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**Executive Board
Annual Session**

Rome, 27 - 29 May 1997

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD TO ECOSOC AND THE FAO COUNCIL

Agenda item 3 c)

**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD TO
ECOSOC AND THE FAO COUNCIL ON ITS ACTIVITIES IN
1996, AND ON FOLLOW-UP TO THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF RELEVANT GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND ECOSOC
RESOLUTIONS AND DECISIONS**

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The format of the present report responds to the efforts of the United Nations Programmes to adopt a common format for reporting to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and takes into account the Executive Board's decision of keeping documentation concise and decision-oriented.

It combines sub-items a), b) and c) of the provisional agenda item 4 of the ECOSOC Substantive Session of 1997 - "Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation."

The report is divided into two parts:

Part I is the report of the Executive Board on its substantive activities during 1996, for which WFP has a legal reporting obligation to the ECOSOC and the FAO Council;

Part II reports on WFP's follow-up on the implementation of United Nations General Assembly and ECOSOC resolutions, including follow-up to the major international conferences and strengthening of the collaboration between the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions.





PART I. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD ON ITS ACTIVITIES IN 1996

BACKGROUND

1. Pursuant to the parallel resolutions 9/95 and 50/8, adopted by the FAO Conference on 31 October 1995 and the United Nations General Assembly on 1 November 1995, respectively, the Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes (CFA), was reconstituted as the WFP Executive Board with effect from 1 January 1996.
2. In 1996, the 36 members of this newly established Board, elected by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the FAO Council, were: Albania, Algeria, Angola, Australia, Bangladesh, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, China, Cuba, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Finland, France, Germany, Haiti, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mauritania, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Paraguay, Philippines, Sweden, Syria, Tunisia, Uganda, United Kingdom and United States of America.
3. The Board elected a Bureau consisting of five members, elected from among the country representatives of the Board, one from each WFP electoral list A to E. Of these five members, one is the President of the Board and another the Vice-President.
4. In 1996, the Board held four sessions - one Annual and three Regular Sessions. Each was preceded by open-ended informal meetings to brief all members and observers on those agenda items that required policy guidance and/or decision-making.
5. As recommended by United Nations General Assembly resolution 48/162, the First Session of the Board was held at WFP headquarters, Rome, in the new Conference Room, on 22 and 23 January 1996.

OPERATIONAL MATTERS

6. Pursuant to the recommendations of United Nations General Assembly resolution 48/162, the Sub-Committee on Projects was abolished. Consequently, Country Strategy Outlines (CSOs), Country Programmes (CPs) and projects are now reviewed directly by the Board. In 1996, eight new CSOs were submitted to the Executive Board for review and advice, bringing the number of CSOs considered by WFP's governing body to a total of 22. The first four CPs (i.e., Bangladesh, Bolivia, India and Pakistan) were submitted to and approved by the Board.



7. During the year, the Board considered and approved a total of seven development projects and seven protracted relief operations, to assist 6.6 million people. The Board also approved two budgetary increases to development projects. A total of 726,500 tons of food was committed, at a total cost of 366 million dollars.
8. In addition, the Board was informed of six development projects, six emergency operations and seven protracted relief operations approved by the Executive Director. Furthermore, 10 emergency operations were jointly approved by the Executive Director and the Director-General of FAO. A total of 988,500 tons of food, at a cost of 542.3 million dollars,¹ assisting 12 million people, was committed for those 29 projects and operations (Source: ODP).

PROCEDURAL MATTERS

Methods of work and rules of procedure of the Executive Board

9. At its First Regular Session of 1996, the Executive Board agreed to use the rules provided by United Nations General Assembly resolution 48/162 and, when insufficient, apply the Rules of Procedure of the CFA, WFP's former governing body. The Board will revise its rules of procedure as it deems necessary and useful, with a view to codifying them after a suitable period of operation.
10. In light of the above, the Executive Board examined some of its procedures and decided to introduce some changes into the methods of work in order to increase efficiency, and ensure clarity and transparency.
11. The measures approved by the Board regarding its methods of work include the following:
 - a) Representation on and attendance at the Executive Board

Members of FAO or the United Nations, who are not members of the Board, would be invited upon request to attend the annual session of the Board as observers. Those members who manifested a special interest would also be invited, upon request, to attend regular sessions of the Board as observers. In addition, representatives of appropriate United Nations bodies would be invited to all sessions of the Board. Other organizations with a special interest may be invited, upon request, to attend sessions of the Board.
 - b) Types of fora

In addition to the information contained in paragraphs 26 and 27 of United Nations General Assembly resolution 48/162, the Board agreed at its Third Regular Session of 1996 to meetings of Member States in the following fora, with a view to enhancing efficient and effective governance:

 - i) Formal Executive Board Sessions composed of Annual Session, Regular Sessions and Resumed and/or Ad hoc Sessions;

¹ All monetary values are expressed in United States dollars.



