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**Executive Board  
Second Regular Session**

**Rome, 12 - 15 May 1998**

# **GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN WFP: AN INTEGRATED ASSESSMENT**

**Agenda item 9**

**E**

Distribution: GENERAL

**WFP/EB.2/98/9**

17 April 1998

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

## **GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN WFP: AN INTEGRATED ASSESSMENT**

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**This document is submitted for consideration to the Executive Board.**

Pursuant to the decisions taken on the methods of work by the Executive Board at its First Regular Session of 1996, the documentation prepared by the Secretariat for the Board has been kept brief and decision-oriented. The meetings of the Executive Board are to be conducted in a business-like manner, with increased dialogue and exchanges between delegations and the Secretariat. Efforts to promote these guiding principles will continue to be pursued by the Secretariat.

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

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## INTRODUCTION

1. Women represent 70 percent of the world's poor. They suffer from hunger as much as children, if not more, since they eat last. Moreover, evidence shows that women are vulnerable to hunger-related effects such as iron and calcium deficiencies which are exacerbated by repeated pregnancies without pre/post-natal care and nutritional supplements. However, women not only account for 80 percent and 60 percent of farmers in Africa and Asia, respectively; they also have the sole responsibility for food gathering, preparation and serving. Consequently, in its efforts to eradicate hunger, WFP addresses women's role as guardians of household food security by giving them access to, distribution of and control over food aid. WFP's commitments are based on the premise that targeting women as direct recipients and managers of food aid is the key to ensuring that more food reaches them and their families.
2. The 1997 United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Agreed Conclusions targeted gender mainstreaming as an essential requirement for all United Nations policies and programmes. Gender mainstreaming aims at fully integrating women's and men's concerns and experiences in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes to allow both women and men to benefit equally. Gender mainstreaming does not exclude the need for specific women's projects and/or components to narrow and/or close the gap.
3. This report reviews achievements in gender mainstreaming, using a selection of examples. The first section presents achievements as they relate to the commitments set forth in the Beijing Declaration. The second section describes the capacity-building strategy and initiatives that have been implemented to promote women's empowerment. The second section also outlines various technical tools that have been developed to facilitate the gender mainstreaming process. The final section focuses on conclusions and recommendations based on experiences to date.

## I. TRANSLATING POLICY COMMITMENTS INTO ACTIONS: TOWARDS EFFECTIVE MAINSTREAMING

4. Of the 12 critical areas of concern in the Beijing Declaration, WFP focuses on those directly linked to its mandate: women and poverty; women and education; women's health; and women under armed conflict.

### **WFP Commitment 1: Provide direct access to appropriate and adequate food**

5. This WFP commitment illustrates one of the Beijing Conference's strategic orientations: helping women in emergencies (man-made or natural) to meet their survival needs in a safe environment.

### ***Relief food distribution to households, ensuring that women control the family entitlement in 80 percent of WFP operations***

6. WFP is always in the front line, providing emergency food supplies for women—in Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Rwanda and Burundi—and implementing innovative programmes to meet their needs.



WFP remains the largest food provider in **Afghanistan**. Following the Taliban edicts limiting women's basic rights in terms of freedom of mobility, visibility, education and employment, WFP endorsed and implemented a principle-centred approach whereby rehabilitation projects will continue only on the condition that women participate and benefit equally. As the Taliban edicts have been maintained, limiting women to a house-bound role, WFP and other United Nations agencies have participated in preparing the Strategic Framework which aims at a common approach to human rights and assistance. WFP noted the absence of a gender perspective in the proposed Strategic Framework and recommended changes to reflect such a perspective. In addition, WFP's active participation in the Inter-Agency Gender Mission (Afghanistan, 12-24 November 1997) ensured that the principle-centred approach was upheld in the operational guidelines and with respect to the United Nations Secretary General's statement on Afghanistan made in June 1997.

At the same time, WFP strengthened its relief operations to maintain life-sustaining assistance and ensure that women and their households have access to and effectively benefit from food in places such as Kabul, Bamyan and Kandahar. Prominent among all operations are the **women's bakeries**, which are currently operational in Kabul, Jalalabad and Mazar El Sharif. These bakeries target a total of 4,300 women. The **widows' bakeries** represent a unique feature of this project. WFP currently supports **37 home-based bakeries** where 259 widows produce, sell and manage the proceeds in underprivileged war-torn areas where women have become de facto heads of households. These bakeries feed about 800,000 people, with women and girls totalling 430,000. They also provide employment, which is prohibited in Taliban-controlled areas. About 54 percent of the beneficiaries are women and over 60 percent are children. These bakeries are crucial, as they provide food, build the management capacity of women and empower them, thereby improving their socio-economic status. By the end of 1997, a total of 33 projects targeted women directly through the bakeries, food for training (FFT), and hospital feeding. These projects account for 20 percent of all approved projects in Afghanistan. Other forms of relief operations included assistance to internally displaced persons, institutional feeding (mother and child health hospitals) and assistance to flood victims as well as for repatriation, all preventing short-term starvation.

