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Programme
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Programa
Mundial
de Alimentos

Executive Board
Third Regular Session

Rome, 2-12 October 1996

COUNTRY STRATEGY OUTLINES

Agenda item 6



Distribution: GENERAL
WFP/EB.3/196/6/Add.2

3 December 1996
ORIGINAL IN ENGLISH

TAJIKISTAN

ABSTRACT

The current crisis in Tajikistan was triggered by the civil war of 1992-93. The conflict has not been fully resolved and fighting continues in some parts of the country. The resulting insecurity has compounded the collapse of the economy. Tajikistan is the poorest country of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and, since 1995, it has been classified as a low-income, food-deficit country by FAO and a low-income economy by the World Bank (yearly per capita income below 695 dollars).

The social and economic upheavals have brought enormous suffering, and conditions are especially hard for the vulnerable groups. Food shortages are acute and widespread. WFP has been responding to the difficulties in Tajikistan with targeted emergency feeding. Food has been distributed direct by WFP (using the infrastructure of existing local authorities) or NGOs, in close coordination with other United Nations agencies. However, there is a consensus among international agencies that activities should shift emphasis from relief to rehabilitation and development. To this end and in recognition of its comparable status with other developing countries regularly assisted by WFP, the inclusion of Tajikistan under WFP's regular programme has been approved by the Executive Director.

The Government has only recently committed itself to reform, and the plans of international development agencies are at an early stage. WFP is dealing direct with the local authorities rather than through ministries. Although conditions are difficult, there are opportunities to use WFP food aid for rehabilitation and development. With some activities having already started on a pilot scale, the key areas identified for future WFP assistance include: promotion of private plots on state farms for household food security; rehabilitation of urban and rural infrastructure that has been neglected or damaged by war; institutional feeding; and promotion of wheat flour trading for small-scale private bakeries.

All monetary values are expressed in United States dollars, unless otherwise stated. In August 1996, one United States dollar equalled 295 Tajik roubles (TR).

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Note to The Executive Board

This document is submitted to the Executive Board for review and comments.

Pursuant to the decisions taken on the methods of work by the Executive Board at its First Regular Session, the documentation prepared by the Secretariat for the Board has been kept brief and decision-oriented. The meetings of the Executive Board are to be conducted in a business-like manner, with increased dialogue and exchanges between delegations and the Secretariat. Efforts to promote these guiding principles will continue to be pursued by the Secretariat.

The Secretariat therefore invites members of the Board who may have questions of a technical nature with regard to this document, to contact the WFP staff member(s) listed below, preferably well in advance of the Board's meeting. This procedure is designed to facilitate the Board's consideration of the document in the plenary.

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FOOD SECURITY AND THE HUNGRY POOR

Food insecurity at the national level

1. Following the break-up of the Soviet Union, there was civil war in Tajikistan in 1992-93. At least 50,000 people were killed and a further 850,000 displaced; of these, 250,000 sought refuge in neighbouring countries. Many villages were destroyed, with homes reduced to rubble and infrastructure severely damaged. The continuing unrest in some parts of the country, often erupting into armed conflict, shows that the issues that sparked the civil war in Tajikistan remain largely unresolved. Hostilities have been mainly in areas in the central mountainous regions between government troops - backed by 25,000 mainly Russian CIS peace-keepers - and opposition forces. Garm and Gorno Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO) regions are often cut off because of civil strife. The search for a peaceful political solution is hindered by the complex alliance of ethnic and clan groups. The present Government is supported mainly by clans in Leninabad and Kulyab (eastern Khatlon). The opposition forces, comprising a coalition of Islamists and democratic secularists, draw their support mainly from Garm, Kurgan Tyube (western Khatlon) and GBAO. War and subsequent insecurity have compounded the severe economic difficulties.
2. Tajikistan is the poorest and the least developed country in the CIS. Income, as measured by the gross domestic product (GDP), has contracted sharply, falling by 29 percent in 1992, 11 percent in 1993 and 21 percent in 1994. Measured overall, industrial and agricultural output is estimated to be less than half its 1990 level, and there is no evidence that the decline has eased. Since 1995, Tajikistan has been grouped with the poorest countries in the world. It is classified as a low-income, food-deficit country by FAO and a low-income economy (annual per capita income below 695 dollars) by the World Bank.
3. Health care, water-supply and sanitation services have deteriorated sharply. While mortality rates were declining in the eighties, they have increased in the nineties; infant mortality rates in particular have risen. Infectious diseases are now the second leading cause of death, after circulatory and respiratory diseases. The population growth rate is 2.9 percent, the highest in the CIS. Food availability will have to increase substantially each year just to maintain consumption levels.
4. In the Soviet era, subsidized food and the wide range of social services allowed the nutritional status to be high in relation to income level. Reductions or removal of food subsidies and the deterioration in the quality of social services have seriously affected nutrition for the poor. Although acute malnutrition is not considered to be widespread, there are indications of chronic malnutrition. An NGO health survey in late 1994 in GBAO revealed a low level (three percent) of acute malnutrition but widespread stunting. Systematic nutritional surveys have not been carried out recently in other parts of the country, but NGOs operating medical clinics have made similar observations in areas such as Khatlon. A 1996 survey in one of the most famine-prone areas in GBAO revealed weight loss for adults and reduced activity in children. The survey suggested that intake of some vitamins is so low that there is a high risk of diseases related to micronutrient deficiencies. The Ministry of Health estimated that in the early nineties 67 percent of expectant mothers



had anaemia, and that the nutritional status has generally declined since then. There is also a high risk of goitre due to an inadequate supply of iodine in the diet.