- ii) Consultations on resources - these meetings would take place in principle twice a year;
 - iii) Open-ended information meetings preceding each formal session of the Board; and
 - iv) Meetings of working groups established by the Executive Board.
- c) Annual programme of work of the Executive Board

At its Third Regular Session of 1996, the Executive Board decided as a general principle that the programme of work for the subsequent year - together with the sequence and tentative schedule of sessions, pre-session briefings and of its working groups (if any were established) - would be approved at its last regular session each year.

- d) Agenda and documentation

The Bureau of the Executive Board, in consultation with the Executive Director, may amend the provisional agenda for the forthcoming sessions provided in the programme of work for the subsequent year.

Documentation of the Executive Board should be available, upon request, to any member of WFP.

Documentation prepared by the Secretariat for the Board should be kept brief and decision-oriented, and should include, where applicable, elements of draft decisions requested of the Board, and reference to WFP focal point officer.

- e) Conduct of business during a debate

In addition to the powers conferred upon the President of the Board by the Rules of Procedure, the Board decided that:

- i) Pro-forma statements and prepared speeches by representatives would be discouraged. If a special guest was invited to address the Board, he/she would make a contribution to a specific agenda item.
- ii) The debate would be confined to the question before the Executive Board, and the President may propose a limitation on the time to be allowed to representatives and to the Secretariat for providing answers or clarification.

- f) Preparation and contents of reporting documents on the Board's Sessions

At the end of the session, a paper containing all decisions and recommendations is provided to representatives attending the Board session for verification. A brief summary of the discussion will be prepared by the Rapporteur, to be endorsed by the Board at its first subsequent session.

GOVERNANCE MATTERS

Revision of WFP's General and Financial Regulations

Revision of WFP's General Regulations

12. Further to the decision taken by the CFA at its Fortieth Session, regarding the drafting of any changes required in WFP's General and Financial Regulations and their submission to



the appropriate bodies for consideration and approval, the Board decided, at its Annual Session of 1996, to establish an open-ended working group.

13. The Open-Ended Working Group on the Revision of WFP's General and Financial Regulations worked in close dialogue with the Secretariat and relied on the assistance of the FAO Legal Counsel. It also benefited from the advice and comments of the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs, through the FAO Legal Counsel.
14. During 1996, the Working Group held three sessions. It initiated the process of revising the General and Financial Regulations and Rules of WFP to bring them into line with recent relevant decisions of the United Nations and FAO, in particular General Assembly resolution 48/162, on further measures for the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields.
15. The revision aimed at bringing the regulations and rules into line with WFP innovations, including the Resource and Long-term Financing Policies. It also sought to provide for greater flexibility by enabling the Board to alter rules affecting a number of operational matters.
16. The Working Group kept in mind that the current legislative process was extremely cumbersome and time-consuming. It adopted the principle that, while recognizing that the United Nations and FAO should have the final responsibility in all matters relating to the basic "constitution" of WFP and its role in the United Nations system, it should be possible to separate out these matters in the General Regulations from points of detail and operational issues which had accumulated over the years.
17. The basic "constitution" of WFP and its role in the United Nations system could be set forth in the General Regulations and be amended, following current procedures (i.e., through ECOSOC and the FAO Council), by the General Assembly and the FAO Conference. Other matters could be contained in rules consistent with the General Regulations, adopted and amended by the Executive Board.
18. This would enable WFP to keep abreast of developments, particularly in operational matters, in the most expeditious way, through the enactment of up-to-date rules when so required. This way of proceeding was therefore adopted by the Working Group, and is reflected in its proposals to the Board for the revision of the current General Regulations.
19. The proposed General Regulations are being presented in 1997 to the Executive Board for further consideration. They will be forwarded, through ECOSOC and the FAO Council, to the General Assembly and the FAO Conference. The rules will be adopted formally by the Board only after the proposed General Regulations have been approved by the General Assembly and the FAO Conference.

