

برنامج  
الأغذية  
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Programme  
Alimentaire  
Mondial

World  
Food  
Programme

Programa  
Mundial  
de Alimentos

**Executive Board  
First Regular Session**

**Rome, 21 - 23 January 1997**

# **SUMMARY OF THE WORK OF THE FIRST REGULAR SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD, 1997**



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## **SUMMARY OF THE WORK OF THE MEETING**

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### **Re-appointment of the Executive Director of the World Food Programme (1997/EB.1/1)**

1. The Board recommended the re-appointment of Ms. Catherine Bertini for a second term of office as the Executive Director of the Programme.
2. Members of electoral lists A, B, C and E unanimously supported the recommendation. The representative of electoral list D informed the meeting that the group also supported the recommendation by a large majority. The Representative of the Netherlands stated, for the record, on behalf of the European Union, that the position of list D on the re-appointment of the Executive Director should be seen in the context of its overall position regarding high-ranking posts within the United Nations and the need for an equitable distribution of those posts. The European Union trusted that, in making future high-level United Nations appointments, full account would be taken of the major contributions by the countries of the Union to the United Nations.

### **Policy issues - implications of the World Food Summit Plan of Action for WFP (1997/EB.1/2)**

3. The Board recognized WFP's active participation in preparatory work for the World Food Summit and its contribution to the drafting of the Rome Declaration on World Food Security and the World Food Summit Plan of Action. It also welcomed the early preparation and presentation to the Board of the first paper on the implications of the World Food Summit Plan of Action for WFP. It was clear that WFP was committed to a systematic and continuous following-up on the Summit.
4. It was agreed that there was a need for careful consideration of the most effective ways for WFP to contribute to implementing the Plan of Action rather than for a revision of WFP's mandate. With regard to operational systems such as vulnerability analysis and mapping, it was felt that coherence should be promoted and duplication of activities avoided.
5. The Board asked that WFP inform it regularly on progress made in contributing to the implementation of the Plan of Action. It further requested an additional paper to include a systematic analysis and a detailed outline of actions being undertaken by WFP in response to the commitments made in the Plan of Action.

### **Resource and financial matters: Update of indirect cost rates (1997/EB.1/3)**

6. Some members of the Board expressed their concern on the delayed submission of the Cost Measurement Study, which impaired their preparation of the agenda item. They welcomed the Secretariat's assistance to prevent such situation in the future. The Board took note of the cost study and approved the new indirect support cost rates for application in 1997. It considered the problems of the cost study methodology, especially with respect to the use of the work measurement survey, projected turnover and budget figures. The Board was reminded that the methodology had been accepted within the United Nations system and by donor governments as the basis for estimating support cost rates. The Board further encouraged the Secretariat to use the results of the cost study as an indicator for controlling costs. It also expressed the wish to have actual data for 1994, 1995 and 1996 shown in the next cost study.
7. The Board noted that the cost study included an analysis of the benefit of multilateral contributions, the benefit of readiness, and the categorization of direct and indirect support



costs. As recommended by the Secretariat, the Board expressed the wish to have these issues evaluated in the next cost study, as well as in the context of the Secretariat's review of the new model and its associated policies to take effect in the next biennium.

8. The Board indicated that the cost study process and methodology should be reviewed for possible improvements, to provide timely and clear explanations of how the rates are calculated and their impact on the recovery of costs and operations. The Board further suggested that the Bureau be advised about the process for the next cost study.

### **Country Programme - India (1997/EB.1/4)**

9. All delegations indicated appreciation for the technical soundness of the activities in the India Country Programme (ICP) and supported the strategy outlined in the document WFP/EB.1/97/5/Add.1. However, some delegations drew attention to the need for flexibility and prioritization of activities, in view of the limitations on WFP resources. Specific points discussed included:
  - a) commitment to poverty alleviation merited support from WFP due to the sheer number of needy people in India;
  - b) food insecurity was adequately addressed in the Country Programme;
  - c) targeting of the poorest, and the focus on women and children, were highly commended;
  - d) a United Nations System Position Statement adequately represented a Common Country Assessment for India, replacing a Country Strategy Note and evidencing cooperation and collaboration by all partners;
  - e) the issue of sustainability should be addressed through strengthening local institutions, encouraging beneficiary participation and training;
  - f) the emphasis on monitoring and evaluation should continue under the Country Programme;
  - g) assistance to some target areas (e.g., Kerala) should be reconsidered in the light of limited resources; and
  - h) the role of local NGOs should be supported and increased.