The food system

5. Food shortages are widespread and acute. Cereal balance sheets show a high dependency on imports, with domestic production covering less than one third of needs (see Table 1, Annex I). The former centrally-planned procurement system exaggerated cereal needs. Overall demand for grain has fallen, reflecting decreased purchasing power, reduced feed use (due to a shift away from livestock products) and a reduction in wastage.
6. The transfer of productive land to food crops has been slow, but the rural population has responded to the shortages by planting wheat wherever possible. Although the area planted with grains appears to have expanded in recent years, the ability of farmers to increase production is severely limited. There is an acute shortage of fuel and spare parts, a general deterioration of mechanized agriculture and irrigation systems, and a lack of good quality seed. Government policy continues to give priority for land and inputs to cotton (a main foreign exchange earner) on state farms. Private plots, though small, have become an increasingly important source of food, but this source of food has generally not been available to internally displaced persons (IDPs) and large urban populations, for whom land allotments are very limited.
7. With most arable land irrigated and plentiful water resources available in the country, agriculture is not vulnerable to drought. However, Tajikistan suffers from land-slips and mud-slides that have claimed many lives and damaged property and infrastructure. Nevertheless, recent incidents have made modest demands for emergency food assistance. Because of the severity of the winter in mountainous regions and frequent avalanches (for instance, in GBAO and Garm), accessibility is precarious except in the summer months. Supplies are pre-positioned, when road transport is feasible, before the winter.
8. The diet contains a large share of cereals, around 50 percent by weight. The dependency on cereals has increased in the nineties, as meat and milk have become much more expensive. During the Soviet era, urban families enjoyed more variety in their diets thanks to the availability of imported foods. In the nineties imports declined sharply, resulting in rural and urban diets being similar.
9. Tajikistan's deliveries of food aid have increased sharply over the past five years and food aid has become a relatively large proportion of total cereal imports. Nearly half of the cereal imports of 400,000 tons in 1995 was food aid (see Table 2, Annex I). Most (80 percent) of the food aid delivered has been programme food aid. Although WFP has been the largest relief food aid agency in Tajikistan, the aggregate contributions of relief food aid direct to NGOs have exceeded the contributions to WFP. Distributions by WFP in the past four years account for 40 percent of the total deliveries of relief food (see Table 3, Annex I).

The hungry poor

10. Annual inflation rates have exceeded 500 percent in the past four years. Households have to spend most of their income on food because of the sharp increase in prices. The



proportion of urban household income spent in 1990 on food items was 37 percent, but by 1993 it was 67 percent. For rural households, the proportion rose from 45 percent to 71 percent during the same period. Since 1993, it has increased even further for both household categories. The Government normally measures poverty by comparing income against the cost of a minimum "consumption basket". In 1993, 80 to 90 percent of the population were below the poverty line. Conditions have worsened considerably since then, but the Government has not had the resources to conduct surveys.

11. At open-market prices, the value of the monthly WFP supplementary ration, which covers under half of an individual's calorie requirement, amounts to 1,250 Tajik roubles (TR) (4.30 dollars). This is three times the monthly salary of a clerk (TR 400) and nearly double that of a teacher or doctor (TR 700-750). People are barely surviving amidst the current difficulties, and for many their food expenditure uses all of their income. No workers can feed themselves or their families on the salary alone. People are seeking a variety of means to survive, with begging widespread and on the rise.
12. Rural people are coping by increasing their reliance on tiny plots granted from state and collective farms. Women carry out much of the work on the private plots. Farm households attached to collective farms are substituting adult labour with child labour so that adults can seek other opportunities. Rural schools have only 50 percent attendance, and girls make up only 25 percent of classes observed.
13. In urban areas, land allotments are very limited and people rely on other coping mechanisms. The sale of personal assets has sustained many people in the past few years but opportunities for the poor from this source are largely exhausted. Many people have entered petty trading. Children are recruited for informal work and school attendance has fallen sharply, as the immediate need to earn cash for basic food overshadows the goal of education.

Returnees and IDPs

14. As a consequence of the 1992-93 civil war, 850,000 people were displaced from their homes. Most people - some 600,000 - were displaced within the country and an estimated 250,000 took refuge across borders - 60,000 to Afghanistan and 195,000 to other CIS republics.
15. By the end of 1993, most IDPs had returned to their areas of origin. Repatriation was mainly voluntary, but the conditions for IDPs were made difficult by the destruction of their homes, severe economic recession and harassment. Most of the remaining IDPs are able to find shelter with relatives and friends, but many have had to use whatever facilities were available, such as public buildings. Many returnees and IDPs - especially those in the most vulnerable groups - have been dependent on humanitarian organizations for their subsistence needs.

Other vulnerable groups

16. While consumer purchasing power has been drastically reduced for most of the population, the drop in living standards has been especially harsh for vulnerable groups. Social services have been sharply reduced following the dramatic fall in tax revenues; they



now offer little assistance. Owing to budgetary constraints, school meals have stopped, except where WFP and NGOs have provided support.

