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de Alimentos

**Executive Board
First Regular Session**

Rome, 20 - 22 January 1999

SUMMARY OF THE WORK OF THE FIRST REGULAR SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD, 1999



Distribution: GENERAL
WFP/EB.1/99/13
14 May 1999
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

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.1/99/12.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
POLICY ISSUES	
Partnership with NGOs (1999/EB.1/1)	1
Organizational change at WFP—A Status Report (1999/EB.1/2)	2
FINANCIAL AND BUDGETARY MATTERS	
Report of the Formal Working Group on the Review of WFP's Resource and Long-term Financing policies (1999/EB.1/3)	2
Direct Support Cost Advance Facility (1999/EB.1/4)	3
Proposed revisions of WFP's General Regulations, General Rules and Financial Regulations (1999/EB.1/5)	4
OPERATIONAL MATTERS	
Country Strategy Outline—Lesotho (1999/EB.1/6)	4
Country Programme—Burkina Faso (2000-2004) (1999/EB.1/7)	5
Country Programme—Madagascar (1999-2003) (1999/EB.1/8)	5
Protracted relief and recovery operation for Executive Board approval—Great Lakes region 6077.00 (1999/EB.1/9)	6
Protracted relief and recovery operation for Executive Board approval—Iraq 6085.00 (1999/EB.1/10)	6
Protracted relief and recovery operation for Executive Board approval—Somalia 6073.00 (1999/EB.1/11)	7
Protracted relief and recovery operation for Executive Board approval—Central America region 6089.00 (1999/EB.1/12)	7
Progress reports on approved projects (1999/EB.1/14)	7
ORGANIZATIONAL AND PROCEDURAL MATTERS	
Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board	8
OTHER BUSINESS	
Follow-up to ECOSOC and General Assembly Resolutions	8
Strengthening the governance of WFP	8
Update on staff matters	9
Briefing on WFP operations in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)	9



At the opening of the First Regular Session of 1999, the members of the Executive Board held a memorial service to pay tribute to the staff of WFP who lost their lives in the line of duty. The Board requested that the event be recorded as testimony of its recognition to all WFP staff for the risks that may be encountered in carrying out WFP's mission.

POLICY ISSUES

Partnership with NGOS (1999/EB.1/1)

1. The Board took note of and welcomed the presentation of the document Partnership with NGOs and, more importantly, the collaboration that it described between WFP and both national and international NGOs. It endorsed the approaches outlined in the document, underlining the need for WFP to maintain close contact with governments to ensure complementarity of efforts. It agreed that the document should be revisited in the light of the consultation on Food Aid and Development with a broader participation.
2. The Board noted the diversity that existed within the NGO community and the need for selectivity in choosing partners. Representatives also appreciated that the NGO community had much professional competence and hard-earned experience, something that it was willing to share with WFP. In this regard, the Board recalled the participation by national and international NGOs at the October 1998 Consultation on Food Aid and Development, including the formal presentations that two NGOs had made on that occasion.
3. The Board agreed that appropriate requirements should be set to ensure accountability. This included matters such as performance standards, reporting requirements and auditing. While acknowledging that NGOs often mobilized significant volumes of resources through their own efforts and brought these to internationally supported operations and activities, representatives suggested that it would be useful to have a greater degree of harmonization within the international community regarding the approaches taken to negotiating the budgets for activities implemented through the NGO community. This would ensure more consistency as to the nature and extent of costs to be met, and should make it easier for the NGO community to interact with international agencies and bilateral donors. The Secretariat agreed to share its approach with interested Member States of WFP.
4. Representatives welcomed the opportunity provided to NGOs, especially national NGOs, to participate in the new Common Country Assessment and United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) initiatives. The Board noted that the guidelines for these exercises had been prepared under the auspices of the United Nations Development Group, of which WFP was a member.
5. The Board noted WFP's intention to support the strengthening of national NGO capacity in developing countries in a prudent and measured way. Representatives pointed out that this approach was consistent with the Board's earlier decisions, for example, when it considered measures to enhance programming in least developed countries and in addressing situations of crisis to recovery; and that any specific proposals would be contained in Country Strategy Outline and Country Programme documentation and be submitted to the Board for its consideration.
6. The Board welcomed the proposal for WFP to have a closer involvement with NGOs in developing countries and countries in transition, both in relief and development work.



