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SUMMARY OF THE WORK OF THE SECOND REGULAR SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD, 2002

In accordance with the methods of work of the Executive Board, the present document reflects the main points of its deliberations to be taken into account by the Secretariat in the implementation of the Board's decisions and recommendations, contained in document WFP/EB.2/2002/11.

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EVALUATION REPORTS

Summary Report of the Mid-Term Evaluation of Country Programme— Ethiopia (1998–2003) (2002/EB.2/1)

1. Several representatives made general comments related to evaluation methodologies used by WFP, terms of reference, and descriptive versus analytical evaluation documents, indicating a preference for the latter.
2. The Secretariat replied that it would welcome a discussion of methodological issues in the course of the Annual Session, when the policy for results-oriented monitoring and evaluation would be presented for approval.
3. The Board was of the opinion that the evaluation was too descriptive but welcomed the fact that it was able to provide valuable input for the preparation of the new Country Strategy Outline (CSO), also being discussed at the current session. Representatives welcomed the impact study of activity 2488, to be carried out by the country office in response to one of the evaluation's recommendations.
4. While supporting the evaluation recommendations and noting with satisfaction the actions taken by the country office as listed in the Summary of Evaluation Recommendations and Management Response, the Board stressed the importance of monitoring systems in WFP activities, especially in cases where evaluation was not possible. One representative welcomed the community-based review recently introduced by WFP in Ethiopia in response to one of the recommendations, underlining that this should be repeated in other countries. Another expressed concern over the recommendation to discontinue school feeding in those schools not upgraded by the Government of Ethiopia, arguing that those schools would thus be penalized twice. The Secretariat responded that it was important to balance the increased enrolment brought about by the provision of food aid with the quality of education and infrastructure.
5. The importance of the local purchase of processed food was also discussed.

Summary Report of the Evaluation of Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation—Azerbaijan 6121.00 (2002/EB.2/2)

6. The Board expressed its appreciation for the quality of the evaluation report, noting with approval that the design of the new PRRO incorporated many of the key evaluation findings and recommendations. It noted also the efforts being made to effect improvements in key areas, as identified in the report. One representative pointed out, however, that the explanation of the methodology used in the Azerbaijan PRRO evaluation was too descriptive.
7. Representatives supported the recommendations provided in the report and said that the report and the presentation had helped them to better appreciate the difficult living conditions of the internally displaced in Azerbaijan. They stressed the need for sustainable solutions for handling internally displaced persons.
8. The post-distribution monitoring described in paragraph 15 of the report was particularly appreciated.



Summary Report of the Evaluation of the WFP Angola Portfolio (2002/EB.2/3)

9. The Board welcomed the comprehensive and useful evaluation report on the WFP portfolio in Angola, noting that the evaluation had come at an opportune moment and had provided valuable input into the design of the successor PRRO, making it a stronger document. The evaluation had placed emphasis on the need for better targeting, a better focus of activities, enhanced training for WFP staff and counterparts, and improved post-distribution monitoring.
10. Some representatives took particular note of the recommendations relating to making better use of indicators to measure outcomes, more participatory approaches to activity design and planning, a province-by-province approach to food aid needs, and the duration of general food distributions. One representative, however, felt that a few of the recommendations had not been adequately answered in the management response matrix, in particular the one relating to indicators.
11. Some representatives wondered if the evaluation had taken sufficient account of the fluid situation and the need for flexibility in operations, having perhaps applied criteria that were more suited to stable development situations. One representative felt that the analysis of integration of the various elements of the portfolio (PRRO, Special Operations and the quick action project) could have been better developed, while another would have welcomed some analysis of the impact of food aid on the war situation in the country.
12. In responding, the Secretariat thanked the Board for its generally very positive response to the evaluation report and for its valuable comments. The evaluation had been an exhaustive one, with an intense interaction between the mission and country office staff responsible for designing the successor PRRO. It was acknowledged that it might prove feasible to implement some of the recommendations only as the situation in Angola stabilized. The Secretariat pointed out that portfolio evaluations could be valuable for providing an overview of total WFP assistance to a particular country and would probably become more frequent in future Office of Evaluation and Monitoring (OEDE) workplans. In that regard, the Board looked forward to the debate on the policy for results-oriented monitoring and evaluation at the forthcoming Annual Session.

