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Programme
Alimentaire
Mondial

World
Food
Programme

Programa
Mundial
de Alimentos

**Executive Board
First Regular Session**

Rome, 13 - 16 February 2001



Distribution: GENERAL
WFP/EB.1/2001/13

29 May 2001
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

SUMMARY OF THE WORK OF THE FIRST REGULAR SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD, 2001

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.1/2001/12.

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ELECTION OF THE BUREAU OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD AND APPOINTMENT OF THE RAPPORTEUR

1. After completion of the election and appointment under this agenda item, the President made an introductory statement. While mentioning the achievements made during the past year, she noted that much remained to be done, particularly in the area of improving governance and the way the Board conducted its business. She also highlighted her wish to work toward obtaining a stronger commitment from the Board to providing the guidance it had the right to provide, and that was its responsibility to provide, to the Secretariat.
2. The President also mentioned the necessity of enhancing the feeling of ownership Members had for their organization. She pledged to work actively with the Members through the Bureau and the geographical lists, and stressed the need for synergy between the Bureau and the Secretariat.
3. She also mentioned that the Bureau expected to be kept apprised of all matters of interest to it. She finished her opening statement by declaring her intention to help set a good example of discipline in the Board's work, for instance, by keeping to the planned timetable.

CURRENT AND FUTURE STRATEGIC ISSUES (2001/EB.1/1)

4. The Executive Director made an oral presentation on the resources, management and programme strategic issues facing WFP and on the work of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) and other inter-agency coordinating bodies.
5. Regarding resources, the Executive Director said that in 2000 the Programme had been resourced at a total 11 percent higher than in 1999, but that there was still a shortfall between estimated needs and contributions received. On average, 80 percent of the requested funds were received—which was good, but was not enough—and contributions were not always timely. All programme categories were under-resourced, but special operations were the worst affected. The decline in development funding was also a considerable concern, especially as the Food Aid and Development (FAAD) consultations had led WFP to believe that development support would at least be maintained.
6. The Programme hopes that implementation of its Resource Mobilization Strategy, approved at the Third Regular Session of 2000, will be successful in ensuring predictable resourcing for all programme categories at the levels estimated to meet the needs of approved activities.
7. The United States School Feeding Initiative was a welcome boost to the development category's resources. WFP will receive approximately US\$140 million to resource underfunded school feeding activities. However, the other priority areas identified by the FAAD process also require resources.



8. On management issues, a major priority of WFP is ensuring staff security. WFP has provided security awareness training to almost its entire staff, provided the physical requirements and been very active in working with other agencies to promote security. However, the Executive Director pointed out that there remained a need to maintain a high level of security and that governments could do two things to help significantly: (i) hold people accountable for the crimes they commit against United Nations humanitarian workers and (ii) provide the resources for a United Nations-wide security system. The Executive Director noted decision A/RES/55/238, adopted by the General Assembly Fifth Committee, 23 December 2000, to fund the field component of the United Nations security system through a cost-sharing mechanism using project budget resources. The Executive Director emphasized the need that resources for security come from regular contributions, thus showing that staff security was at the top of the General Assembly agenda, and she asked Rome-based representatives to contact their New York-based counterparts in support of this.
9. The Board was informed that the issue of security had been considered by the ACC and that WFP had taken an active role in coordination within the UNDG and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) on development and relief issues.
10. Other management issues mentioned: SAP, part of the Financial Management Improvement Programme (FMIP), had its “go live” in February, and WFP looks forward to the benefits of the improved financial, information and reporting facilities it will provide. The Indefinite Appointment is being introduced for International Professional Staff, and information management will be handled by a new division of the Programme, to be headed by a specialist in that field. The Programme is preparing for the next step in decentralization with the transfer of the Asia and Africa bureaux to the field in mid-2001.
11. On programme issues, the Executive Director drew attention to the development portfolio’s sharpened focus on the areas of emphasis in the Enabling Development policy, the expansion of the school feeding element of development and the need for baseline studies to enable proper tracking of school feeding implementation. The value that vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM) has for all programme categories means that its continued development and use for informing baseline studies remain important.
12. The Executive Director stressed the continuing importance of the Programme’s Commitments to Women and the need to strengthen this emphasis in all of WFP’s work as the key to ensuring that food is appropriately used within the family.
13. Representatives welcomed the Executive Director’s review of issues and congratulated WFP on its work. Several representatives expressed their support for the promotion of staff security and for a United Nations-wide system of security, to be resourced directly through the United Nations Secretariat. It was suggested that the Board discuss throughout the year the emergency-to-development continuum and WFP’s role in that continuum, and the Millennium Declaration, the World Food Summit Five Years Later and the outcome of the World Children’s Summit. The decline in development funding was noted as a concern, while thanks were expressed for the resources provided through the United States School Feeding Initiative.
14. In summing up the discussion, the President indicated that items planned for inclusion in future Executive Board sessions would provide opportunities for discussion of some of the issues representatives had raised.