Revision of WFP's Financial Regulations

20. The Board decided that the Open-Ended Working Group would review the Financial Regulations taking into account the advice of the FAO Finance Committee and the ACABQ. Following up on the decision of the CFA at its Fortieth Session regarding the revision of the General and Financial Regulations, and noting that the revised Financial Regulations would require detailed discussion to ensure the full and explicit incorporation of the CFA's decision on the new resourcing and long-term financing policies, the Board decided that the revised Financial Regulations should be applied only from the beginning of the next biennium (1998-99).



POLICY ISSUES

Annual Report of the Executive Director

21. In considering the report, the Board emphasized the importance of:
- a) ensuring that adequate resources are available, particularly for development activities but also for relief operations, striving for an appropriate balance between these;
 - b) continuing to focus on the poorest people in the neediest countries, particularly in countries emerging from disasters;
 - c) developing further WFP's partnerships with other United Nations agencies, bilateral donors, NGOs and local institutions;
 - d) preserving the multilateral nature of WFP;
 - e) giving greater importance to health and nutrition issues in WFP's development activities; and
 - f) continuing its efforts in disaster prevention and preparedness.

Gender balance and the changing WFP profile

22. Following consideration of the progress report on gender balance and the changing WFP profile proposed by the Secretariat, the Board: a) welcomed the efforts made by the Secretariat in diversifying international professional staff in terms of gender and nationality; b) stressed that further action needed to be taken by the Secretariat to improve the representation of professional and higher category staff in terms of gender and nationality; c) emphasized that these efforts should concentrate on women from economically developing countries; and d) requested future regular reporting by the Secretariat on trends in the representation of women and nationals from economically developing countries among professional and higher category staff.

Other policy issues

23. The following issues were identified by the Board for future policy discussions: monetization, directed multilateral funding, nutrition, the role of women, and strategies for phasing out WFP assistance.
24. In considering the Secretariat's report to ECOSOC, the Board commented as follows on specific topics and proposals contained therein:
- a) The Board recognized WFP's dual mandate of providing both relief and development assistance as its major strength. It noted that the Programme was in the unique position not only of being able to respond quickly to emergency situations, but also of encouraging the transition from relief to rehabilitation and development.
 - b) It also acknowledged that the issues of responsibility and accountability for end-distribution of food to refugees were particularly sensitive, given the respective mandates of WFP and UNHCR. It encouraged the two agencies to continue consultations on those matters, as well as on the issues of census and accurate registration of refugee populations in the context of ongoing revisions of the WFP/UNHCR Memorandum of Understanding.



- c) The Board also addressed questions of WFP's competence in the field of procurement and transport of non-food items, including seeds, in support of the work of other organizations. The Board considered that consultations with partner agencies on those issues should continue.

Resource Matters

25. During its Annual Session of 1996, the Board examined the WFP budgetary performance report.
26. It noted the steps taken by the Executive Director to improve WFP's financial management and commended her for the cost savings achieved during the biennium 1994-95.
27. While appreciating the low overall programme support and administrative expenditures and encouraging the Secretariat to pursue further its efforts in this area, the Board noted that care should be taken to avoid those efforts affecting the quality of delivery programmes.

Inspection and Investigation

28. The Office of Inspection and Investigation (OEDI) was established by the Executive Director in July 1995. The Board took note with appreciation of the report on the first 12 months' work of the OEDI. Since the Office's inception, its inspectors have carried out various investigations and inspections at WFP headquarters and in 11 country offices. The deterrent effect and the assistance provided to management were discussed by the Board. It was considered that these elements could be of far greater value to WFP than the moneys recovered by the Office.
29. At the request of the Board, a copy of the report, together with its comments, has been forwarded to the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), for information.

Further Reform and Revitalization Measures in WFP

30. The Board expressed its satisfaction with the wide-ranging initiatives undertaken in WFP over the last several years and noted the leadership it had shown in that regard, and approved the document outlining them. It suggested that additional reform measures, which were to be considered in the years ahead, be included in Strategic and Financial Plans. The Board recommended that the document be transmitted to ECOSOC and the FAO Council for information.