7. Women in **Rwanda** and **Burundi** are the silent victims of endless suffering. They face the ravages of war and ethnic tensions, exacerbating their vulnerability. An estimated 30 percent of women have been turned into de facto heads of households as their husbands were killed and they found themselves suddenly burdened with this responsibility without the years of preparation that their male counterparts had benefited from. Moreover, recurrent conflicts repeatedly drive them away from their homes and disrupt their traditional coping mechanisms. Every week, WFP field staff witness the emergence of hundreds of malnourished children and women from Burundi's forests after months in hiding. Here, WFP adapted its approach to the country's realities. In Rwanda, WFP was instrumental in ensuring that women have direct access to food; and in creating the network and support systems to achieve this, with women's effective involvement. WFP has been actively networking with the Government, NGOs and local churches, supporting the creation of about 50 women's organizations entrusted with this task. Out of three WFP-supported projects, women directly benefiting from food represent the majority, exceeding 58 percent of the target population in two project areas. In Burundi, WFP was in the front line to: a) assess the situation of hungry, displaced women; b) ensure that the ad hoc emergency food distribution benefits women directly; and c) encourage women's participation in scooping food rations and monitoring food distribution. Between 1995 and early 1998, WFP recorded a significant increase in its female target group, effectively putting food in the hands of 80 percent of its total beneficiary population, 60 percent of whom are direct recipients and consumers.

8. **Ethiopia** illustrates the positive will to fully integrate women's concerns in Protracted Relief Operations (PROs) and Emergency Operations (EMOPs). The ongoing PRO targets



repatriation food to households headed by women which account for about 60 percent of the total beneficiary population. Here, WFP staff realized the need to shift the distribution of responsibility from the hands of male community leaders and village elders to women beneficiaries. This helped deter people from manipulating the system and diverting food towards unintended beneficiaries. The current EMOP specifically targets women by involving them in food aid management and allowing them to directly benefit from at least 50 percent of the relief resources. This target is currently illustrated in the gender balance among direct beneficiaries, as women account for 50 percent of the total. Related activities include gender training workshops and collection of disaggregated data.

9. In post-Khmer Rouge *Cambodia*, over 30 percent of the households are headed by women as a result of husbands' death or desertion. Unlike their African counterparts, Cambodian women are turned into social outcasts and receive little if any assistance. Here, WFP ensured women's equal access to and benefit from food aid by: a) integrating them in project identification through village development committees; and b) supporting projects addressing their specific needs, including day-care centres and rural credit programmes, literacy and capacity-building. WFP used participatory tools (focus group discussions) with community women in 15 provinces to assess food and poverty-related problems and improve targeting. This poverty mapping exercise covered 1,500 villages.

### **Addressing micronutrient deficiencies in vulnerable groups of women, children and adolescents**

10. The Women's Health and Micronutrient Facility is funded by the Canadian Government. It aims to support the development and implementation of cost-effective initiatives in the field of primary health, including micronutrient supplements and drink fortification. The Micronutrient Facility programme was launched in 1996, targeting 16 countries. A total of eight projects, worth 14.6 million dollars<sup>1</sup> were approved in 1997, in addition to eight projects totalling 7.8 million dollars approved this year. Although aiming for the same objective, each country's micronutrient project developed a unique strategy to benefit children and women either directly or indirectly.
11. In *Viet Nam*, WFP's projects target 62 percent of food and 80 percent of non-food resources to women. Nevertheless, a high level of malnutrition among poor vulnerable groups necessitated specific well-targeted components to reduce children's and women's nutritional deficiencies. The micronutrient project is implemented in 450 communes in 25 districts sheltering poor community groups of varied ethnic origin; it currently targets a total of 53,322 malnourished children, 140,000 expectant mothers and 280,800 health workers. Women account for 50 percent of the total beneficiary population. The rest are children under three years old. Primary health care (PHC) workers also benefit from food rations as an incentive to provide health education, health checks and weighing. Since it started in 1995/96, this project has succeeded in increasing the attendance of expectant and nursing mothers in PHC centres; and improving nutrition among severely malnourished children. The M&E system closely follows indicators related to morbidity, mortality and the impact of micronutrients to assess the long-term effects on the nutritional status of children.