POLICY ISSUES

School Feeding Initiative (2001/EB.1/2)

15. The Board took note of the information document, which indicates that WFP is to receive approximately 48 percent of a United States Government donation of 630,000 metric tons of commodities that is intended to promote school feeding worldwide. The resources are intended for WFP school feeding activities in 23 countries. The Programme has established a School Feeding Support Unit. WFP will conduct a baseline survey of national school feeding programmes, and is actively seeking opportunities for new partnerships with FAO, UNESCO, UNICEF, WHO, the World Bank, international and local NGOs and foundations that support the education sector in ways complementary to WFP and school feeding.
16. There was active discussion of this issue, providing insight on various aspects of school feeding, including: collaboration, monitoring and evaluation, sustainability, complementary funding, local and regional purchase when possible, broader donor support and the adherence of school feeding activities to the Enabling Development and Full Cost Recovery policies.
17. Several members thanked the United States for its generous contribution and expressed their support for WFP's school feeding activities. They noted that several issues raised at the previous Executive Board meeting had been addressed in the school feeding document and in the Secretariat's presentation.

Guidelines for the Meetings of the Executive Board of the World Food Programme (2001/EB.1/3)

18. In approving the Guidelines for the Meetings, the Board made a number of suggestions for improving the document, i.e. making it more concise, sharper and more focused. Notably, the Board requested that the document be made a "stand-alone" document and that it be lightly edited to include correct references to any material quoted from the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board. Many members pointed out that suggestions in the document that were more common sense than procedure could be deleted. Specifically, it was suggested that the second paragraph of the section entitled, "The respective roles of governance and management", on page 5, be deleted. Others expressed the view that it could be useful to remind members (especially newcomers) of those points. The Board requested that the Secretariat prepare a summary of the Guidelines' main points in the format of a brief, easy-to-use, visually striking pamphlet. The Board decided to assess the Guidelines at its Third Regular Session in 2001. The Board recognized with appreciation the work completed by the Working Group.

FINANCIAL AND BUDGETARY MATTERS

Strengthening the Management Capacity of the World Food Programme (2001/EB.1/4)

19. This document was presented to the Board for approval. On presentation of the original document on Strengthening the Management Capacity of the World Food Programme,



submitted to the Third Regular Session of the Executive Board of 2000, the Executive Board sought clarification of the proposed new Assistant Secretary-General (ASG)-level post and asked the Secretariat to respond to the comments made by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ).

20. The Board expressed appreciation for the clarification provided on the proposed duties and responsibilities of the new ASG-level post, and its satisfaction with the responses to the issues raised by the ACABQ. Consequently, the Board approved the establishment of one additional ASG-level post for the Programme. The Board noted that the functions of the post would be administrative and that they might be reviewed periodically.
21. Several representatives indicated that the decentralization of the Programme should not result in increases to WFP's overhead costs, and that an evaluation of the Programme's decentralization efforts, including costs, should be conducted within the year and submitted to the Board for information.

Evaluation Panel for the Selection and Appointment of the WFP External Auditor (2001/EB.1/5)

22. The Board considered a recommendation to designate formally the Bureau of 2000, in modification of its decision 1997/EB.3/7, as the Evaluation Panel for the evaluation and short-listing of proposals for WFP's External Auditor.
23. Further clarification of the steps and time frame to be followed in the selection process was requested. Representatives suggested that the Board consider adding observers to the Evaluation Panel. The Legal Office informed the Board that the inclusion of observers, although not disallowed, was not standard practice when the Board established subsidiary bodies, as foreseen in Rule XIII.1 of the Rules of Procedure.
24. The Secretariat clarified that, in accordance with the time frame of the selection process approved by the Board at its Annual Session of 2000 (decision 2000/EB.A/7), the comments and advice of the ACABQ and of the FAO Finance Committee would be requested before the short-listed candidates made oral presentations.
25. It was also suggested that in future selection processes the Board consider establishing a specific evaluation panel, separately from the Bureau of the Board, at the beginning of the procedure.
26. The Board approved the recommendations presented by the Bureau.