17. The most vulnerable groups are those who were formerly dependent on state welfare payments and whose coping mechanisms are very limited (e.g., sale of personal assets, gifts from relatives and friends, occasional access to subsidized food, and begging). In the south-west of the country (Khatlon) there is a relatively high percentage of women whose husbands were either killed during the civil war or who remain displaced, either within the country or as refugees. The war left more than 25,000 widows and 50,000 orphans. The aggregate number of people in the most vulnerable groups is currently estimated at 620,000 (see Annex II, map). Many of the target beneficiaries for relief food distributions have been the urban poor.
18. The able-bodied of the most vulnerable groups could participate in income-generating activities if opportunities were available. Those unable to work at all and who cannot rely on family ties require a sustainable targeted social security system. The prospects for the generation of adequate tax for the Government to afford such a system are bleak in the short to medium term.
19. The sharp contraction of the economy has caused much unemployment. Even those who are officially employed are seldom paid their salaries, the value of which has become negligible. The concentrations of unemployed are largest in urban areas. Collective and state farms have been unable to pay their work-forces, apart from ad hoc in-kind payments. Women constitute the majority of the unemployed as a result of the elimination of many social support positions previously dominated by female workers.
20. The barrier to self-reliance for the unemployed and underemployed is the absence of economic reform measures that create labour opportunities. Private initiatives are anticipated to contribute most to this process, but international agencies plan to participate in development activities with income-generating schemes.
21. The nature of food insecurity for the most vulnerable groups is chronic, though the overall food availability is inclined to be worse in the winter months; furthermore, extra calories are needed in the cold months to maintain sufficient body heat. Able-bodied people with access to private plots tend to have the least food available in the period immediately preceding the summer harvests.

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES AND POLICIES ADDRESSING POVERTY AND FOOD INSECURITY

Overall policies

22. The Government of Tajikistan has only recently committed itself to economic reform. It is currently attempting to follow International Monetary Fund (IMF) recommendations so that loan facilities can be granted. IMF recommends the establishment of policies for financial accountability, with enterprises paying tax to the State. The capability of the Government to collect taxes is in doubt and progress is certain to be slow. Consequently, its ability to resume welfare benefits will be limited.



Food security policies

23. Food security was formerly the responsibility of Soviet central planning. Current political alliances within the CIS do not allow the same level of food security. The Government's disaster preparedness is weak, a legacy of dependence on the former Soviet authorities. Trading links and payment mechanisms are not fully established and the Government appears to lack the necessary experience to negotiate timely imports. Stocks have been drawn down to dangerously low levels and the Government has been unable to establish any strategic reserves.
24. Tajikistan has a very limited ability to mobilize adequate cereal supplies through commercial imports. The accumulated debt exceeds annual GDP, and neither the Government nor the central bank have significant foreign currency reserves. Production of the main barter commodities - cotton and aluminium - has fallen sharply and is inadequate to cover essential imports. Expected foreign earnings for the whole of 1996, if used exclusively for grain procurement, would cover only 70 percent of forecast wheat import needs at current prices. Trading partners are not willing to provide cereals on credit terms. The capacity to import has been reduced further by high world market cereal prices and poor harvests in the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan, the traditional suppliers. Cereal prices are higher than they have been for a decade. With Tajikistan land-locked, the sources of cereals are limited.
25. The Ministry of Grain has been responsible for obtaining grain. However, under proposed reforms agreed with the IMF, instead of being allocated funds for purchasing, the Ministry would have to collect revenue from the sale of flour and bread, and use generated funds to continue purchasing. The private sector is expected to take over the role of importer, but it is unclear how quickly the private sector can develop the capacity to import sufficient grain. Furthermore, there have been contradictory messages on the intentions of the Government, with some indications that the system of State Orders for cereal procurement may persist. Procurement targets are still in place and state channels set about reaching them through offering procurement prices at perceived market prices. Some farms have been unwilling to sell to the Government on credit terms. Livestock farmers have been avoiding the state distribution systems, preferring the emerging private retail sector.
26. The Government has attempted to offer a level of household food security through rationed and subsidized bread (and other basic products), but general shortages of flour have meant that state bread only covers a fraction of needs. Bread subsidies have been reduced but state bread is still only a quarter of the price of open-market bread.

Food aid policies

27. The Government and bilateral donors agreed on terms for the use of proceeds from the sale of programme food aid. The counterpart funds generated have generally been intended for the social sector, including the payment of welfare benefits. However, the monetary value of the funds has been quickly eroded by devaluation and inflation. Furthermore, the funds have proved to be difficult to monitor. Consequently, programme food aid has made little direct impact on the well-being of the poorest groups.
28. Little food aid has been utilized for project purposes so far. IFRC and NGOs have received cooperation from local authorities for the implementation of school and hospital



feeding projects and food-for-work (FFW) projects. The central government ministries' interest in project food aid has been limited to requests for food to pay their civil servants on a FFW basis, which WFP has resisted, except for emergency campaigns such as locust and epidemic control. Beyond this, discussions on project food aid have been inconclusive at the capital city level. In contrast, the district authorities have shown great eagerness for food aid to be used to support rehabilitation efforts and WFP has received many requests with some constructive proposals for FFW activities.

29. For relief food, the Government has cooperated in the provision of information for beneficiary targeting. The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (MLSP) has been key in providing lists of proposed beneficiaries. WFP has used these as a starting point and has refined them in discussions with the local authorities - district executive committees and kishlak (village) leaders. WFP has been able to harness existing local authority facilities (stores and distribution centres) for local food distribution.
30. On the other hand, the Government has resorted to borrowing stocks of relief food aid when ruptures in the cereal pipeline have occurred. Stocks of cereals have been at critically low levels and delays in the delivery of food aid or other imports can cause a break in bread production. This may cause unrest, particularly in urban areas. WFP has often coordinated the efforts of NGOs and donors to secure repayments of loans of cereals. It has also stressed to the Government that relief distributions should not be disrupted by such diversion of food aid.
31. The Government is inexperienced in foreign relations, which were previously handled in Moscow, causing ambiguity in relations between politicians or civil servants and the bilateral donors, United Nations agencies, and international NGOs. WFP has encouraged the Government to be open with information on the overall food supply position but its data management for food management is weak.