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<sup>1</sup> All monetary values are expressed in United States dollars.



In **Ecuador**, the micronutrient project targets 500,000 primary school boys and girls in the country's poorest areas; it aims to improve their health and nutritional standard; and reduce the incidence of intestinal parasites through a food ration fortified with essential vitamins and minerals. This project has an additional component of direct benefit to mothers: the production and use of information, education and communication (IEC) materials to inform/educate them on basic health, hygiene and related subjects. Women participate in the project as food distributors, preparing and serving the snacks. This has a direct effect on women as they: a) ensure their children's nutrition, school attendance and education; b) improve their knowledge and overall welfare, acquiring practical know-how about nutrition and preparation of nutritious meals; c) benefit from income transfer through food; d) are managers of food aid and thus have decision-making opportunities; and e) achieve a sense of ownership. This will also have a multiplier effect. Indeed, women participating in the project will invariably talk to other women in social gatherings or in the neighbourhood, transferring the same know-how.

## **WFP Commitment 2: Take measures to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making**

12. This goal is one of the most difficult to operationalize, as socio-cultural, religious and political norms often hinder women's progress. WFP played a pioneering role, using innovative approaches at the grass-roots level by creating women's committees, reinforcing women's groups and increasing representation in community structures. In **Gambia**, women's groups were reinforced to create the North Bank Women's Development Committee (NBWDC), an umbrella grouping of women in 132 villages. It aims to promote women in development and decision-making for economic and social welfare. WFP supported the provision of two tractors, currently used for ploughing rice fields and transporting women's produce to the markets. Women generated an additional income of 8,000 dollars and their empowerment through decision-making processes, thus: a) having some control over their economic prospects; b) playing an active part in other women's sensitization and mobilization; and c) personally managing their resources. This marked a step forward in their socio-economic advancement.
13. In **Benin**, WFP supported the creation of cereal banks, and cereal production and marketing cooperatives where women represent the majority and have full management responsibility. WFP staff plans on intensifying efforts to increase women's participation and access to decision-making especially in the North, where traditional customs 'discourage' women's involvement in food production and food-for-work activities.



Nowhere more than in **Afghanistan, Yemen, Pakistan** and **Gaza/West Bank** is women's access to decision-making more difficult, if not impossible, to achieve because of deeply ingrained traditions.

Nonetheless, women's full participation in food aid management is progressing slowly but steadily. In **Yemen**, women's committees have been set up to supervise the food distribution by women refugees, who scoop the food ration to card holders. This actively contributes to refugee women's empowerment as they check cards and are therefore able to refuse the food ration if the cards are not in order. Eight out of 24 persons involved in food handling and distribution are women. Although the refugees are from Somalia, this is quite an achievement for a project operating in Yemen. Similarly, in **Pakistan**, women's participation at the grass-roots level is encouraged through the creation of Women's Organizations (WOs), which are involved in community or household nurseries, farm forestry plantations, and the selection of trees for planting in the natural resources management project area. A total of 116 women's groups (whose membership ranges between 40 and 80) have been organized to strengthen women's socio-economic role at the village level.

WFP operations in **Gaza** opted for a similar approach. The number of women participating in food distribution increased from 50 to 150. The immediate benefits are access to food and thus income transfer, and on-the-job training as they weigh and scoop the food. The long-term impact includes empowerment since, as in Yemen, women verify food coupons and take the responsibility of refusing beneficiaries who do not have the right coupons. Such responsibility could not be fulfilled without confidence and assertiveness. In addition, the project provides income support, especially to women who do not benefit from welfare assistance. Notwithstanding traditional conservative social norms, and on WFP's insistence, instructions were given to register food coupons in the name of women, including those who are not recognized as heads of households (abandoned women, second wives, etc.).