PART II. FOLLOW-UP ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RELEVANT UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND ECOSOC RESOLUTIONS AND DECISIONS

A. UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 50/120 AND ECOSOC RESOLUTION 1996/42

Programme approach

31. WFP is following through with its commitment to implement the Country Programme Approach (CPA) as promoted by General Assembly resolutions. Country Strategy Outlines (CSOs), the first step in the CPA, have been, or are being, prepared for 43 countries.
32. In addition, the Board has approved to date four Country Programmes; (i.e., for Bangladesh, Bolivia, India and Pakistan). Another 21 Country Programmes are planned or under preparation. It is projected that by the end of 1999, approximately 30 Country Programmes will have been presented to the Board for approval.
33. The Country Programme Approach is consonant with the objectives of WFP's re-organization and increased level of delegation to the field. For example, at its Third Regular Session of 1996, the Executive Board decided that the Executive Director would be able to delegate to Country Directors approval of projects that are in line with an approved Country Programme, as well as the reallocation of resources among programme activities, up to a maximum of 10 percent of their cost estimates, subject to the availability of resources.

Harmonization of Programme Cycles and Programming Procedures

34. WFP fully supports the Country Strategy Note (CSN) process by actively participating in the preparation of CSNs in countries where it operates. This facilitates the mobilization of United Nations assistance in a collaborative manner.
35. WFP Country Programmes play an important part in this integrated approach by taking into account CSNs, government plans and programmes of other agencies. WFP Country Programmes usually have programming periods that coincide with those of CSNs.
36. WFP also participates in the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP) process which aims, *inter alia*, to harmonize the programming cycles of participating organizations. In addition, it is an active supporter of the elaboration of an effective approach to Common Country Assessments.
37. WFP has been an active partner in the Inter-Agency Working Group on Evaluation, and strongly supports the harmonization of evaluation methodologies and their effective use, both in a development context and in humanitarian relief. Similarly, WFP has continued to



contribute to the JCGP's efforts towards harmonization of procedures for the monitoring, review and evaluation of operational activities. The JCGP "Common Guidelines on Monitoring and Evaluation" were sent to WFP country offices. They serve as a framework for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) at the level of projects/operations and within the context of the Country Programme Approach. Country Strategy Outlines and Country Programmes include specifications for complementarity of M&E (for example, sharing of secondary data among agencies, joint collection of primary data).

38. The Office of Evaluation participated in the elaboration of a more effective approach to the monitoring and evaluation of emergency relief operations. WFP's experience has shown that evaluation activities can be handled very efficiently in a decentralized way, i.e., through autonomous evaluation units. However, WFP continued to strongly support efforts aimed at harmonizing methodologies and organizing joint evaluations with other assistance partners. With regard to food assistance in emergency and refugee operations, an in-house task force is developing procedures and guidelines, taking account of the need for inter-agency coordination of efforts in the field setting.
39. WFP has continued to focus on its strategic objective of strengthening operational accountability through the enhancement of a culture of evaluation, and through the monitoring of performance and impact. Performance concerns extend from individual projects to programmes, and to the effectiveness of organizational entities and procedures. Evaluations were carried out on sustainability, impact, special beneficiary groups and the phasing out of programme components. There is inter-agency consultation, in particular through JCGP, in WFP's ongoing work towards improving its capacity to undertake gender impact assessments. An approach for the evaluation of Country Programmes is under preparation, since the first evaluations of Country Programmes will be initiated within the next 18 months.

National capacity-building and execution

40. All WFP development projects are executed by national counterpart entities. WFP remains committed to using and strengthening national government and non-governmental execution capacity for the activities in which it provides food aid. In order to strengthen governments' capacity to formulate, execute, monitor and supervise WFP-assisted project activities, WFP finances training courses for national project staff. In 1996, over 3,250 counterpart staff were trained in various aspects of management of food-assisted projects.

Field and regional coordination

41. WFP is fully committed to the Resident Coordinator system (RCS). The Executive Director articulated this commitment through a letter to the UNDP Administrator and requested all country offices to give their full support. Document WFP/EB.A/96/6, entitled "Reform and Revitalization Measures in the World Food Programme", outlines WFP's support to the RCS.
42. WFP sees the RCS as a vehicle to improve the quality of Country Programmes, reduce expenditure, harmonize programmes, and expedite assistance offered to the hungry poor. At the headquarters level, progress has been made in standardizing all the agency governing bodies as "Executive Boards," with the same number of members.