Organizational Change at WFP—A Status Report (1999/EB.1/2)

7. The Board noted with satisfaction the presentation of the document Organizational Change at WFP—A Status Report. Representatives underlined the importance they attached to the Organizational Change Initiative as a means of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of WFP for lasting impacts, in both its relief and development work. They expressed their pleasure at the impressive record of achievement for 1997 and 1998, which reflected the commitment of the Executive Director and WFP's staff to implementing the changes. The Board appreciated the participatory approach inherent in the way organizational change had been implemented at WFP.
8. The Board noted that WFP's Organizational Change Initiative supported the overall process of reform of the United Nations led by the Secretary-General. In particular, a stronger WFP presence in the field through more senior staff with increased authority would strengthen WFP's capacity to participate effectively in initiatives such as the United Nations Development Assistance Framework.
9. The Board encouraged the Secretariat to vigorously pursue a number of specific elements of the Initiative, to which it attached high priority. These included full and early implementation of the Financial Management Improvement Programme, bringing to completion and disseminating in 1999 the new Programme Design Manual, and ensuring that connectivity among all WFP country, cluster and liaison offices and headquarters was achieved as soon as possible, to enhance full and active participation of field office staff in all activities.
10. The Board invited the Secretariat to consider using instruments such as a staff attitude survey to deepen the understanding of how the organizational change process was perceived by staff and thereby identify possible areas needing particular attention by management. It noted that other areas may also require attention in the context of the outcome of the Consultation on Food Aid and Development. The Executive Director informed the Board that a formal assessment of WFP experience with the Organizational Change Initiative would be conducted in 1999, and that a report would be presented to the Board the following year.

FINANCIAL AND BUDGETARY MATTERS

Report of the Formal Working Group on the Review of WFP's Resource and Long-term Financing policies (1999/EB.1/3)

11. The Board had before it document WFP/EB.1/99/4-A. In introducing the item, the President pointed out that, at the Third Regular Session of 1998, the Board had postponed its decision on the approval of the report of the Formal Working Group on the Review of WFP's Resource and Long-term Financing policies until the First Regular Session of 1999, as one key donor was not at that point able to indicate its position concerning the report's recommendations. This was because sufficient progress had not been made in the discussions between that donor and the United Nations on the financing of United Nations programmes and actions, and the related issue of the special status of WFP.
12. The donor had informed the President that those financing issues were still being considered by it and the United Nations. It had not been possible to agree upon a basis on which WFP could be treated as a special case. The donor was nonetheless anxious to move the discussions forward and remained committed to finding an early outcome that was

mutually satisfactory to WFP and to the donor. The latter well understood the significance of this to the budget for the next biennium, which would be presented to the Executive Board in October 1999. The aforementioned donor would look for constructive ways of meeting WFP's requirements, in the framework of the discussions with the United Nations.

13. Against that background, the President proposed that the Executive Board approve the report, and the Board so decided.

Direct Support Cost Advance Facility (1999/EB.1/4)

14. The Board recognized the need for the creation of a Direct Support Cost (DSC) facility as a consequence of its agreement to transfer some Indirect Support Cost (ISC) items from the Programme Support and Administration (PSA) budget to project DSC, as per Recommendation 2.2 of the Report of the Formal Working Group on the Review of WFP's Resource and Long-term Financing policies. It agreed that the guarantee mechanism proposed by the Secretariat was the preferred option for the provision of such a facility.
15. The Board urged caution in the use of the mechanism, and asked that the mechanism be kept under constant review. The Board was concerned that the level of exposure of the General Fund could be as high as 33 million United States dollars and preferred that a conservative view of exposure levels be adopted when the Secretariat proposed these during the budget process.
16. The Board noted that the basic infrastructure for country offices referred to in the document included a maximum complement of staff funded through the PSA budget and not through DSC recovery. This staff complement would typically comprise the Country Director, up to two national officers and three national support staff, and would be responsible for both relief and development activities within WFP's programme categories. The basic infrastructure for Country Offices could be reviewed by the Board in the context of the budget.
17. The Board accepted the advice of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) with regard to recommendation d) under paragraph 17 of document WFP/EB.1/99/4-B/1—Direct Support Cost Advance Facility—and considered that the ACABQ's suggested amendment to the recommendation¹ would adequately reflect the Board's requirement for constant review of the guarantee mechanism.
18. One representative, highlighting that its country had discontinued support to WFP development activities for some years, expressed a reservation for the record that interest from his country's contributions to emergency and relief operations was included in the WFP General Fund and might therefore be used through the guarantee mechanism to advance DSC for development activities.

¹ The recommendation would read as follows:

Unless otherwise decided, upon recommendation of the Executive Director, the Board agrees to review biennially the level and operation of the guarantee mechanism in all its aspects.