### **WFP Commitment 3: Take positive action to facilitate women's equal access to resources, employment, markets and trade**

#### ***Sixty percent of country programme resources will be targeted to women and girls where there is a gender gap***

14. Food has been used as a leverage to obtain complementary resources to improve women's socio-economic and nutritional status through: a) food for work for women as i) direct beneficiaries, ensuring food supply to the household; valuing women's contribution through income in kind; and emphasizing women's importance in the household through direct control over the food she brings; ii) indirect beneficiaries of health infrastructure projects through MCH services; and b) food for training (FFT), targeting adult women through vocational training to generate income. The immediate effect of such projects is putting food on the table, while the potential long-term benefit is an increase in family income and women's effective empowerment through skills development and status improvement.
15. In **Gambia**, male and female youths were targeted to ensure that they take full economic responsibility and provide for themselves. This FFT project aims to improve rural youths' competence, knowledge and skills, including home crafts, sewing and tie-dyeing for girls, while young men are trained in carpentry, masonry, metal work, agriculture and blacksmithing. WFP intensified its efforts to achieve a gender balance among the target group currently totalling 321 trainees in five rural skills centres. This project puts food in the hands of these youths and thus their households (which is, in itself, an income transfer); builds their technical capacity for income generation and sustainability; and provides a service to the community. The project is implemented in collaboration with the Department of Community Development and Directorates of Vocational Skills Training.
16. In **Ethiopia**, two FFW projects target women as both recipients and decision-makers. The first one recorded an increase in female beneficiaries from 22 percent to 37 percent. WFP





staff monitored the process, learning lessons for an improvement in project design. Monitoring took women's specific needs into consideration, especially in terms of increased workload. The urban food assistance facility is a second project that targets urban women by building their technical competence through income-generating skills training; and by reducing their reproductive burden through improved day care centre facilities. This project exceeded the expected results—60 percent of women beneficiaries participate in FFW activities, 93 percent in income-generating and 100 percent in skills training.

17. In **Burundi**, food is used to help women settle back in their original communities and start the recovery process, using food aid for micro-projects. A total of 6,000 women benefited from WFP's assistance in renting and cultivating land to produce 250 tons of food and cash crops, especially rice and cotton. Income is generated through marketing of agricultural produce, small bakeries and traditional crafts, thus giving women access to and use of food and a potential for long-term sustainability/survival through income generation. Since 40 percent of the bread and handicrafts sales are reinvested, a multiplier effect is set in motion.

**The Latin America and Caribbean Region:** Gender-specific benefit assessments were carried out for 80 percent of WFP development projects. The assessments show that women generally represent about 50 percent of the labour force but have less access than men to services, especially credit and training. In **Colombia**, food for work activities strengthened women who were community representatives and provided them with new openings to work in public areas. In **Bolivia**, men decided on the extent of women's contribution to FFW, while in **Nicaragua** men controlled the food rations. This assessment allowed WFP to make changes in project design to increase women's benefits and control over food rations. WFP took corrective measures to ensure women's membership and management responsibilities in production associations, including the collection of FFW rations. In **Bolivia**, amendments to the monitoring system, reporting requirements and management were introduced in the plans of operation, while in **Ecuador**, computerized M&E systems now include gender-sensitive indicators to follow up on project benefits. In **Honduras**, participatory planning with women's full involvement was initiated in order to develop gender-sensitive plans of operation and mobilize resources to ensure that a new forestry project will be accessible to and benefit women.

In **Afghanistan**, following the Taliban gender-related discriminatory practices, WFP issued an interim policy suspending most of its rehabilitation projects because women cannot participate and benefit equally. Some food for training projects have been maintained, addressing young women's immediate as well as strategic needs in terms of food provision and capacity-building. Skills training includes traditional embroidery, carpet weaving and small animal raising, combined with health education. FFW projects support 6,885 women, especially adolescent women, as direct beneficiaries across Afghanistan. Indirect beneficiaries include the households which average seven people per household. Subsequently, the total beneficiary population could be estimated at 48,195. The potential long-term benefit is the technical competence of young women, allowing them to play an active economic and social role if and when the edicts prohibiting women's employment and mobility are lifted. WFP implemented some of these projects in collaboration with Afghan women's NGOs, thereby involving them in food aid management.

18. Approaches to the economic advancement of women in **Pakistan** and **Yemen** ranged from making them managers of environmental protection efforts to literacy to take on economic activities, and/or 'empowering' to benefit from and control assets created through WFP projects. In **Pakistan**, the Natural Resources Management (NRM) project originally failed to involve women, overlooking their importance in environmental protection, especially as they are responsible for firewood collection. WFP carried out a gender study, resulting in women's effective involvement as planners and direct recipients of the Food Stamp Savings and Loan Programme. Women receive food stamps while they undergo capacity-building in seed production. The project encouraged the creation of 116 groups totalling





4,000 women, who benefit from food, training and production inputs, to start income-generating activities. In *Yemen*, WFP combined its income-generating training for Somali refugees with literacy, as 62 percent of the illiterates in the camps are women. This will enable them to plan their income-generation and savings opportunities, thereby reducing their dependency.