B. PARAGRAPHS 5 TO 10 AND PARAGRAPH 54 OF UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 50/120, PARAGRAPH 17 OF UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 50/227 AND PARAGRAPH 11 OF ECOSOC RESOLUTION 1996/42

Funding operational activities

43. On 1 January 1996, WFP introduced on a trial basis a new resourcing model, based on the principles of full cost recovery, greater transparency and improved accountability. The overall impact of the new resourcing procedures has been positive, in terms of providing greater clarity in the mobilization, management and utilization of resources.
44. The breakdown of resource requirements for each operation into precise components serves as the basis for full cost recovery and gives transparency on the proposed utilization of funds. However, it has also significantly increased the work load for WFP staff, in particular in the preparation of proposals to donors and the subsequent registration of pledges.
45. In the course of the year, an integrated process was developed for the registration and allocation of resources. The new system helps to monitor the level of contributions and identify shortfalls. The next stage is to develop an even more comprehensive approach to programming and managing resources.
46. The implementation in 1996 of the quarterly consultations on resources, combined with meetings with donor representatives both in Rome and in donor capitals, was highly effective in communicating, on a regular basis, the gaps in operational funding, and provided a forum for responding to donor queries on operations. WFP also improved its operational reporting, with regular situation reports produced for major relief operations, including those in the Great Lakes and Liberia regions, the former Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and the Commonwealth of Independent States.
47. WFP has also been working in 1996 to develop consistent and practical pipeline management systems. To be effective management tools, such systems should be able to monitor in a standard way the food supply against forthcoming demand. Data must be collected regularly from each operation in the field on the number of beneficiaries reached, the actual distributions effected and the level of in-country stocks. These data must then be related to headquarters-held data on resourcing, commitments, allocations, procurement and logistics. Improved pipeline management systems have been introduced in specific operations, including those for former Yugoslavia and the Rwanda/Burundi regional operation, and in some countries, such as Ethiopia, Kenya and Sudan. The achievements of these prototype systems will be assessed and modifications made before introducing them in other operations.
48. Work has also proceeded in 1996 on developing a standard commodity tracking system for use in WFP operations worldwide. The benefits of a commodity tracking system were shown in the Great Lakes operation, where a trial system was implemented by the Transport Coordination Unit. The improved ability to monitor commodity flows enabled WFP to make swift tactical decisions such as truck diversions or cargo reroutings as the situation changed.



Advocacy, media and public campaigns

49. In 1996, WFP undertook a proactive campaign to raise its profile and to advocate on behalf of the hungry poor. WFP established an office in Japan - one of its major donors - to carry out advocacy campaigns on hunger and related issues and to promote WFP's activities. Strong advocacy on behalf of the hungry people in southern Sudan persuaded authorities to allow the resumption of vital air-lifts. In July, the Executive Director held a news conference in New York and appealed to the Government of Sudan to allow the use of a DC 3 aircraft to transport food to the drought-affected areas in the south, especially in Bar El-Ghazal, where hundreds of thousands of people were threatened with starvation.
50. Advocacy also centred on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, where WFP was one of the very few humanitarian organizations allowed to function. Because of this unique position, WFP was able to provide news agencies with video footage of daily life which was widely distributed around the world. The Programme's activities received extensive coverage.
51. WFP has also continued its effort to support the cause of the 800 million hungry poor and to warn of a potential major crisis in the years to come, should ODA budgets continue to decline. The World Food Summit in November offered WFP a chance to play a constructive role in advocating on behalf of the world's hungry. The event coincided with the outbreak of a major humanitarian crisis in eastern Zaire and provided an opportunity for WFP to brief the international community and media on the situation and on its efforts to assist those in need.