### **Development project for Executive Board approval - Nicaragua 4515 (Exp.1) (1997/EB.1/5)**

10. The Board noted the many positive aspects of the project in support of pre-primary and primary education in Nicaragua, and gave general support to the project. Concern was expressed on the absence of a plan for phasing down WFP assistance and for the Government to take over. It was also noted that the sustainability of the project was not well explained in the document. Questions were raised on the acceptability of corn-soya blend, measures to ensure increased girls' participation and women's empowerment, and cost-benefit aspects in relation to cost per child per year.

### **Development project for Executive Board approval - Syria 2418 (Exp.4) (1997/EB.1/6)**

11. Representatives expressed support for the approval of the final phase of the project and, in particular, manifested their appreciation for the project's new emphasis on providing



beneficiaries with sustainable assets through community forestry and small-scale economic ventures for women. The Board urged the Secretariat to give adequate support to these innovative components and, in particular, recommended that the project strive to offer training and cash inputs for economic ventures to a larger proportion of target groups than foreseen in the document, to women workers in particular. Since the project's approach to leaving beneficiaries with sustainable economic assets may be replicable in other countries, the findings of a future evaluation of the project would be valuable. The Board also recognized the importance of the project's environmental objectives and the significant achievements in this sphere during previous phases.

12. A number of delegations expressed their appreciation for the Secretariat's decision to phase down the level of development resources for Syria in light of its progress towards achieving food security. The Secretariat clarified that Syria continues to be classified by FAO as a low-income, food-deficit country and that, while a phasing down has been initiated, there has not been a decision for WFP to phase out completely from Syria. On the question of Syria's overall food import requirements, the Secretariat clarified that its import needs vary widely depending on a particular year's harvest. Nevertheless, the country has made significant progress in grain production over the past decade.
13. On the issue of food being distributed as wage payments or wage supplements to public sector employees, the Secretariat was urged to undertake a comprehensive thematic evaluation, and to issue new guidelines for the preparation of projects.

#### **Protracted refugee and displaced person projects for Executive Board approval - PRO Angola 5602 (Exp.1) (1997/EB.1/7)**

14. The project was well received by the Board. Positive comments were made on the fact that the project aims at supporting the reintegration of displaced persons and rehabilitation of the country. The installation of a Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping Unit in the country office was particularly commended.
15. In its reply to concerns expressed by some delegations, the Secretariat explained that the number of beneficiaries, the nutritional situation and agricultural production are continuously monitored in order to avoid disincentives from food aid to local agricultural production. Food assistance will be distributed in line with actual needs which will be reviewed periodically. Concerning the land transport, storage and handling (LTSH) rate, the Secretariat informed the Board that a mission was currently in the country to review the cost structure. Food assistance to demobilized soldiers, as well as to reintegration activities, is only one element of support which is complemented by other measures provided by the Government, and through United Nations agencies and bilateral donors and organizations.

#### **Evaluation reports (1997/EB.1/8)**

##### ***India 2303 (Exp.2) - Rural development in the Krishna Basin command area, Karnataka (WFP/EB.1/97/8/Add.2).***

16. One delegation observed that the WFP country office should make particular efforts to monitor the activities of the labour contractors operating in the project area, to ensure that the project beneficiaries are not exploited. The representative of the Government of India reported that the State Government of Karnataka was already implementing the necessary improvements, and regulating the contractors.