Proposed revisions of WFP's General Regulations, General Rules and Financial Regulations (1999/EB.1/5)

19. The Board reviewed the revisions to Article XIII.2 of the General Regulations, General Rule XIII.4 and Financial Regulations 1.1 and 4.5 proposed in document WFP/EB.1/99/4-C/1. The revisions were intended to bring the Regulations and Rules of WFP in line with the Resource and Long-term Financing policy changes approved by the Board under agenda item 4 a).
20. The proposed revisions to General Rule XIII.4 were further revised by suggestions contained in document WFP/EB.1/99/4-C/1/Add.1, which resulted from discussions at the pre-Session Briefing for the First Regular Session of the Executive Board, on 14 January 1999.
21. The advice to the Board of the ACABQ and FAO Finance Committee was supportive of the revisions proposed; all revisions had been prepared in consultation with the Legal Counsel.
22. The Board accepted the recommendation of the Secretariat to consider and approve the proposed revisions contained in document WFP/EB.1/99/4-C/1, together with the further revisions of General Rule XIII.4 contained in document WFP/EB.1/99/4-C/1/Add.1.

OPERATIONAL MATTERS

Country Strategy Outline—Lesotho (1999/EB.1/6)

23. The Board supported the Country Strategy Outline's emphasis on targeting assistance to the poorest people in rural and mountainous areas and its focus on human resources, which were in line with the Government's priorities. Many representatives commended the document's broad gender perspective and gender balance, and the support to herd boys who would normally not have access to education. While most representatives supported the focus on education, they deemed it desirable to include activities for the creation of assets through food for work. Support to vocational training for women was noted positively.
24. A number of representatives expressed the view that the document's reference to collaborative efforts with partner agencies, NGOs and the status of the UNDAF process was important. It was suggested that coordination with relevant World Bank programmes should also be considered. Since Lesotho suffers from considerable environmental degradation, some representatives urged for this aspect to be kept in mind in implementing WFP-supported activities, as it influenced future food security. The Board proposed that monitoring and evaluation be simplified for cost-effectiveness purposes, and that indicators be developed to measure impact. In view of the modest level of WFP assistance foreseen for Lesotho, operational costs needed to be re-examined. One representative queried whether it would be better to continue with projects rather than to formulate a Country Programme.
25. Responding to the Board's comments, the Secretariat advised that operational costs were being kept to the minimum level compatible with effectiveness and efficiency and that Country Programmes were normally formulated for countries receiving over one million dollars of WFP assistance per year. The Board's guidance on a minimum level of resources required for the preparation of Country Programmes would be welcomed.

Country Programme—Burkina Faso (2000–2004) (1999/EB.1/7)

26. The Board commended the quality of the Country Programme, noting with satisfaction that comments on the Country Strategy Outline had been integrated therein. Many representatives noted with appreciation the programme's targeting to the poorest areas, its focus on three basic activities—namely, basic health care, education and rural development—and the collaboration with the Government, other agencies and bilateral donors. Community participation and the emphasis on women and girls were also noted with satisfaction.
27. The Board looked forward to the UNDAF exercise and expected that WFP-supported activities would be implemented within that framework. One representative indicated that the Country Programme could have awaited completion of the UNDAF process which should take place during 1999. In response to a query, the Secretariat explained that although the September 1998 evaluation of project 4959.00—Supplementary feeding for vulnerable groups—was conducted after the preparation of the Country Programme document, the recommendations of the evaluation mission would be taken into account in implementing the activities.
28. Further to several representatives' concerns regarding the impact of local purchases on local markets and food aid distributions, the Secretariat explained that basic commodities would be used to prepare community meals on work sites so as to avoid possible disincentive effects on the local market. The representative of the Government of Burkina Faso assured the Board that the issue of government taxes and duties on development and humanitarian food aid assistance had been resolved.
29. As the overall benefit of the Country Programme (CP) may go beyond the simple sum of the benefits of each of its components, in its evaluation of the CP, the Secretariat would look at the synergy effect between the various elements of the programme.

