food assistance from July 1999 to June 2002. In view of continued need, WFP implemented PRRO 10165.0 in July 2002; the operation terminates on 31 March 2004. A recent assessment of the donor communities and various poverty assessment studies indicate that there is still an urgent need for targeted food interventions.
3. The transition from a centrally planned economy to a market system has been marked by increased poverty, underemployment and gender inequality. WFP's food aid operation is designed to support the Government's longer-term poverty reduction programme; it aims to reduce poverty by contributing to improved social and economic conditions and enhanced household food security for certain marginalized population groups.
4. Food aid under PRRO 10165.1 will provide an essential income transfer for families whose earnings, and consequently food security, fall below minimum standards. The activities under this operation will focus on: (i) social sector assistance, 49 percent; (ii) communal forestry and pasture management, 23 percent; and (iii) community asset building through food for work (FFW), 28 percent.
5. The social sector assistance will mainly target the most marginalized women, giving them opportunities to be trained in income-generating activities, health, childcare and social problems. They will also receive counselling. The focus will be on women heads of households, widows, divorcees and women trying to re-establish their lives after breaking away from an existence made unbearable by abuses such as domestic violence or trafficking. A small portion of the assistance will be used to support elderly people with no source of income, disabled people and others who find themselves in a difficult situation.
6. The second activity is related to communal forestry activities. The Government is implementing a policy aimed at transferring the management of part of the state-owned forests. Over the last decade, the areas selected for this transfer have been exposed to uncontrolled deforestation and overgrazing. Under the management of the forestry users' associations, unemployed and vulnerable people will be provided with work opportunities through forestry activities.
7. The third activity involves creation and rehabilitation of community assets through FFW, targeted to the poorest regions—the mountainous areas in the northeast and in the south. Participants will contribute to the construction or repair of assets for their communities through labour-intensive schemes.
8. The food assistance will act as a safety-net for the most vulnerable households, preventing them from resorting to detrimental coping mechanisms. This PRRO will contribute to capacity-building in two ways: (i) for the beneficiaries by strengthening their self-reliance; and (ii) for implementing partners by increasing their experience through implementation of the activities.