ASSESSMENT OF WFP'S PERFORMANCE TO DATE

Effectiveness of targeting

32. Under a United Nations appeal, WFP began food distributions in mid-1993 in Khatlon, which was the area most severely affected by the civil war. Returnees, IDPs and seriously war-affected people totalled 500,000. As these groups had access to some food, rations were supplementary. The country office in Afghanistan assisted in meeting the food needs of refugees from Tajikistan, and provided a special ration package for returnees.
33. In mid-1994 WFP, in cooperation with MLSP, shifted the orientation of the feeding operation away from the geographic-based, war-affected population to a country-wide programme for vulnerable groups, reflecting the deteriorating social conditions. This has also served to reduce regional tensions because relief food resources were targeted using the criterion of poverty; when the criterion of war-affected was used, relief food tended to be concentrated in one region. WFP targeted elderly pensioners, households with no breadwinner (mainly households headed by women and war widows with children) and people in institutions (such as orphans, the disabled and hospitals). These groups have been



acknowledged as extremely food-insecure. WFP is not targeting returnees and IDPs specifically, but these may be eligible as members of vulnerable groups and comprise many of the beneficiaries in Khatlon. Of the current WFP beneficiaries, around 50 percent are pensioners, 40 percent are single-parent families and 10 percent are in institutions.

34. In 1994/95, WFP and other relief food agencies began coordinating their relief food distributions and almost all geographic areas were covered under the vulnerable group programme. WFP's food availability in 1995 allowed an expansion of distributions into more high-priority areas (such as Garm and GBAO) and activities (e.g., FFW for the reconstruction of war-damaged housing) by implementation through NGOs.
35. Nearly all WFP food aid has been distributed as free relief commodities. This has succeeded in maintaining the food security of the most vulnerable groups, even though the rations provided were only supplementary, providing 40 percent of an individual's calorie needs. There is much pressure to be included on WFP'S distribution lists and WFP monitors have had to be very vigilant to screen the lists so that only the eligible receive rations.
36. The distribution of relief food has, to some extent, maintained the professional integrity of MLSP. For three years the Government has been unable to pay welfare benefits and without involvement in relief food distributions, MLSP would have had nothing to provide to the most vulnerable groups. The country office is convinced that the Ministry as well as the local authorities have learned lessons from working with WFP, the most important of which is the need to target scarce resources only to those who are most vulnerable to food shortages. These lessons can be built upon in the future when communities or local authorities have sufficient resources to restart a social welfare programme.
37. Only a small proportion of WFP emergency food assistance has been used for FFW activities so far. Wheat flour (1,000 tons) was provided through an NGO (Save the Children-USA) for the reconstruction of war-damaged buildings. Some 50 tons of food were provided to locust control workers for an emergency campaign supported by UNDP/FAO. WFP's pilot projects to expand the areas of private plots for food crops on state farms started in mid-1996. One pilot project (Sadvin Sovkhoz) in Kumsangir District is targeted to all families on the farm. The other pilot project (in Navruz Sovkhoz) in Vaksh District has targeted only households headed by women due to the shortage of land and their position as the most vulnerable of the able-bodied people. Each project is for around 160 heads of family, with 1,000 family members, and requires some 50 tons of wheat flour a year.

Strengths and weaknesses in design and implementation

38. From the outset, WFP has taken the responsibility for distributions, with limited amounts carried out through NGOs. This has not only increased WFP's control over operations, but has also proved to be cost-effective; many international NGOs have large requirements for support costs. Some donors have supported WFP operations in Tajikistan, mainly because most of the food distribution has been direct and not dependent on sub-contracting to NGO implementing partners.
39. WFP was the first agency to distribute relief food aid and has kept its position as the largest distributor. This, together with constructive dialogue with other international



agencies and donors, has helped it to establish and maintain its position as the food aid coordinator. Coordination has extended to operational issues, with WFP providing food to NGOs to fill gaps in the pipelines and representing other food aid agencies in negotiations with the Government.

40. Owing to inadequate funding, there have been breaks in the WFP pipeline that have caused interruptions or reductions in distributions. The purchasing of commodities, especially within the CIS region, has often been protracted and delays in implementation have occurred, attracting the criticism of donors.
41. Post-delivery losses exceeded two percent in 1994-95. WFP obtained a larger, more secure warehouse (at Yavan, near Dushanbe) and rotated staff in an attempt to make losses more easily identifiable. Almost all losses had apparently occurred in transit between the extended delivery point (EDP) at Termez and WFP warehouses. Following protestations by WFP to the Government, the Tajikistan Railways Authority indicated that it would compensate for losses. WFP's losses since mid-1995 have been well under one percent overall.
42. Monitoring has been improved considerably in the past year. This has reduced losses and diversions and ensured that the entitled people receive their rations. However, the success of monitors in identifying misuse of WFP food has often endangered the personal security of the monitors. Other staff have also been at risk. While WFP has sought to ensure protection for its staff from the local authorities, the police can offer little assistance and have often been implicated in theft themselves.

Cost-efficiency

43. WFP has used a standard ration with a limited range of commodities, which has eased synchronization of distributions. Bulk food has been used from the outset, normally in 50-kilogram sacks of wheat flour and sugar, and five-litre containers of vegetable oil. Commodities used are basic and relatively cheap, helping to reduce costs and the risk of diversion. An examination of WFP's total costs of delivering its food items shows that the per-ton cost incurred by WFP is considerably cheaper than the open-market prices for wheat flour, while costs are similar for vegetable oil and sugar (see Table 4, Annex I). In view of the comparative advantage of wheat flour, WFP may consider the elimination of vegetable oil and sugar, concurrently raising the proportion of wheat flour.
44. The rate of inflation has been very high since the collapse of the Soviet Union, with annual rates of 1,000 percent in 1992, 2,000 percent in 1993, 1,500 percent in 1994 and 500 percent in 1995. Food assistance as aid in kind has had a distinct advantage over cash because its value to the beneficiary does not deteriorate during the implementation period. The proceeds from the monetization of programme food aid, which were intended for use in social programmes, have been quickly devalued by inflation (and the introduction of the new currency). WFP has not monetized any food assistance so far, but with signs of inflation being more under control, it will examine the possibilities for future monetization.