### **Targeting 50 percent of education resources within a country programme to girls**

19. WFP is committed to this United Nations strategic orientation, based on the premise that education for all is a basic human right and that education empowers women, both socially and economically.
20. WFP managers ensure that school feeding programmes are screened on gender equality in resource allocation to increase girls' enrolment and attendance. In 1997, WFP approved six such projects totalling 70 million dollars in food aid, 50 percent of which directly target girls. In addition, the budgets of ongoing projects are currently being adjusted to reflect WFP's commitment to gender equality in the allocation of resources. This quantitative target is set to increase because of WFP's commitments to girls' education in societies like Pakistan and Afghanistan, where there is a wide gender gap.

Despite the lack of statistical evidence, the gender gap in **Afghanistan** is wider than anywhere, as the country's socio-economic indicators are the lowest in the world. WFP is actively defending girls' right to education **as a basic human right** and is ready to support girls' formal education if and when the edicts are lifted.

21. In *Pakistan*, WFP pioneered the 'take-home' food ration to promote rural girls' education; reduce drop out rates; narrow the gender gap; reduce rural teachers' absenteeism; and, at the same time, involve women in project management. Implemented in 900 schools across the country, this project has a target population of 127,343 girls and 5,883 teachers. Beneficiaries to date include 50,000 girls and 1,900 female teachers. This is a significant achievement in a society where single women living alone are near outcasts and girls' education is seen as having no value compared to their contribution to household chores. The project opted for a single-commodity approach with the provision of highly valued edible oil. In addition, women are fully responsible for project management at the district and primary school levels—in particular oil storage and distribution, as well as monitoring and reporting project activities. Benefits for these women include income transfer through food rations, access to decision-making through project management, increased social status and long-term empowerment prospects.
22. A similar principle applies in *Yemen* and *Gaza*. In the former, WFP promoted girls' enrolment and attendance by providing a food ration to 86,000 girl students in 1997 (86 percent of WFP's total support to education in Yemen). This contributed to an improvement in their nutritional and educational level and provided them with a learning and social environment for exchange and human development. In *Gaza*, WFP centred its education attention on adult women, aiming to reduce illiteracy. A total of 500 young rural women benefited with literacy skills and food rations. Many women who completed the first course have enrolled in the second despite a significant and deliberate reduction in the food rations to avoid dependency. At the beginning of 1998, the Programme provided support to an additional literacy centre in rural areas.



23. Support to girls' education in *Ethiopia* and *Gambia*, among other countries, has been intensified through school feeding programmes and clear agreements that make government staff and partners accountable for allocating 50 percent of WFP's resources to girls. In *Ethiopia*, one such project increased the proportion of girls enrolled and effectively attending school from 40 percent to 43 percent. The project also sponsored a gender study to identify ways of increasing girls' attendance. The study determined the need for practical/operational mechanisms and monitoring systems to achieve girls' equal participation in and benefit from education. Among the proposed solutions are reducing both the direct and indirect (opportunity) costs of girls' education and improving the school environment by providing adequate facilities for girls. As a result, additional activities now include: a) community awareness about efforts to emphasize the importance of girls' education; b) girls' enrolment as a criterion for WFP assistance to schools; c) support to pre-schoolers at kindergartens to reduce the burden of child care on young girls; and d) the active participation of at least two women in all school feeding committees. In *Gambia*, WFP's support to feeding and day-care centres for pre-school children aims at two mutually reinforcing objectives: a) children's nutrition, encouraging a gender balance early in their schooling and development; and b) relieving mothers of childcare chores to free them for capacity-building activities. WFP supports 49 centres, providing food to 10,000 children and, at the same time, relieving 2,000 mothers of the childcare burden to engage in small farming and income generation. In addition, 259 women cooks receive income transfer through food rations in lieu of their work in the feeding centres.

#### **WFP Commitment 4: Generate and disseminate gender-disaggregated data**

24. The Beijing Plan of Action determined the need for gender-disaggregated data to improve programming and assess progress on women's advancement. This requires: a) an adequate M&E system to provide data for managers to improve targeting and ensure women's equal access to project benefits; and b) institutional mechanisms to ensure accountability.

#### **Gender-disaggregated data within the current M&E system**

25. Despite the willingness of staff, there is still limited capacity to collect the relevant data to facilitate management action; understand the underlying purpose and use of new monitoring methodologies to disaggregate data, and move beyond the boundaries of the traditional food assistance monitoring approach. In a recent M&E needs assessment, WFP food monitors indicated that they were not always sure about the kind of questions to ask beneficiaries. Moreover, they did not document the replies because of report formats. Yet, gender-disaggregated data are necessary to improve targeting and reach the most vulnerable. WFP's priority remains data collection on access to and availability of food, survival strategies and coping mechanisms. WFP staff believe that a participatory approach to data collection and analysis will eventually help build the capacity for gender-disaggregated data collection as it will help those involved in the process to understand gender roles and specific needs.