Country Programme—Madagascar (1999–2003) (1999/EB.1/8)

30. The Board noted with appreciation that the comments made during discussion of the CSO at the Second Regular Session of 1998 had been taken into account. The Board also noted that the programme was in line with the development priorities of the Government, and that it fit within the collaborative context of UNDAF. The proposed regional targeting was strongly supported, as was the focus on children under three years of age and expectant mothers. Several representatives found the development orientation positive, while noting that the focus on disaster mitigation was also important.
31. Regarding the school feeding component, representatives stressed the need to improve performance. The planned increase in enrolment by 10–15 percent a year was considered modest but realistic.
32. The importance of performance indicators to measure impact on beneficiaries was underlined. To that effect, the key indicators to be monitored in the programme's implementation (as detailed in Annex II to document WFP/EB.1/99/6/2) should be reviewed periodically.
33. Some representatives expressed concern regarding the sustainability of the proposed programme components and stressed the importance of increased government spending on social sectors so as to ensure such sustainability.
34. Responding to an observation on internal transport, storage and handling (ITSH) costs, the Secretariat indicated that because Madagascar faced extremely difficult financial



problems, implementation of the programme would be greatly hampered if WFP did not meet those costs.

Protracted relief and recovery operation for Executive Board approval—Great Lakes region 6077.00 (1999/EB.1/9)

35. The Board encouraged WFP to continue the excellent collaboration with its partners, including other United Nations agencies and local and international NGOs. Representatives expressed concern for the security of WFP staff; WFP was asked to make every effort to ensure their safety. Several representatives emphasized the fact that an end to instability in the region could be found only through a political solution.
36. The Board stressed the need for close monitoring of the number of beneficiaries reached and the impact of WFP assistance on their food security so as to avoid any dependency. The Board also emphasized that a smooth transition into a recovery and reconstruction phase needed to be achieved through activities leading to truly sustainable development. Some representatives drew attention to environmental degradation in the area and asked WFP to work closely with its partners on that issue.
37. The Board noted that although the scope of the operation was extensive, both in terms of beneficiaries and cost, it had been downsized compared to previous years and responded well to the needs of the population, especially the many internally displaced persons and refugees. At the same time, the PRRO incorporated food-for-work and vulnerable group feeding activities which included the active participation of the community, particularly of women.
38. One representative asked why the operation was not better incorporated into the United Nations Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP) and drew attention to the need for a synchronization in the duration of projects to harmonize it with Consolidated Appeals. The Board commended WFP for its excellent performance in the region.

Protracted relief and recovery operation for executive board approval—Iraq 6085.00 (1999/EB.1/10)

39. The Board expressed support for the objectives of PRRO Iraq 6085.00, in particular for its targeting of children and other vulnerable groups. Some representatives requested that WFP help ensure the appropriateness of training programmes for beneficiary mothers, and encouraged WFP to concentrate on malnourished children, who were more difficult to reach than beneficiaries housed in institutions. In this regard, the Board emphasized the importance of the referral system being developed to identify and assist especially vulnerable malnourished children. A few representatives also stressed that international standards should be used to determine acute malnutrition in children.
40. Responding to queries about the time frame of the PRRO, the Secretariat assured the Board that WFP would review regularly the duration of the operation in light of the international sanctions on Iraq and the evolving humanitarian situation, and would develop an appropriate exit strategy.

Protracted relief and recovery operation for Executive Board approval—Somalia 6073.00 (1999/EB.1/11)

41. The Board acknowledged the difficult circumstances under which humanitarian operations in Somalia were carried out, given the absence of government institutions in the country. Representatives expressed concern regarding staff security and conditions of work

in the field, and recommended that WFP pay special attention to ensuring the safety of staff. It was felt that the three-year duration of the PRRO was long. Consequently, the Board suggested that periodic reviews be carried out and adjustments be made, if necessary.

42. In view of the high non-food costs of the operation in relation to food costs, some representatives highlighted the need to monitor operational costs closely and reduce them wherever possible. The Board requested the Secretariat to submit to it annual reports on the PRRO's implementation.

Protracted relief and recovery operation for executive board approval—Central America region 6089.00 (1999/EB.1/12)

43. The Board commended WFP's regional capacity which, together with the availability of food stocks for development projects already in place in the affected areas, allowed the Programme to respond efficiently and rapidly to the emergency brought about by Hurricane Mitch.
44. The Board noted the importance of coordination and cooperation among United Nations agencies, bilateral donors, NGOs and civil authorities in order to assist rehabilitation and reconstruction of the affected countries.
45. Some representatives stressed the need for WFP to work more on disaster prevention and to promote environmental protection and rehabilitation of natural resources, as well as to be vigilant about the nutritional status of vulnerable groups, market prices of staple foods and storage/transportation facilities. Several representatives encouraged WFP to consider local purchases and to include donors in the mid-term and final evaluations of the PRRO.