Impact on markets and domestic production

45. WFP has provided around 40 percent of relief food, and relief food aid is substantial compared with marketed production. The annual marketed production of cereals is



estimated at around 150,000 tons; annual relief deliveries of cereals reached over 60,000 tons in 1995 and will be at a similar level by the end of 1996. Collective and state farms have been unable to meet the government procurement targets and with the acute and widespread shortages of food so evident in Tajikistan, WFP food deliveries appear to have had little negative impact on production and markets. Moreover, WFP food aid has been targeted only to the most vulnerable groups, who have limited access to the open-market produce, for which prices are very high.

Monitoring and reporting

46. WFP's distributions have been carried out in cooperation with the local government authorities (district executive committees), under the direct supervision of WFP monitors. Under WFP supervision, food commodities are transported from the Programme's warehouses to distribution centres near the homes of the targeted beneficiaries. Final distributions to the targeted beneficiaries are made by the local authorities, with WFP monitors in attendance. The monitors also conduct post-distribution surveys to ensure that people eligible for relief rations have received their food.
47. Monitors work actively with district and local officials, discussing and negotiating to ensure that WFP requirements are met. Ninety percent of them are female. Their understanding, energy and commitment have been crucial to target needy households headed by women, and to have greater involvement of women in decision-making for food distributions. For the period of the distributions, WFP employs additional local people in each district to assist in checking beneficiary lists.
48. Reporting from the country office has been satisfactory, with the Food Availability Status Report (FASREP) and Situation Report (SITREP) submitted each month. The FASREP includes food data of NGOs. A food tracking system initiated by the country office ("Track"), with a data base for each railway wagon (identifying the wagon, bill of lading weight, unloaded weight losses by destination), has been key for individual donor reporting as well as for tracing losses. The bureau releases a quarterly situation report on WFP operations in the CIS, which includes a section on Tajikistan.

Conclusion

49. Relief food distributions are clearly warranted. WFP, in cooperation with NGOs, is ensuring an even coverage of the most vulnerable groups with the food available. There is a growing consensus among United Nations agencies, NGOs and donors in Tajikistan that humanitarian activities should expand from purely emergency operations to rehabilitation and development. Within the framework of emergency operations, WFP is initiating a more constructive use of food aid to support development-type activities.

FUTURE ORIENTATION OF WFP ASSISTANCE

50. WFP plans to introduce FFW activities which can allow an orderly phase-down of relief distributions. It expects that improved food security for participants in FFW projects will enable a reduction in the population targeted for relief assistance. Most importantly, WFP



proposes FFW activities that will allow a sustainable improvement in household food security of the rural poor through improved access to land. Families gaining access to land on the state farms through share-cropping, supported by FFW (see below), could be taken out of the vulnerable group feeding programme.

51. WFP will concentrate its development efforts on the areas where it has ongoing relief distributions, as it would be difficult to maintain control in areas where it has no distribution structure and monitors. NGOs undertaking relief feeding are also starting development initiatives in their geographic areas of operation. WFP intends to implement FFW rehabilitation initially only in Khatlon.
52. The conditions attached by donors to directed multilateral pledges determine the extent to which emergency food assistance can be utilized for FFW. Most donors are flexible and are in favour of emergency food being applied to rehabilitation and development efforts. The source of funding is expected to shift to those channels that support rehabilitation activities (e.g., European Union DGVIII rather than ECHO).

Emergency assistance planned for 1996-97

53. The target group is of a scale and composition similar to that of 1994 and 1995. WFP is appealing for the relief food needs of 400,000 people out of the total most vulnerable population of 620,000. WFP plans to implement direct distributions to 270,000 people in Khatlon and to 27,000 people in GBAO. Because the Government distributes virtually no wheat flour in GBAO, distributions to the general population (by the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF)) have taken over and WFP's distributions—targeted only at the most vulnerable groups—are complementary to those of AKF. In addition - as in 1995 - WFP expects to reach a further 83,000 persons in Republican Subordination Rayons (RSR) and Dushanbe and 20,000 persons in GBAO, with IFRC/NGOs as implementing partners. The remaining 220,000 of the targeted vulnerable population are expected to receive food assistance through pledges made direct to IFRC/NGOs. IFRC/NGOs have been receiving relief food contributions direct from donors and some have also implemented distributions for WFP in RSR/Dushanbe, and GBAO.

Rehabilitation and development assistance planned

54. With much of the infrastructure dilapidated, there is much potential for able-bodied people to work for food rations in rehabilitation activities. This may include returnees and IDPs as well as unemployed and destitute people. The Government's plans for national development are still at an early stage and little reform has been implemented. While there are some indications of a focus on privatization and land reform, the Government is moving very slowly on these issues. Development banks have not undertaken significant reconstruction efforts so far, and the credit facility the Government has been negotiating with the IMF this year has been for 22 million dollars only. Thus, WFP efforts in rehabilitation could be a relatively large share of external assistance. WFP rehabilitation activities are being designed on the basis of experience gained during the implementation of emergency feeding programmes. As there is little experience of FFW activities in Tajikistan, a pilot approach is being used.



55. Most rehabilitation activities require inputs (i.e., non-food items) additional to the food resources that can be provided by WFP. Complementary inputs - both as physical and human resources - from the Government, donors, and other development partners, such as Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP) partners and NGOs, will be crucial determinants of success.