26. Some country offices, including *India*, *Pakistan*, and various offices in *Latin America*, are testing new approaches and/or revising current M&E procedures. In *India*, monitoring tools are being revised for gender disaggregation while programme staff are being sensitized for this purpose. In *Pakistan*, reporting formats and monitoring checklists have been revised to reflect the need for gender-disaggregated data. In addition, female staff carry out beneficiary contact monitoring to identify problems and assess project progress.



27. In **Bolivia**, systematic M&E systems with the participation of beneficiary women in food monitoring have been initiated: these include gender-based indicators. A special unit was set up to provide gender-disaggregated data and monitor achievements with respect to WFP's Commitments to Women. In *Haiti* and *Guatemala*, the need to collect gender-sensitive data and monitor progress was translated into a strengthening of M&E through capacity-building. Training covered the identification of gender-specific indicators, and the use of participatory rural appraisal (PRA) techniques for data collection, analysis and reporting. A training of trainers (ToT) took place in Central America in April, targeting participants from WFP, NGOs and counterparts (see Section II, paragraphs 32 to 35).

### *Improving accountability through institutional mechanisms*

28. Institutional mechanisms to implement and monitor WFP's Commitments to Women include:

- a) a gender task force, under the chairmanship of the Deputy Executive Director, responsible for advocacy, guidance and fund-raising;
- b) gender focal points to ensure gender-sensitive projects and change of attitude among staff and counterparts through gender awareness and sensitization; and
- c) a community-based approach through pro-active female and male beneficiaries as well as field staff, advocating and supporting the implementation and monitoring of WFP's Commitments to Women.

29. Moreover, efforts are being made to screen all EMOPs and PROs to ensure agency accountability for gender equality in resource allocation and women's participation in food aid management. Regional bureaux have devised clear criteria applying to all emergency funding submissions, committing governments to use participatory implementation mechanisms to strengthen women's role in existing plans of operation. In addition, Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) require projects, whether emergency or recovery, to monitor participatory planning and the provision of adequate food for women and children at risk, and the positions held by women in food aid management.

30. Furthermore, accountability is ensured through a clear appraisal system, making managers responsible for implementing the Beijing Commitments, including that of contributing to the United Nations goal of achieving a gender balance in employment by 2001. WFP's Human Resources Division devised a strategy to achieve this commitment. It is based on pro-active recruitment and promotion, coupled with a better retention rate, resulting in:

- a) an increase in P-5 female staff from nine percent to 23 percent between 1992 and 1997. In addition, women staff at the D-1 and D-2 levels represent 23.2 percent and 25 percent of the total, respectively; and
- b) a more than three-fold increase in overall female recruitment, representing 43 percent of total recruitment in 1997, against 12 percent in 1994.

31. In addition, field managers were encouraged to use local consultants' registers to motivate qualified gender experts to apply for vacancies. Managers were also held accountable for contributing to the gender balance through the performance appraisal system.



## II. OTHER INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT GENDER MAINSTREAMING

### Capacity-building for gender awareness

32. To implement its Beijing Commitments to Women, WFP recognized the need to carry out a massive capacity-building programme to provide staff and counterparts with the skills to understand gender-related issues. Traditionally, WFP staff and counterparts have been trained to ensure that food is available to beneficiaries rather than to assess the beneficiary profile in a gender-sensitive way. Therefore, WFP's capacity-building strategy aims to:

- a) create and increase awareness of gender-related issues;
- b) increase gender sensitivity to ensure that it is reflected in attitudes, and translated into action in project design, training and management decisions;
- c) build the foundations for effective gender mainstreaming, learning lessons from women's approaches and projects; and
- d) create the capacity for systematic monitoring of gender-related aspects using participatory approaches.

33. The Gender Action Fund supported many capacity-building initiatives at all levels:

- **Human Resources Division** developed a corporate training strategy, incorporating role modelling, case studies and other training methodologies related to the empowerment of and decision-making roles for women.
- **Technical Support Service (ODT)** provided 85,000 dollars to finance a training needs assessment workshop for Gender and Participation in Emergencies (Ethiopia). The resulting training strategy is being developed and will be tested in a Disaster Preparedness Workshop to be conducted in Spring. A portion of these funds was used to meet the cost of the M&E needs assessment (see Section II, paragraphs 32 to 35). In addition, gender training workshops were organized to provide 90 percent of the programme coordinators with methodologies, mechanisms and tools for gender sensitive programming.