C. FOLLOW-UP TO MAJOR UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCES AND SUMMITS (ECOSOC RESOLUTION 1996/36)

Fourth World Conference on Women

52. On the occasion of the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in September 1995, WFP launched a set of Commitments to Women with the aim of reducing gender-related inequalities. These commitments state the Programme's objectives and targets to be reached by the year 2001: a 60 percent investment of Country Programme resources in disadvantaged women; at least 25 percent of the longer-term benefits of food for work controlled by women; and an investment of at least 80 percent of resources for emergency operations in redressing the position of women vis-à-vis that of men, both as beneficiaries of food aid and as participants in the food distribution process. WFP made a commitment to contribute to the United Nations goal of reaching gender equity by the year 2001, particularly in higher management positions.
53. WFP Strategic and Financial Plans for 1996-99 and 1998-2001 place priority on a people-centred approach to programming food aid, targeting women and children, along with programme design based on a broad-based participation, and increased accountability for actual delivery. The issue of stronger advocacy for the disadvantaged, particularly women and children, is also given particular attention.

Gender Action Plans

54. Virtually all country offices and several headquarters units have translated the Commitments to Women into specific action plans to meet the commitments. Gender-specific goals for results in activities and resource levels were set, and steps were



determined for women to interact with and hold their governments, WFP and WFP's implementing partners accountable for assistance. Initial targets are set for 1998. They differ within the regions and among countries, as follows:

- **An improvement in targeting strategies** in order to reach the most disadvantaged, particularly women, is a priority for most regions. Gender-specific targeting assessments have been undertaken in Africa and guidelines are being prepared.
 - Different plans exist among the regions and countries to negotiate with counterparts, on **how to provide women with a substantial voice in local committees**, and in planning and monitoring food distribution systems and food-supported activities.
 - Another commitment referred to in almost all plans is the target regarding **how women use the benefits derived from food-for-work activities**. Progress is gradual. The ability to obtain data on beneficiaries, benefits and participation varies according to counterpart capacity to monitor and evaluate.
 - A number of country offices and headquarters units are striving to **increase the number of professional women** through job advertisements, networking with private-sector associations, advocacy during meetings with implementing partners, and through the media. Working groups on gender parity are operational in various WFP offices, with defined action plans dealing with career development, working environments and recruitment issues.
55. **Several measures to improve accountability for action** have been taken: Funding proposals for WFP development and relief operations are evaluated on what measures are taken to meet the Commitments. For all its operations, WFP now requires gender-disaggregated reporting on the share of resources received from food distribution, the share of benefits by category of activities, and positions held in the planning and management of food distribution.
56. By negotiating specific **Memoranda of Understanding with implementing partners and United Nations agencies**, the Programme is ensuring that:
- a) the specific needs, resources and potentials of refugee and displaced women are taken into account;
 - b) appropriate and adequate food is provided; and
 - c) women have a substantial role in managing food aid.
57. The Gender Action Plans are monitored semi-annually on the specific indicators set in the regions and by the units. The Gender Task Force at the senior management level and the Gender Focal Points play a crucial role in ensuring reporting on achievements and financial requirements.

Gender Action Fund

58. A budget allocation of 700,000 dollars was made for 1997 to finance the Gender Action Plans at the country and headquarters level.

Training strategy

59. A gender analysis and planning training module was developed, and gender training workshops were organized in the country offices, regions and headquarters by the gender focal points, the gender adviser, external consultants and the training section, as part of regional strategic planning or as separate gender workshops.



Network of gender focal points and advisory support

60. A network of gender focal points is established at the country office, regional and headquarters level, linked to the Task Force and the Programme Adviser on Socio-economics and Gender. The reorganization scheme includes the recruitment of a second socio-economics and gender adviser in the Technical Support Service at headquarters, and diversification of the skills profiles in the country offices, to ensure that there is gender expertise among newly recruited national officers working in development and emergency programming.

Gender balance among professionals

61. Although much work remains to be done, the number of female staff has increased substantially at all levels and in all categories, through a proactive recruitment and promotion policy, and a better retention rate. In particular, the proportion of female staff at the P-5 level and above was 18.9 percent in December 1996, against 9.2 percent in 1992. The overall recruitment of female staff increased from 12 percent of total recruitment during 1994 to 39 percent during 1996. In 1992, there were no women at a level higher than P-5. In March 1997, female staff are represented at the D-1 (24.4 percent), D-2 (25 percent), and ASG/USG (33 percent) levels.
62. Female staff representation has increased from 17.12 percent in 1992 to 26.47 percent in December 1996 in relative terms (i.e., as compared to total staff numbers). Considering career staff only, that is, Specialist and Unified Service categories (excluding Project staff), female staff represented a higher percentage: 35 percent (Specialist) and 24 percent (Unified Service) as at 31 December 1996. Project staff numbers in country offices unfortunately have the lowest levels of gender balance, at 20 percent female.