Development activities identified

Promotion of private plots for household food security

56. WFP can provide a necessary "bridge" in food resources to allow a transition in farm production towards privately-grown food crops for sustainable improvement in rural household food security.
57. State and collective farms allocate private plots to families, but these are very small, typically less than one tenth of a hectare. However, most farms have "spare" irrigated land, as the limited availability of inputs and lack of cash to pay workers have reduced the cropped area. Furthermore, a relatively large area of irrigated land is currently allocated for forage. With less demand for livestock, the forage areas could be rented to private farm families without major disruption to existing production. Thus, even without land reform, WFP has identified an opportunity to expand the areas of private plots on farms so that between 0.5 and one hectare per family can be leased.
58. WFP is undertaking pilot projects to promote food crops through such private leasing of land on state farms (Sovkhoz) in Khatlon. Participants will pay the Sovkhoz a share equivalent to 30 percent of crops in exchange for the lease of land and irrigation facilities, and will bear all other production costs (including seed). With FFW, participants will not have to spend time searching for food. They will also have an opportunity to work on the Sovkhoz land as well as on their leased land. WFP will consider the provision of loans (in wheat flour) for individuals to obtain farm inputs by barter. Where inputs are identified as a serious bottleneck, donors and other agencies will be actively solicited to assist in the provision of non-food inputs. United Nations agencies and NGOs may also participate. Technical advice to participants will be provided by the Sovkhoz, but external advice will also be sought. Participants will receive FFW during the first year of cultivation and are expected to be self-reliant in food in subsequent years.
59. The country office believes this activity could be replicated throughout the state farms. Although a detailed survey in the project area has not been completed, some 200 state farms have been identified in Khatlon as able to undertake this type of FFW initiative, to the immediate benefit of around 150 households on each farm, with a provisional estimate of food needs at 10,000 tons of wheat flour. Where the land available is limited, project selection will encourage women farmers, particularly households headed by women, to have priority in the allocation of leased land. There are indications that women, as family members or heads of family, have most interest in the private plots.

Rural/urban infrastructure

60. Most arable production is dependent on irrigation and facilities are dilapidated, having either been damaged during the civil war or fallen into disrepair. It is likely that the massive



irrigation infrastructure will remain as a state asset, and rehabilitation works through FFW would have public benefits. Public infrastructure, such as schools, is deteriorating because of the lack of government funds.

61. WFP, UNICEF and the United Nations Office for Project Services (OPS) have identified priority activities in the public health sector for assistance through FFW. The activities include: construction of latrines (particularly in schools, hospitals and other public institutions); restoration of public bath facilities which are in bad condition due to lack of repairs or were destroyed during the civil war; and installation of hand-pumps.
62. WFP intends to continue to support FFW for rehabilitation, with implementing partners providing the non-food inputs and technical supervision.

Institutional feeding

63. Schools performed feeding activities before social expenditures were cut. To encourage the attendance of girls, WFP will explore the possibility of providing take-home rations to families which send their female children to school. The Ministry of Education would identify eligible families, and food would be distributed through the vulnerable group programme.
64. Old people's homes and hospitals have suffered greatly from cuts in government expenditure. As the residents of such institutions have no possible coping mechanisms, they are very vulnerable to food shortages. Some NGOs have started operating soup-kitchens for pensioners.
65. WFP will consider further support to institutional feeding through NGOs, subject to the availability of food, an assessment of the urgency of needs and the capacity of the implementing partners. WFP does not foresee a country-wide school feeding project in the immediate future.

Promotion of wheat flour trading for small-scale private bakeries

66. Subject to conditions being favourable for monetization (low inflation in wheat flour prices), bread sources could be diversified by providing access to wheat flour for small local entrepreneurs, particularly in areas poorly supplied by state bakeries or where access to wheat flour is especially limited. Wheat flour could be sold in small lots at auctions or through negotiated sales in selected urban and rural areas. Sales proceeds in Tajik roubles could be used in the OPS development projects targeted to poor areas, substituting the local currency component. Immediate use would prevent losses through devaluation. Project selection would emphasize the encouragement of women as entrepreneurs. Alternatively, wheat flour loans could be provided to those without sufficient initial capital. Loans would be repaid in kind as repayments in bread to social institutions in the area (such as hospitals, schools, orphanages and soup-kitchens). WFP does not expect this component to be implemented during the next year. However, during 1996-97 WFP will explore further the feasibility of this option.

Scope for joint programming with other agencies

67. WFP ensures coordination with NGO emergency operations through regular meetings (every two weeks) and informal working contacts. It also prepares consolidated reports to



keep all interested agencies and donors informed on the status of operations. WFP's role as the coordinator of all food aid at the country level is well established.

68. WFP operations have been coordinated with other United Nations agencies through the inter-agency assessments. Initial coordination of humanitarian activities was undertaken by DHA through the "lead agency" (UNHCR) between 1993 and 1995. DHA passed its coordination function to UNDP in 1996. However, few joint activities have been implemented. FAO had an emergency locust control programme, with the field labourers being paid with WFP food for work and UNDP facilitating arrangements with the Ministry of Agriculture. WFP and UNICEF have identified some joint activities for FFW. Further opportunities will be explored in coordination with JCGP partners (IFAD, UNFPA, UNDP and UNICEF).
69. International NGOs will continue to be engaged: a) where WFP food is sufficient and where distributions in the area covered by the NGO are perceived as a high priority; or b) where the NGO imparts a particular advantage either through non-food inputs, technical support, or a good distribution channel to which it has sole access.