34. Regional bureaux adopted a common approach to build the capacity of WFP staff and counterparts to implement the Beijing Commitments through needs assessments and training workshops, followed by the development of gender action plans. Examples include:

- **The Asia Regional Bureau (OAP)** provided 75,000 dollars to hold two gender training workshops in Bangladesh and China in addition to a strategic planning and an M&E workshop aimed at providing staff with strategic thinking and planning skills to implement WFP's people-centred approach and monitor its implementation. A small proportion of this allocation funded an exchange visit for a winner of the International Women's Day Awards for best contribution to women's programmes. The winner was a WFP monitor from Afghanistan who had visited a women's programme in Iraq.
- **The Latin American and Caribbean Regional Bureau (OLC)** financed needs assessments in Cuba, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Peru with 125,000 dollars. The aim was to identify skills gaps in gender-sensitive M&E. These studies were followed by a regional gender awareness workshop; and a pilot training in Gender-Sensitive Participatory M&E. Both



workshops strove to build staff and counterparts' capacity to integrate gender concerns in project design.

- **The Africa Regional Bureau (OSA)** funded, with 325,000 dollars, various national and regional training workshops to: a) create and/or increase gender awareness and change attitudes first in the workplace and then with beneficiaries; and b) build the capacity for gender-sensitive disaster preparedness using PRA methodologies. In addition, a regional workshop was organized in Senegal to build the capacity of WFP's managers and focal points in gender analysis. Participants were trained to use this approach starting with a field needs assessment as a basis for identifying the four steps in the gender analysis framework<sup>1</sup> and applying them in project formulation.
- With 128,000 dollars, the **Mediterranean, Middle East and CIS Regional Bureau (OMC)** financed three gender training workshops in Amman, Damascus and Tunis during late 1996. The workshops targeted Country Directors, Programme Officers, National Staff and counterparts. The training included developing a common understanding of gender policy and concepts, with skills development in targeting and participatory tools, as well as monitoring for gender equity.

35. In addition, three steps have been identified to enhance the benefits of all types of training: a) gender-specific assessments of benefits in ongoing projects and operations; b) field work with participants during the workshop; and c) managers' involvement to ensure a follow-up action through the integration of innovative ideas in the office and/or cluster workplan.

### Capacity-building for gender-sensitive M&E

36. WFP's Technical Support Service launched a major initiative aimed at building staff and counterparts' capacity to integrate a gender perspective in the M&E system. Indeed, one of WFP's strategic priorities for programme improvement focuses on capacity building in: a) socio-economic and gender-specific qualitative monitoring of beneficiary profiles; and b) monitoring the distribution of benefits and beneficiary participation. This initiative is partly funded through a small allocation from the Gender Action Fund. Norway provided a larger contribution, with a grant of 213,675 dollars to fund the 1998 activities. These include capacity-building in qualitative M&E at the national level. The initiative aims to build staff and counterparts' capacity in qualitative M&E using the following strategy:

- a) Needs assessments in selected countries in Central America, Africa, the Middle East and Asia to:
  - i) assess existing M&E systems;
  - ii) determine mechanisms for qualitative and participatory M&E;
  - iii) identify potential participants in the pilot workshop (WFP and counterparts); and
  - iv) collect and analyse data as a basis for developing modules to build staff capacity. These were completed in October 1997.
- b) Pilot training workshops to provide WFP staff and counterparts with the skills to use participatory/qualitative tools to monitor beneficiaries and benefits. In

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<sup>1</sup> The four steps include: i) identification and analysis of factors influencing development in the project area; ii) assessment of activities profile by gender; iii) assessment of the resources profile by gender; and iv) translation of gender needs (as a result of this assessment) into project formulation.





November-December 1997, two pilot workshops were conducted for 50 staff members, of whom 30 were selected for a Training of Trainers (ToT) workshop.

- c) A ToT workshop took place in April 1998 and provided WFP staff with ToT skills in qualitative M&E and participatory tools to build the capacity at the national and local levels to train other staff and counterparts. This will initiate a multiplier effect and reduce dependence on external and costly expertise.

After its completion, this initiative will ensure consistency in WFP monitoring, making a significant contribution to the collection of gender-disaggregated data, their analysis and use in project planning and monitoring.