**Projects approved by the Executive Director, 1 July—31 December 1996  
(1997/EB.1/10)**

***Bangladesh 2197 (Exp.10) - Rural development programme (WFP/EB.1/97/9-B/Add.5)***

17. The Board took note of the abstract of project Bangladesh 2197 (Exp. 10) - Rural Development (WFP/EB.1/97/9-B/Add.5), approved by the Executive Director under her delegated authority.
18. The Board acknowledged with appreciation the attention given to skills training, the availability of credit services, and to the development of self-reliance, expected to result in sustainable impact for beneficiaries, which had been lacking to some extent in previous phases of the project.

***Egypt 5586 - Support to natural resource management in the North-western desert (WFP/EB.1/97/9-B/Add.2)***

19. The Board took note of the project which had been approved by the Executive Director. It also noted the opportunity for WFP to cooperate in the project area, with a major donor, the Government of Germany, as well as with the World Bank.

***Gaza 5761/Q - Support to social safety net programmes in the Gaza strip (WFP/EB.1/97/9-B/Add.1)***

20. The Board expressed its support for the activities in the project and endorsed the Executive Director's approval, noting that her delegated authority for project approval was being judiciously exercised.

***Zaire 5732 - Food security in Kinshasa (WFP/EB.1/97/9-B/Add.4)***

21. Responding to comments on the appropriateness of initiating development activities under the current situation in Zaire, the Secretariat indicated that this project aims at the rehabilitation of rice production to improve food security among the project participants. It was pointed out that the project is entirely funded through a directed multilateral contribution and coordination arrangements are in place.

**Protracted refugee and displaced person projects approved by the Executive Director, 1 July—31 December 1996 (1997/EB.1/11)**

***Bangladesh 5329 (Exp. 1) - Assistance to Myanmar refugees (WFP/EB.1/97/9-C/Add.4)***

22. The Board took note of the abstract of project Bangladesh 5329 (Exp.1) - Assistance to Rohingya refugees from Myanmar, approved by the Executive Director under her delegated authority. The Board commended the Government of Bangladesh for its willingness to continue to provide adequate support for the refugees until they could return in safety and with dignity to their own country.



### ***Sri Lanka 5346 (Exp. 3) - Assistance to Sri Lankan internally displaced persons (WFP/EB.1/97/9-C/Add.2)***

23. The Board took note of the approval by the Executive Director, under her delegated authority, of project Sri Lanka 5346 (Exp.3) - Assistance to Sri Lankan internally displaced persons.
24. The Board noted that, with the Government of Sri Lanka supplying relief food inside the conflict zone, WFP is providing food assistance to internally displaced persons in three provinces located outside the area of direct conflict. The Board commended WFP staff for their dedication and readiness to work in difficult, even dangerous, areas.

### **Summary of the work of the Third Regular Session of 1996 of the Executive Board (1997/EB.1/13)**

25. The Board agreed to incorporate the following specific comments submitted in writing by the representative of the Netherlands:
  - “The Summary [of the Third Regular Session of 1996] does not reflect the fact that the Board welcomed the preparation by the Secretariat of a policy document on monetization, which will be submitted to the 1997 Annual Session of the Board for discussion and action;
  - the Summary should mention that the Board requested more information from the Secretariat regarding its proposals for the use of the Immediate Response Account (IRA) for emergencies in refugees operations, as well as the use of surplus funds for replenishing the IRA;
  - with regard to the Madagascar interim evaluation, the summary report is not sufficiently complete. It should be added that the Operational guidelines for WFP assistance to education be taken into account in the follow-up to the project;
  - on Country Strategy Outlines, no reference is made to the Board’s wish that these documents should, as a rule, contain a separate heading on criteria for the allocation of resources;
  - on the Jordan project, the summary report does not reflect the concerns expressed by the delegation of the Netherlands, to which a number of other delegations adhered. It was stated that some of the most crucial issues of the project should be reconsidered. These related to: the creation of dependency on food aid; the unrealistic labour burden on participants; the inadequacy of the participatory approach; and the lack of any schedule for the phasing out of WFP assistance.”