Modalities for WFP assistance

70. Some CIS countries are large food grain exporters and have potential for regional purchasing (triangular transactions). The Programme has made regional purchases direct and large savings were made. However, at present, direct regional purchasing does not appear to be an attractive option for WFP: suppliers have proved to be very unreliable and the commodity costs have risen sharply.
71. WFP expects to continue to buy food commodities from Western Europe, Eastern Europe, the United States and perhaps the CIS. Food is transported either: a) by ship to ports on the Baltic Sea (Riga or Ventspils) or the Black Sea (Novorossisk) for on-forwarding by rail; or b) railed direct from Eastern Europe or countries in the CIS. Commodities are sent through the WFP logistics centre in Termez, Uzbekistan (which also serves WFP operations in Afghanistan), and then re-routed to designated railway delivery points within Tajikistan, normally the main WFP warehouses at Shartuz, Yavan, and Kallininabad. However, for GBAO, commodities are sent direct by rail to Osh (Kyrgyzstan) for on-forwarding by truck to WFP warehouses in each of the eight districts in the GBAO.
72. To increase the knowledge base for operations in Tajikistan (and other Central Asian Republics), in 1994 and 1995 WFP made an assessment of the existing logistics and transportation infrastructure, and identified alternative transport routes and regional purchasing opportunities. This has established a baseline understanding and allows for contingency planning should a larger-scale emergency arise. It is planned to expand this work in 1996-97.

Resource requirements

73. WFP delivered over 30,000 tons in 1995 and is expected to deliver a similar amount in 1996. Based on the feasibility of the proposed targeted programme, the current estimate for annual WFP resource requirements for relief and FFW in Tajikistan is some 34,000 tons, with a total cost of approximately 20 million dollars (see Table 5, Annex I). Requirements



are expected to decline as the impact of FFW projects improves food security in the rural areas. Although WFP, Tajikistan expects to receive part of its resources through the WFP regular programme, the Programme will continue to make appeals for resources from directed multilateral donor contributions and anticipates receiving most of its needs through this channel.

KEY ISSUES AND RISKS

Security

74. The security situation is fragile and there is a risk that full-scale civil war may break out again, despite the presence of CIS peace-keepers and the continuing efforts of the United Nations in maintaining cease-fires between the Government and opposition forces. Garm and GBAO are frequently inaccessible due to hostilities. WFP's main area of operations (Khatlon) has occasional security incidents, but WFP operations have had few interruptions so far.

Government policy and cooperation of local authorities

75. The Government has been very tentative in implementing economic reform, and the commitment to initiatives to increase private activities is uncertain. UNDP had difficulty implementing some quick-action projects. Although officially committed to the IMF goals in privatization, the reaction of the Government to efforts aimed at encouraging private bakeries is not clear. Accordingly, a cautious pilot approach is proposed for this area. However, WFP believes that whether farms are privatized or not, the expansion of private plots is unlikely to be threatened by central government policy: families would be taking over land which is either unused or underutilized and in any case not being used for export crops.
76. Owing to insufficient resources available to local authorities, the ability of the district executive committees and kishlak leaders to participate in logistics and distributions is diminishing. It is likely that WFP may receive less assistance in secondary transport and distribution from local authorities in the future, and ITSH and direct support costs may have to increase accordingly.

Organized crime

77. Organized criminals pose considerable risks both to the success of projects and to WFP staff. Criminal gangs appear to have asserted themselves in most areas of economic activity - controlling much of the emerging private sector and influencing the operations of the state-run industry, especially the associated black market. Organized crime appears to be suppressing private initiatives and efforts to promote income-generating activities have to be designed and managed carefully to avoid interference from these gangs.



ANNEX I

TABLE 1: AVERAGE CEREAL AVAILABILITY AND UTILIZATION 1990-96
(*thousand tons*)

	Average 1990-92	1993/94	1994/95	1995/96 estimated	1996/97 projected
Domestic availability	620	335	265	234	225
Opening stocks	350	80	26	6	5
Production	270	255	239	228	220
Utilization	1 720	1 135	674	760	775
Food use	870	660	498	600	600
Feed use	400	309	60	50	50
Other uses	200	140	110	105	100
Closing stocks	250	26	6	5	25
Imports / import requirement	1 100	800	409	526	550
Imports as % of utilization	64	70	61	69	71
Per capita consumption (kg/pa)	160	120	90	109	109

Source: FAO Global Information and Early Warning System.

TABLE 2: TOTAL FOOD AID DELIVERIES
(PROGRAMME, PROJECT AND RELIEF)

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
Food aid deliveries total (tons)	0	58 600	84 000	109 700	195 200
Food aid deliveries per capita (kg)	0	10.5	14.6	18.5	32.0

Source: WFP INTERFAIS.



TABLE 3: RELIEF FOOD DISTRIBUTIONS 1993-96 (tons)

	1993	Share %	1994	Share %	1995	Share %	1996	Share %
WFP	7 000	34	12 000	38	33 696	47	24 485	37
AKF	13 400	66	13 700	44	21 100	29	20 500	31
SC-USA					4 500	6	5 000	8
GAA			3 521	11	4 147	6	4 600	7
CARE			1 127	4	4 558	6	4 000	6
IFRC			128	0	2 394	3	5 000	8
MCI			822	3	2 317	3	2 000	3
Total	20 400	100	31 298	100	72 712	100	65 585	100

AKF = Aga Khan Foundation; SC-USA = Save the Children - USA.

GAA = German Agro Action; CARE-CARE International.

IFRC = International Federation of the Red Cross; MCI = Mercy Corp International.

Source: WFP, Tajikistan.