### Technical guidance, advice and on-the-job assistance

37. Technical guidance and assistance are provided on a regular basis to regional bureaux and country offices. Various tools and guidelines have been developed to facilitate this process:

- **Gender glossary.** A gender glossary is in production and will provide terminology in Arabic, English, French and Spanish. The glossary, which is expected to facilitate communications at all administrative levels, will be widely circulated among staff and counterparts.
- **Operational guidelines.** These aim to ensure a gender perspective and facilitate field and staff and managers' tasks when formulating projects. These include:
  - a) **School feeding guidelines** and an M&E Manual. A major revision of the latter has just been completed. It complements the guidelines and focuses on the M&E implications of school feeding activities, including gender-sensitive data collection through field visits and beneficiary contact monitoring. A UNESCO/WFP paper further refined these guidelines, with the aim of clarifying the policy implications from an operational point of view in terms of: a) the proportion of resources targeted to girls; b) this target's feasibility within specific local contexts; and c) practical programmatic solutions.
  - b) **Mother and child health (MCH).** Considering the number of projects targeting expectant and nursing mothers to improve nutrition and MCH, these guidelines are currently being developed to improve targeting and effective benefits accruing to the most vulnerable.
  - c) **Gender-sensitive guidelines for project planning.** Guidelines are being finalized on the **Implementation of the Gender Policy in Programmes/Projects**, aiming to integrate gender concerns throughout the programme cycle. These guidelines cover all the steps in the socio-economic and gender analysis framework.
- **Technical advice and on-the-job assistance.** Regular technical support in gender-related matters is provided through field visits and according to specific needs. For instance, technical assistance was provided to 16 countries benefiting from the Canadian Women's Health and Micronutrient Facility. Moreover, WFP/UNESCO experts on girls' education reviewed WFP assistance to West African countries and provided technical assistance to all education appraisal missions to assess feasible food aid in support of women's education. Furthermore, some country offices (e.g., Ethiopia) took a leading role in commissioning studies aimed at improving project design from a gender perspective. These recommended: a) project ideas to enhance women's participation in WFP-supported FFW projects; b) methods for increasing both enrolment and attendance in the framework of school feeding projects;





c) design of effective income-generating projects; d) an appraisal of a project aimed at improving education through school feeding; and e) an assessment of current M&E systems.

### III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

38. WFP should bear in mind the following conclusions:

- a) **Gender mainstreaming.** The numerous examples cited demonstrate that the gender mainstreaming process is progressing steadily, especially in terms of management action and accountability. Good practices will be further analysed and documented for exchange and replication, and will form part of the overall mid-term evaluation of the Beijing Commitments. However, effective gender mainstreaming as indicated in the ECOSOC policy (see paragraph 2), is constrained by inappropriate perceptions, an overriding one being that gender issues are synonymous with women's issues. This is currently reflected in:
  - i) the absence of a gender analysis framework and approach, including an assessment of both women's and men's roles. This one-sided approach neglects the importance of the gender complementary roles and thus fails to address them in programme planning;
  - ii) an inappropriate programme approach in which traditional practices aimed at improving women's income-generating skills have been continued without assessing their impact in terms of marginalizing rather than mainstreaming women in development; and
  - iii) the grafting of small components in selected places within development projects without integrating gender concerns throughout the programme cycle (including M&E).
- b) **Institutional mechanisms and processes.** The institutional mechanisms are firmly in place and operational while processes indicate some gaps. These include:
  - i) **data collection:** the system for the collection of gender disaggregated data is still in need of improvement in terms of process and analysis and often results in unusable data and thus an inability to address gender concerns; and
  - ii) **evaluation:** the training and capacity building programme needs a follow-up system to assess progress in gender awareness and sensitivity, and to identify opportunities for consolidating or updating this training.

39. The Secretariat commits itself to:

- a) consolidating achievements through a programme planning approach using the gender analysis framework and taking into consideration women's and men's roles;
- b) setting up a systematic follow-up and monitoring system to provide gender-disaggregated data in order to assess progress and improve programme planning and effectiveness;
- c) devising operational guidelines for gender mainstreaming at the headquarters and field levels and appropriate training to facilitate their use;
- d) developing a methodology for gender-sensitive targeting to ensure that benefits accrue to those for whom intended; and



- e) creating a critical mass of staff who have a genuine interest in, knowledge and practical experience of, gender issues both from a conceptual and practical point of view in order to be advocates for gender mainstreaming.
40. In order to achieve this, additional financial resources will be needed. The Executive Director will allocate some resources from the approved budget, but additional support will be needed from donors to strengthen WFP's gender mainstreaming capacity, especially at the country and cluster office levels.