EVALUATION REPORTS

Summary Report of the Mid-term Evaluation of Country Programme for Yemen (1998–2001) (2001/EB.1/6)

27. When considering the document, some delegates expressed concern with regard to the availability of institutional capacities, both within the WFP country office and with partners. The limited attention given to food aid and sustainability was also cited as a concern. The Secretariat acknowledged the importance of these issues and informed the Board that they had been taken into account in the formulation of the standard terms of reference for Country Programme evaluations. Also cited as a matter of concern were the food aid management issues identified in the report. The Secretariat informed concerned



members that the country office had taken those issues, and others, into account when preparing the Country Strategy Outline.

Mid-term Evaluation of Country Programme—Senegal (1999–2001) (2001/EB.1/7)

28. The Board noted that the evaluation's recommendations were reflected in the CSO. Concern was expressed that some broader programming issues (institutional capacity and sustainability) were not adequately addressed in the evaluation report. Several representatives also noted the inability of the evaluation team to report on the impact of the school feeding activity in view of insufficient baseline and disaggregated monitoring data. The conclusion that a well-prepared Country Strategy Outline was a necessary condition for developing the subsequent Country Programme was supported.
29. The Secretariat confirmed that more strategic, broader issues were being addressed in subsequent Country Programme evaluations through the adoption of standard terms of reference. As identified in the management response matrix, a number of measures are being undertaken by the country and regional offices to improve both monitoring and the ability to measure results at the activity level. The Secretariat pointed out that the ability of mid-term evaluations to measure impact was limited because many of the activities were still in their early stages.

OPERATIONAL MATTERS

Country Strategy Outline—Yemen (2001/EB.1/8)

30. The Board endorsed the CSO and authorized the Secretariat to proceed with the preparation of a Country Programme. Some representatives noted that food aid was appropriate for overcoming obstacles to development in Yemen, especially the dearth of human capital and that the CSO reflected well the strategies developed among WFP, the Government and other partners.
31. One representative welcomed the proposed new partnership modalities (especially those with NGOs and community groups) and efforts by the country office to improve food management. The representative also urged WFP to explore potential linkages with a current World Bank project investing in rural education.
32. Another representative urged follow-up on all management recommendations identified by the mid-term evaluation. The Secretariat highlighted that the lessons learned had been incorporated into the CSO and would be addressed in the Country Programme. Country office capacity, particularly the logistics role, would be strengthened, and focus placed on counterpart staff in the Government, with cost implications kept in mind. Targeting to the most vulnerable areas using VAM and implementation of complementary programme activities for women's socio-economic empowerment through a participatory approach would also be addressed. The Country Programme Agreement would clarify the roles of WFP and the Government in implementing the Country Programme.



Country Strategy Outline—Senegal (2001/EB.1/9)

33. The Board expressed support for the CSO and asked the Secretariat to proceed with the preparation of the Country Programme. Representatives commended the targeting proposed and the focus on nutritional issues and noted that the country situation offered the scope for a more balanced approach between the social sector and physical asset creation activities. The Secretariat explained that the future programme would concentrate on fewer activities and that the priority given to the social sector was in line with government strategy.
34. Several representatives stressed the need for a focus on the urban sector in the forthcoming CP. They asked that the Board rethink the proposed discontinuation of the current urban sanitation activity and questioned how the Programme would address urban unemployment, which particularly affected youth.
35. The observer from Senegal informed the Board that his Government had officially requested that the country be reclassified as a least-developed country. He expressed concern over the phasing out of the urban sanitation activity and underlined the priority the Government gave to the problems of urban poverty and youth unemployment. The Secretariat informed the Board that the decision to shift from the sanitation activity to a training component that will target young urban immigrants was based on recommendations from the CP evaluation and a country office survey. The Secretariat explained that a feasibility study would be carried out to identify specific training needs for the development of income-generating activities and asset creation.
36. Some representatives requested that future activities demonstrate food aid impact and recommended that monitoring and evaluation systems be strengthened before the next Country Programme was formulated. The availability of relevant and gender-disaggregated data on school feeding was also underlined.
37. One representative noted with appreciation the planned intervention in the Casamance region and emphasized the key role the Programme could play in the peace and rehabilitation process there. The Secretariat informed the Board that in addition to the Country Programme activity, a request for PRRO assistance had already been prepared and would be sent to Headquarters for consideration.

