

WFP Ethiopia: Remarks to the WFP EB on PRRO 200712 May 28, 2015, Rome

Mr. President, Madame Executive Director, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Ethiopia is in transition. For the last decade, the country has seen strong and broad based economic growth averaging 10.8 percent. With a population of over 94 million, the country has also made strong progress in reducing poverty and in achieving most of its Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Ethiopia's first Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP I) ends in July 2015 and will be followed by GTP II that aims to propel the country towards middle-income status by 2025 through sustainable and equitable growth.

Despite these impressive achievements, poverty, food insecurity and under-nutrition still remain widespread. Some 25 million Ethiopians fall below the poverty line, living on marginal and fragile land, exposed to extreme variations in climate, recurring natural disasters, and limited livelihood opportunities—with women facing additional burdens in their dual role as productive members of households and primary caregivers. Every year, on average, some 2 Ethiopians face acute food shortages as a result of climatic and economic shocks while over 7 million people are classified as chronically food insecure. While the country has made impressive strides in reducing malnutrition, stunting rates stand at 44 percent and wasting, 10 percent.

The Government has put in place a suite of policies, strategies and programmes designed to tackle these challenges head on. The GTP II has placed greater emphasis on food production as a central pillar for the coming years. Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP), in which WFP is one of the key actors, offers conditional cash and food transfers to over 7 million chronically food insecure people. The recently approved Disaster Risk Management (DRM) policy aims at to reduce risks and the impacts of disasters by linking early warning to early action and prioritizes investments in community resilience. And finally, the National Nutrition Policy will place a premium on the first 1000 days of life to prevent stunting and wasting among young children and to reduce the prevalence of chronic under nutrition among women of reproductive age.

WFP's PRRO 200712 will use the GTP II and the new policies on DRM, Social Protection and Nutrition as our strategic anchors guiding and grounding our efforts. The operation aims to address both emergency and structural needs of 6 million people over a three-year period and places special emphasis on supporting women to lead healthy and productive lives free from hunger and deprivation. The total cost of the PRRO for three years (Jul 2015-Jun 2018) is US\$ 1,034,273,100—or roughly US\$ 300 million per year.

Our overall goal is to support the policy priorities of our principal partner: the Disaster Risk Management and Food Security Sector (DRMFSS) of the Ministry of Agriculture. However, given the multifaceted causes of food insecurity and under-nutrition, WFP will also strengthen its operational partnerships with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs to ensure alignment with associated national policies and programmes. UN system agencies—notably FAO and UNICEF—along with the World Bank will be our strategic partners and ensure that WFP's interventions in the field of nutrition and food security are complementary in nature and contribute towards the crowding-in of critical investments in support of Government priorities. Last, but not

least, WFP will continue to engage and coordinate with the donor community in Ethiopia to keep food security and nutrition high on their agenda and continue to demonstrate accountability and transparency in the use of their resources.

As was the case in the previous PRRO, relief and emergency nutrition assistance through unconditional food and cash transfers and use of specialized nutritious foods coupled with operational support in implementing the PSNP 4 to address chronic hunger will continue to central areas of activity. This being said, I would like to highlight some key components of our new operation.

First, nutrition activities will focus on both acute and chronic malnutrition. The linkages between these two forms of undernutrition have been well established and require attention. WFP will work with the MoH and UNICEF to develop a comprehensive strategy for nutrition encompassing food and non-food based approaches to address acute and chronic malnutrition and associated micronutrient deficiencies among young children and women. For stunting reduction in particular, WFP will employ locally produced specialized nutritious products combined with the introduction of locally available complementary foods into the diet via vouchers for fresh foods such as vegetables, milk and meat.

Second, WFP's role as a key stakeholder in supporting the implementation of PSNP 4 will focus specifically on the Somali and Afar regions. In addition to providing chronically food insecure populations conditional food and cash transfers, WFP will work with Regional Authorities and other PSNP partners to oversee the implementation of public works that will rehabilitate the assets upon which livelihoods depend. As both the Somali and Afar regions are primarily pastoral, lessons learned from WFP's MERET programme will be adapted for this new context. Wherever possible, WFP and partners will seek to link its nutrition activities and services to PSNP households—providing additional targeted nutritional assistance to children and women.

Third, capacity strengthening and technical assistance will be a crosscutting priority under the new operation. The Food Management Improvement Programme (FMIP)—a commodity tracking system—will be installed and institutionalized in the DRMFSS at national, regional and woreda levels. WFP will continue to refine its previous support to the DRMFSS in the area of early warning and coordinating inter-agency livelihood assessments among populations living in disaster prone areas. Updating woreda level risk profiles and contingency plans will complement enhanced assessment and early warning methodologies.

Lastly, WFP will continue to invest in developing local supply chains by scaling up P4P and local procurement activities. With respect to P4P, WFP will expand its efforts to work with and procure from cooperatives that have a significant number of women farmers. Local procurement of maize and beans from traders will also be pursued as a means not only to stimulate local production and the rural economy, but also as a means for efficiency gains through reduced commodity costs.

In closing, I would like to thank all donors who have generously contributed towards WFP work in Ethiopia and I count on your continued support. Thank you.