OPERATIONAL MATTERS

Country Strategy Outline—Ethiopia (2002/EB.2/4)

13. Several members expressed satisfaction with the focus of the CSO, in particular its emphasis on school feeding, HIV/AIDS mitigation and prevention activities, and gender.
14. A number of representatives enquired about WFP's comparative advantage in Ethiopia, given the Programme's long presence in the country. The Secretariat responded that preliminary results of the impact assessment indicated that this comparative advantage included a strong field orientation, knowledge of the target population, and the flexibility to adapt interventions to meet the food needs of the people, while assisting them in carrying out initiatives that improved their incomes, raised production and reduced relief food needs.
15. One representative, referring to WFP's vulnerability criteria for targeting and its partnership strategy, questioned the compatibility of the two, for example when partners worked in regions that were not the most vulnerable according to vulnerability analysis and



mapping (VAM) criteria. The Secretariat responded that partnerships were very important to WFP, and that in Ethiopia, regions were now given more responsibility to manage their own resources. Hence, the capacity of the regions to work with partners and contribute to WFP activities from their own resources was increasing. The Board noted the need to obtain adequate non-food resources in order to achieve development results, such as increases in household income and assets, that would lead to greater food security.

16. Several members requested more information about WFP's strategy for local food purchases, noting the possible negative effects of importing food. The Secretariat responded that in Ethiopia WFP was using three types of procurement options: procurement for international use (mostly cereals), procurement for use in Ethiopia, and developmental procurement in areas where WFP promoted food-for-assets schemes, supporting local farmers. It stressed that WFP strongly encouraged donor support of this strategy and the provision of cash when possible.
17. The Board welcomed the recent impact assessment and looked forward to receiving the full report on the findings. It was noted that the results of that assessment would contribute to the development of the Country Programme. The full report was expected to be ready in June, and preliminary findings showed positive results from development assistance, in particular in reducing the need for emergency assistance in development-assisted areas.
18. Several representatives noted that the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic on Ethiopia was severe in both rural and urban areas: Ethiopia had the third largest number of HIV/AIDS-infected people of any country, including 1 million AIDS orphans. It was pointed out that the Government's national AIDS programme was guiding WFP's work in this area, and the National AIDS Council would be the implementing partner for WFP's urban intervention. One member referred to the nutritional problems of women and children and recommended that WFP explore ways to address these problems through a more integrated approach. The Secretariat responded that within the framework of the national AIDS strategy there would be more opportunities for partnerships, including for the mother-and-child health programme.
19. Several members enquired about WFP's role in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) process in Ethiopia. The Secretariat replied that WFP was actively participating on committees for food security, environment and gender, and that the Programme also represented the United Nations on the National Committee for Food Security.

Country Programme—Rwanda (2003–2006) (2002/EB.2/5)

20. In approving the first Rwanda Country Programme (2003–2006), the Board expressed appreciation that it would be implemented concurrently with the ongoing PRRO, and that it represented a shift in WFP assistance from emergency and relief and recovery interventions to development.
21. Several members noted with satisfaction that the CP was harmonized with the programme cycles of other United Nations agencies and that it was well synchronized with the Government's poverty reduction strategy and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) priorities. Some members queried WFP's role in sectorial approaches. The Secretariat assured members that WFP was closely coordinating its activities with those of other partners, pointing out that the Programme was involved in donor working groups and United Nations theme groups and had taken a lead role in drafting sections of the UNDAF.



22. In relation to gender issues and making specific references to the 10-percent under-performance of girls in primary school leaving certificate exams, as compared with boys, one member suggested that WFP promote the importance of girls' education through a public information programme. The Secretariat explained that also in the area of gender equity the country office was doing its utmost to increase participation by women on district and community food aid committees and in parent-teacher associations, and that the percentage of WFP female staff stood at 60 for international and 34 for national staff. It stressed that should opportunities for the recruitment of new staff arise, WFP would make special efforts to recruit women.
23. Commenting on food procurement policies, as described in paragraph 59 of the document—which states that “WFP is required to procure food commodities when stocks of the highest quality are available on a competitive basis, in a transparent manner and by international tender”—one member requested clarification on how these policies would affect WFP's scope for local food purchases in Rwanda. The Secretariat explained that WFP had been successful over the past years in buying significant quantities of blended foods, pulses and maize locally. In order to further boost opportunities for local food procurements, the Programme planned to arrange an open meeting with local traders to explain its food procurement plans, policies and procedures.