TABLE 4: COST-EFFICIENCY

	Total WFP cost ¹ (dollars/ton)	Tajikistan open market (April 1996) (dollars/ton)	WFP cost as % of open- market price
Wheat flour	549	889	62
Vegetable oil	1 220	1 185	103
Sugar	664	649	102

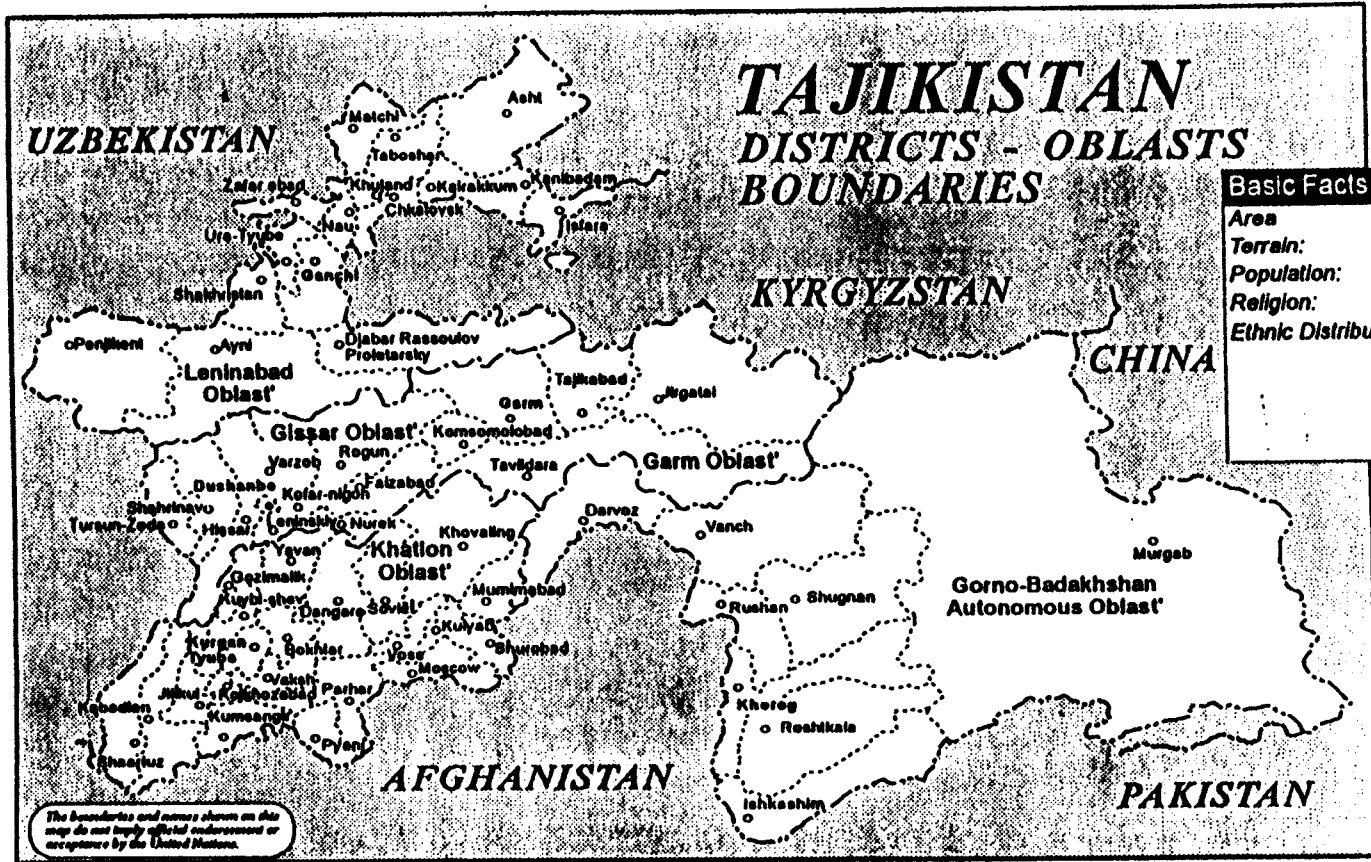
¹ Comprises commodity cost, ocean and overland freight, superintendance, ITSH, direct support costs and indirect support costs.



**TABLE 5: WFP RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS FOR TAJIKISTAN
APRIL 1996 - MAY 1997**

	Quantity (tons)	Dollars/ton	Value (cost) in dollars
Wheat flour	30 800	360	11 088 000
Edible oil	2 010	950	1 909 500
Sugar	1 340	430	576 200
Total commodities	34 150		13 573 700
Sea/overland transport		101	3 465 876
ITSH (internal transport, storage and handling)		25	853 750
Direct support costs			683 482
Indirect support costs (4.8 percent)			891 687
Total costs			19 468 495





Basic Facts	
Area	143,000 Km ²
Terrain:	Largely mountainous
Population:	5.38 million
Religion:	Muslim 80%
Ethnic Distribution:	62% Tajik (Persian origin)
	23% Uzbek (Turkic Origin)
	8% Russian
	1.4% Tartar
	1.3% Kyrgyz

RSR-Republican Subordinated Rayon comprises Gissar and Garm Oblast

Targeted Population of Most Vulnerable Groups by Region 1996/1997					
Oblast	Total Population (1991)	Urban Population (% of total)	Total Target Population	Target Pop/ Total Pop.	WFP Target Population
Leninabad	1,836,000	33.1%	110,000	7%	
Republican Subordination Rayons (RSR)*	1,182,000	15.1%	115,000	10%	63,000
Dushanbe	592,000	98.7%	78,000	13%	20,000
Khatlon	1,781,000	19.7%	270,000	15%	270,000
Gorno Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO)	187,000	12.5%	47,000	28%	47,000
Total	5,358,000		620,000	12%	400,000

ANNEX II