Country Strategy Outline—Nicaragua (2001/EB.1/10)

38. The Board endorsed the CSO for Nicaragua. It recommended that qualitative indicators be included in the Country Programme to allow for impact measurement.
39. The Board noted with satisfaction that the CSO's approach focused on disaster mitigation activities and that the Enabling Development objectives had been taken into consideration. The strategy demonstrated the way that development activities could help prevent emergencies. The Board recommended that efforts be made to guarantee that the poorest were reached through appropriate targeting, including that to landless farmers.
40. Some representatives recommended improving coordination among United Nations agencies the donor community and NGOs.

Country Strategy Outline—Bhutan (2001/EB.1/11)

41. The Board commended the CSO for its problem analysis, which highlighted that a significant portion of the population was food insecure and that low birth weight and malnutrition were still exceptionally high. Two representatives proposed that the analysis be sharpened further with respect to inheritance rights and the gender division of labour in



households. It was also pointed out that the Government of Bhutan had postponed the target of achieving universal primary school enrolment by 2002. Considering the limited data available, the Board welcomed the fact that WFP would soon conduct baseline food security studies in order to identify and target the most food insecure populations.

42. One representative praised the CSO's emphasis on the social sector and confirmed the intention to provide additional resources for children's education. The representative also stressed the medium-term need for continued assistance, in light of a potential increase in social tensions. Another representative questioned WFP's plan to continue food assistance to Bhutan and pointed out that food aid may not be an appropriate part of the longer-term solution to the country's problems. That representative requested that WFP collaborate closely with the Government to sustainably improve food security and phase out WFP assistance to the country by 2007. The Secretariat responded that the Government intended to reduce the need for food aid and advised WFP to strive to phase out as early as feasible. The Secretariat informed the Board that at the end of 2000 the Government announced that cash wage rates to road workers would be doubled. Responding to a query on the possible negative environmental effects of constructing rural roads, the Secretariat pointed out that every proposal was assessed by the National Environment Commission before being approved.
43. Representatives expressed appreciation for the envisaged harmonization of the CP with the Ninth Five-Year Plan, and for WFP collaboration with the Government and IFAD on the new food-for-work activity. The representatives voiced appreciation also for WFP's plan to address, jointly with the Government and UNICEF, nutrition problems in the country.

Country Programme—China (2001–2005) (2001/EB.1/12)

44. The Board found the CP to be comprehensive and in line with WFP's Enabling Development policy. In particular, representatives noted with satisfaction that the CP had been prepared in line with the phase-out strategy presented in the China CSO considered by the Board at its Third Regular Session in 2000. Many representatives commended the Chinese Government for its strong commitment to the CP by significantly increasing its contribution to the activities.
45. The Board noted that the CP was well integrated with the UNDAF. Many representatives praised the VAM methodology applied in the CP targeting and urged WFP to refine even further its targeting of the most vulnerable populations. The Board praised the Programme's integrated approach and its strong partnership with IFAD. The Secretariat informed the Board that WFP cooperated closely with many other United Nations agencies and aid organizations represented in China.
46. The Secretariat added that the success of the integrated rural development model used in China was being documented and that this documentation could be made available at a later date to representatives who requested it.
47. The Secretariat pointed out that, in approving the Country Programme, the Board had accepted the concepts of "basic" and "supplementary" programme activities as set out in the document. Funding of all activities—basic or supplementary—under a CP is subject to the availability of resources and priority is always given to basic activities.

Country Programme—Guinea (2002–2005) (2001/EB.1/13)