Country Programme—Zambia (2002–2006) (2002/EB.2/6)

24. The Board approved the Zambia Country Programme (2002–2006), noting that it was compatible with WFP's Enabling Development policy and that it conformed with the Government's national poverty reduction action plan and HIV/AIDS strategic plan.
25. Several members observed that the CP was consistent with the CSO and the Board's comments, and well synchronized with the programmes of other United Nations agencies and the UNDAF priorities. One member sought clarification on the degree of coordination between WFP activities and sectorial programmes, referring specifically to coordination with donors in the primary education sector. The Secretariat responded that the strategy and implementation modality of the new school feeding activity had been developed in close consultation with the Government, and that WFP staff frequently participated in donor meetings. The Secretariat affirmed that closer coordination with partners in the education sector would be pursued.
26. Referring to the dimensions of poverty in Zambia, coupled with the emerging HIV/AIDS pandemic, a number of representatives highlighted the importance of targeting the most vulnerable population groups and focusing assistance on improving the nutritional status of young children, expectant and nursing mothers, and people living with HIV/AIDS. One member recommended that WFP extend its HIV/AIDS focus to rural households. Noting that US\$20 million had been committed to Zambia from the HIV/AIDS United Nations Global Fund, the Board expressed some concern about the absorptive capacity of the Government to use these resources effectively. One member recommended that WFP study carefully other agencies' involvement in HIV/AIDS activities to ensure complementarity of inputs and avoid overlapping of donor assistance in the same geographical areas. The Secretariat replied that it was working closely with UNICEF, UNDP and other partners, including local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), on community-level health, nutrition and water programmes, and HIV/AIDS-related training.
27. One member noted the importance of addressing the underlying causes of the food deficit and the decreasing levels of food security, in order that Zambia, as a disaster-prone country, might be seen in the right context. The Secretariat clarified that development of



the agriculture sector was a high priority for the Government and that it ranked high on the President's agenda. The Government was proactively testing new seed varieties and agricultural techniques aimed at increasing food production, including a new technique for growing two crops of winter maize.

28. The Secretariat drew attention to the Government's positive new practice of publishing its budget every month in the local newspapers. It appeared that the Government would continue its support of WFP activities, with continued funding to WFP partners.

Country Programme—Bolivia (2003–2007) (2002/EB.2/7)

29. In approving the CP for Bolivia, the Board noted that it responded to the Bolivian Poverty Reduction Strategy and promoted social inclusion. It praised the consultative process undertaken with all stakeholders to prepare the CP.
30. Acknowledging the high level of commitment by the Bolivian Government, the Board recommended that the current level of contributions be maintained. The importance of beneficiary contributions to activities in order to support ownership, and the linkages between Activities 1 and 2 at the municipal level and with the Poverty Reduction Strategy were stressed.
31. Several members recommended that the country office increase the participation of small producer organizations in providing food. The importance of establishing a monitoring and evaluation system compatible with that established for monitoring the Poverty Reduction Strategy was also noted. The need to implement an integrated food security policy was underlined, and one member indicated willingness to strengthen the implementation of a sustainable livelihood strategy.

Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation for Executive Board Approval—Azerbaijan 10168.0 (2002/EB.2/8)

32. In approving Azerbaijan PRRO 10168.0, the Board commended the quality of the document and expressed appreciation for the fact that the activities were designed following the recommendations of the evaluation mission that had appraised the prior PRRO (6121.00) in October 2001.
33. Members acknowledged the deplorable socio-economic conditions of the country's internally displaced persons and noted the need for WFP to continue supporting them. Many members expressed satisfaction that the new PRRO would promote sustainable systems through employment-generating schemes in order to increase the self-reliance of the internally displaced, and that many of these activities would target women. The Board welcomed the school feeding component introduced in the operation, and pointed out the need to reinforce collaboration with partners.

Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation for Executive Board Approval—Algeria 10172.0 (2002/EB.2/9)

34. The Board approved the PRRO for Algeria, noting that until a political solution could be found, there would be a continued need for assistance to this group of refugees.
35. Several members commented on the fact that the refugees could not have survived for so long (since 1975) in such an inhospitable climate without assistance from the Government of Algeria, the international community, WFP and other agencies.



36. Members also noted that a very high number of refugees were women and children, and that for them food assistance was essential. Members also appreciated the role of women's committees in the operation.
37. One member commented on the increase in the number of refugees receiving WFP assistance since the last PRRO, and the discrepancy between the beneficiary numbers used by WFP and those used by UNHCR. The Secretariat replied that, prior to mid-2000, WFP had covered the needs of 80,000 people out of a caseload of 155,000 refugees under the PRRO, while other donors had provided for the remaining refugees bilaterally. However, since food aid from all sources was pooled and distributed to the entire caseload, for the sake of transparency, WFP had decided to present the needs of the entire caseload in the current PRRO. The caseload number was based on the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara's (MINURSO's) uncontested registration of eligible voters for the referendum, and on UNHCR's pre-registration for repatriation from the Tindouf camps. The refugee population figure used by the Government of Algeria was 165,000, while WFP and UNHCR both used the figure of 155,430 for programme purposes.
38. One member recommended that WFP step up its presence in Tindouf to allow for more efficient post-delivery monitoring. The same member recommended that a new census be carried out to establish the exact numbers of refugees requiring assistance. The Secretariat informed the Board that the Government of Algeria had recently approved the opening of a sub-office in Tindouf, and that this would enable WFP to increase its presence in the camps and strengthen its post-delivery monitoring.
39. One member announced a contribution to the PRRO of 1 million euro and indicated that there could be additional funds forthcoming.

Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation for Executive Board Approval— Angola 10054.1 (2002/EB.2/10)

40. The Board approved PRRO 10054.1 for Angola, requesting that the document be modified to reflect the latest developments taking place in the country, and that the Secretariat present to the Board at the Third Regular Session of 2002 any budget revision that might be required. The Secretariat would distribute an updated document as soon as possible.
41. Several members commended the flexible design of the PRRO, which allowed greater emphasis to be placed on recovery elements, the targeting of women, FFW activities, the training of counterparts, local capacity-building and HIV/AIDS awareness.
42. Members also noted that with better road access, resulting from improved security, it was expected that transport costs would be reduced.
43. Several members noted the role WFP played in coordinating emergency assistance and recommended more collaboration with FAO for the provision of seeds and tools prior to the planting season.
44. Several members urged the Angolan Government to redirect its defence budget towards assisting resettlement and social development activities.
45. Some representatives drew attention to the possibility that the number of internally displaced beneficiaries could increase as a result of improved access, and they urged WFP to be prepared to face these needs.
46. One representative highlighted the need to enhance post-distribution monitoring.



47. Members encouraged WFP to continue with its local procurement strategy whenever possible.
48. Several representatives mentioned that WFP might be called upon, at short notice, to support quartering areas.

Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation for Executive Board Approval— Colombia 10158.0 (2002/EB.2/11)

49. The Board acknowledged the gravity of the humanitarian crisis in Colombia and the appropriateness of the proposed response. The importance of community participation, VAM, monitoring and coordination between WFP and donors, and with UNSECOORD, was underlined. The country office was encouraged to strengthen the human resource capacity and efficiency of the implementing counterpart at the national level. One member expressed concern about the large-scale programme growth, while the need for programme expansion was also mentioned.
50. Several members recommended expanding the donor base.

REPORTS BY THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT

Report on the Development of a Follow-up System for Joint Inspection Unit Reports (JIU) (2002/EB.2/17)

51. The Secretariat presented the report, which was the result of an extensive dialogue between WFP and the JIU. The Chairman of the JIU highlighted the importance of the agreement on an effective follow-up scheme, which he described as instrumental in achieving harmonization among United Nations bodies. The Board fully supported the proposal and approved the scheme outlined in the document as the WFP follow-up system for JIU reports.

Reports by the Joint Inspection Unit Relevant to the Work of WFP (2002/EB.2/18)

52. The Secretariat presented the document to the Board. The Chairman of the JIU emphasized that sound governance had been ensured by effective policy and strategy direction as well as oversight findings (from both internal and external oversight bodies) enabling financial, human and other resources to be used effectively. He pointed out that WFP was already one step ahead of other United Nations agencies as a result of the Board's decision and its work plan on the introduction of its new governance arrangements.
53. The Board expressed its satisfaction with the close working relationship between the JIU and WFP. It endorsed the Secretariat's response to the recommendations of the JIU report.



OTHER BUSINESS

Final Report on the Financial Management Improvement Programme (FMIP) (2002/EB.2/20)

54. The Secretariat thanked the Board for its support in the implementation of the Financial Management Improvement Programme since its conception in 1995, and acknowledged that the short- and long-term objectives of FMIP had been reached and the programme effectively completed with the introduction of the WFP Information Network and Global System (WINGS), the new corporate information system. It was noted that WINGS provided accurate and timely information to assist in decision-making, as well as strengthened transparency and timely reporting in the use and management of resources. It was pointed out that WFP had now moved into a new phase: that of mainstreaming WINGS into all aspects of the Programme's activities, ensuring rapid adoption and ownership of the system by all business users and completion of the rest of HR/payroll and other enhancements by the relevant business units.

WFP Operations in the Palestinian Territory (2002/EB.2/21)

55. At the request of the Board, the Secretariat gave a presentation on the status of the situation in the Palestinian Territory, updating the Board on WFP's operations in the Territory and the Programme's response to the recent crisis.
56. Several members expressed appreciation for the efforts made by WFP to date and underlined the need for continued assistance to affected communities in the Territory under the recently approved emergency operation (EMOP). The Board urged all members to provide additional assistance, and one member stressed the need for non-traditional donors to provide assistance as well.