World Food Summit

63. In preparation for the World Food Summit, WFP completed a background paper, entitled "Tackling hunger in a world full of food: tasks ahead for food aid", and participated as an observer in each of the FAO Regional Conferences, and in meetings of the FAO Committee on the World Food Security and the associated Intersessional Working Group. Throughout the process, WFP's focus was on access to food.
64. The World Food Summit Plan of Action highlights matters which WFP has identified for further attention and particular effort in its follow-up to the Summit. Many aspects of the Plan of Action - those relating to preparedness for natural disasters and man-made emergencies, for example - have been deeply embedded in the work of WFP for some years.
65. WFP is giving careful consideration to the most effective ways of contributing to the implementation of the Plan of Action. These relate to: the key contribution of women to food security; the importance of participatory approaches; the role of regional and local purchases; the need for information and mapping of food insecurity and vulnerability; and advocacy to raise the global profile of food security questions.

Women and food security

66. WFP's support to women is based on the premise that investment in women is an investment in the food security of the whole household. While WFP has a good record in providing assistance to women, it intends to do better. An area requiring further attention is



that of targeting more of its resources to a particularly vulnerable group - expectant and nursing mothers and their young children.

Participation

67. In developing participatory approaches, WFP has placed particular emphasis on ensuring the participation of women as well as men. Women are to have a substantial voice in local decision-making concerning the management of food aid and the assets created, for example. Further work is needed in training, and on the monitoring and evaluation of participation. Work to provide this support is in progress, beginning with guidelines, under preparation, for monitoring participation in natural resource interventions and the identification of indicators for relief operations.

Regional and local purchases

68. Some 20 percent of the food aid provided through WFP is purchased in developing countries. In 1996, the value of the food commodities purchased in developing countries amounted to 166 million dollars. The Executive Director has substantially increased the delegation of procurement authority to country offices; the procurement review and approval process has been streamlined.

Food insecurity and vulnerability analysis

69. Information pertaining to food insecurity and to the factors determining vulnerability, when it is disaggregated and analysed, can enable governments, donors, international agencies and NGOs to identify emerging problems and effectively target assistance. WFP has developed a Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (VAM) Unit as a tool for operational decision-making. The challenge will be to bring together various organizations and methodologies in a way that is complementary, not duplicative. The key players have begun to exchange views on methodological questions, draw out the lessons of experience, and explore ways to strengthen the linkages between vulnerability analysis and decision-making.

Advocacy

70. WFP has committed itself to being an active advocate for the hungry poor; this advocacy will be based on, not divorced from, its operational activities. Therefore, advocacy has been identified as one of the key responsibilities of field managers, while headquarters staff will also have a role to play.
71. WFP is in the process of preparing, for the Third Regular Session of the Board (October 1997), a systematic analysis of the objectives established in the Summit Plan of Action and how, within WFP's mandate, its programmes, projects and other activities can contribute to achieving these objectives.

D. COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM AND THE BRETTON WOODS INSTITUTIONS (ECOSOC 1996/43)

72. The World Bank is present in almost all of the major areas of development activity supported by WFP food aid. In 1996, there were 11 projects - five in Africa, three in Latin America and three in Asia - in which WFP collaborated with the World Bank.



73. In the context of strengthening United Nations relief and rehabilitation activities, WFP and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) have undertaken discussions with the World Bank to examine the prospects of the latter playing a more substantive role in emergency relief operations, particularly in situations where the Bank may not be present but WFP and UNHCR are. There are several activities which may be well suited for support by the World Bank during an emergency period, which also have the prospect of being “pre-investments” for post-emergency rehabilitation and development activities.
74. For WFP and UNHCR, an improved port, railway and road transport system helps to avoid costly operations such as air-lifts of food and other commodities, which otherwise become necessary to ensure timely assistance. A good example of effective WFP/World Bank collaboration in this area was the 10 million dollars of World Bank funding provided within the framework of “100 Days Plan of Action” in Somalia. These funds were used mainly to improve the basic physical and institutional infrastructure needed for relief operations.
75. The Board noted the steps taken by the Secretariat to strengthen collaboration with the Bretton Woods institutions, and particularly with the World Bank.