48. The Board approved the Country Programme, noting its integration into the national food security and poverty-reduction strategy, and its compliance with the Enabling Development policy. The Board also commended the CP's focus on education and rural development, and its alignment with the UNDAF.
49. Several representatives stressed the importance of the CP's addressing the needs of the refugee and Guinea populations affected by armed conflicts in the border zones with Liberia and Sierra Leone, and of its having an integrated approach between relief and development assistance. A few representatives emphasized the need to take into account national sectoral policies, put aside food security stocks and improve coordination with bilateral donors or regional institutions. Clarifications were requested for targeting and monitoring and evaluation.
50. The Secretariat explained that the current emergency situation was being addressed by more adequate tools than a CP, namely a regional PRRO for refugees and a national EMOP for Guinea displaced populations, and this in spite of the very delicate security situation. The CP would continue to target other parts of the country, where security was good but food insecurity very high, basing that targeting on national poverty mapping and the need to concentrate efforts. It was also felt strongly that Guinea development efforts should not be penalized by the country's long-standing support to refugees or its current crisis. It was hoped that the CP would help prevent such a crisis from eventually reaching the targeted areas, and felt that scarce development resources should not be diverted for relief assistance. Were the security situation to improve in the border zones, development and rehabilitation assistance would also take place there. The Secretariat also noted that WFP food imports—limited in size and targeted to the poorest—would have no adverse impact on local production, and that the Board's other concerns about coordination and monitoring and evaluation would be taken into consideration during formulation and implementation of the Country Programme activities.
51. A general discussion took place on how information on an integrated approach for assistance could best be presented in documents submitted to the Board for those Country Programmes designed to help countries in complex emergency situations. The Board recommended that the complex issue of the different instruments for development, relief and emergency assistance used in a given country, particularly one in crisis, be further examined.

Development Project for Executive Board Approval—Cuba 6258.00 (2001/EB.1/14)

52. The Board commended and approved the excellent work of the Secretariat in the elaboration of this project, which took into account experience and lessons learned and was prepared in close consultation with United Nations agencies and the donor community.
53. Representatives expressed their satisfaction with the Government's ownership of and commitment to the project, which will ensure sustainability.
54. Some representatives asked for clarification regarding the orientation of the project towards vulnerable group feeding, and the apparent discontinuation of WFP's support to productive activities that had considerable success in helping to create assets. The Country Director remarked that activities in two ongoing projects would continue to be implemented thanks to revolving funds.



55. Concern was expressed over managing the risk outlined in the project document regarding the potential lack of adequate donor support. The Country Director noted that the very positive reaction of many donors to the presentation of the project augured well.

Budget Increase to a Development Project for Executive Board Approval— Bhutan 3734.02 (2001/EB.1/15)

56. The Board approved this budget increase. One representative, expressing strong support for the school feeding project, requested that the Secretariat report periodically on the Bhutan Government's financial and management support.

Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation for Executive Board Approval— Nepal 6151.01 (2001/EB.1/16)

57. The Board approved this expansion. Representatives noted recent positive developments resulting from ongoing bilateral talks between the Governments of Nepal and Bhutan. Some representatives strongly stressed the need for the continued presence of the international community, which plays a key role in promoting a durable solution to the refugee situation, and requested that the Secretariat report periodically to the Board on the situation of the return of refugees and on any related project adjustments.

Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation for Executive Board Approval— Angola 6159.01 (2001/EB.1/17)

58. In approving PRRO Angola 6159.01, the Board commended the quality of the document and welcomed the shift in the strategy towards a focus on safety nets and rehabilitation, while still giving due attention to the food requirements of the most vulnerable people. The strong inter-agency coordination on which the PRRO is based was perceived as contributing to the success of WFP assistance. The Board also welcomed contributions from the Government of Angola and encouraged it to continue supporting WFP and overall humanitarian efforts. A representative underscored the need for WFP to continue giving due attention to the Congolese refugees being assisted under the PRRO. The Board noted with satisfaction the usefulness of the vulnerability assessment and mapping tools developed by WFP. The Board noted that the high cost of the project resulted from the use of air operations, made necessary by access and security problems. It further noted the savings realized by WFP as a result of increased use of road transport.

Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation for Executive Board Approval— Great Lakes Region 6077.01 (2001/EB.1/18)

59. Several representatives emphasized the importance of the PRRO in assisting a large number of people in the Great Lakes Region who continued to be affected by conflict. One representative expressed appreciation for the regional approach adopted in the document, and several commended it for considering the local purchase of food commodities. The clear presentation of objectives with related monitoring indicators, the use of VAM for targeting, the promotion of refugee self-reliance and the provision of security training to staff were also noted by the Board with appreciation.
60. One representative commended the document for paying close attention to female beneficiaries and stressed the importance of monitoring the level of women's participation in project activities.



61. The Board expressed general appreciation for the quality of the document. Among the points raised by representatives were: the importance of close collaboration with UNHCR in prioritizing the use of food resources; enhancing WFP's partnership with FAO to improve beneficiary food security; the appropriateness of the food ration size; and encouraging refugees to provide some of the food themselves.