Progress reports on approved projects (1999/EB.1/14)

46. In taking note of progress reports on approved projects, the Board expressed satisfaction regarding the effective assistance WFP provided to indigenous communities in the framework of project Colombia 2740.01, as these groups needed WFP and government support.
47. Regarding Project Gambia 2729.0, two representatives requested clarifications regarding technical supervision, monitoring and the Government's execution capacity. The Secretariat assured the Board that the Government and WFP were making efforts to improve project implementation and to find complementary resources through partnerships.

ORGANIZATIONAL AND PROCEDURAL MATTERS

Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board

48. The Board noted with appreciation the work undertaken by the Working Group and the consultation process that had given all members an opportunity to consider the proposed text. One representative inquired as to the reason for which the summaries of the sessions of the Board were not reflected as a document of the Board in the Rules of Procedure. The Chairperson of the Working Group explained that the matter had been debated at length by the Working Group, and that the Group had concluded that it would be best to retain in the Rules of Procedure only the formal report on the Board's decisions and recommendations,



and to leave the summaries as part of its less formal methods of work. Such course of action would give the Board more flexibility in deciding in future how to reflect the main points of its deliberations to be taken into account by the Secretariat in the implementation of the Board's decisions and recommendations.

OTHER BUSINESS

Follow-up to ECOSOC and General Assembly Resolutions

49. The Board was informed that the Secretariat had reviewed with the Bureau a number of resolutions emanating from the ECOSOC and General Assembly, and that, upon the Secretariat's request, the Bureau had given guidance as to the course of action concerning the main resolutions which required follow-up by the Secretariat or by the Board itself. The Bureau had identified three major issues on which the Board needed to ensure that the appropriate follow-up action be taken, namely, that the Board's reports be more analytical and issue-oriented, and that increased attention be given to the follow-up to major United Nations conferences and to women and gender issues.
50. The Board agreed with the guidance given by the Bureau to the Secretariat and requested that, in addition to follow-up and reporting on the implementation of Plans of Action adopted at the World Food Summit, the Fourth World Conference on Women, the World Conference on Education for All, and the World Summit for Social Development, WFP ensure that all its actions were consistent with the Plans of Action of other relevant summits and conferences.

Strengthening the governance of WFP

51. During discussion of this matter, some representatives expressed the view that the Board needed to review more thoroughly the draft terms of reference of the consultancy for the strengthening of the governance of WFP. Others felt that adequate opportunity had been given to review this document, but agreed that sufficient time should be given for further consultation by the Bureau with the members through their respective electoral lists. Upon the completion of such consultation, the Bureau may approve the terms of reference of the consultancy.

Update on staff matters

52. The Executive Director informed the Board of new appointments, reassignments, transfers and departures of WFP staff at P5 level and above. She also referred to the Information Note WFP/EB.1/99/INF/7 distributed to representatives on recruitment in the professional grades from 1 January to 31 December 1998.
53. The Executive Director informed the Board that henceforth, a one-page summary information note on top-level movements (P5 and above) would be made available at each Session of the Board.

Briefing on WFP operations in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)

54. The Assistant Executive Director briefed the Board on WFP's operations in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). He explained that the current phase of

emergency operation 5959.00, which had commenced on 1 April 1998, had an expected duration of one year with a total commodity commitment of 603,000 tons. He advised the Board that the operation's resource needs were close to being met, and that 42 of the 46 international staff were already in Pyongyang and in five sub-offices throughout the country.

55. He noted that a document entitled the "Nutritional Survey of DPRK"—prepared jointly by WFP, UNICEF and the European Union—was the first scientific nutritional survey carried out in the DPRK. The document reported an acute malnutrition rate (wasting) of 16 percent, and a chronic malnutrition rate (stunting) of about 62 percent in the children surveyed.
56. WFP and FAO had jointly undertaken a crop and food supply assessment that estimated cereal production at 3,480,000 tons, higher than last year's estimate of 2.6 million tons. Despite improved harvests, there remained a shortfall of one million tons of food grains to be met through food aid.
57. With reference to the CAP, the Assistant Executive Director mentioned that on 16 December 1998, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), had launched an appeal for 362 million dollars for the period January to December 1999. The WFP portion of the appeal, 62 percent, was valued at 225 million dollars.
58. WFP planned to extend the current emergency operation to 30 June 1999. A new emergency operation was then expected to be undertaken, aimed at vulnerable group feeding. WFP was also considering presenting a PRRO to the Board in October 1999.
59. In response to queries from the Board, the Secretariat replied that frequent consultations with donors were undertaken. A donor visit, similar to the one undertaken two years earlier, was foreseen, probably during April or May 1999.

