

PRRO 200793:
MAY 2015
COUNTRY DIRECTOR OPENING REMARKS

Thank you Mr. President.

As many of you recall, in 2011, Burkina Faso experienced a severe drought, leading to cereal deficits of 154,000 MT and a **serious food and nutrition crisis** during the 2011/2012 agricultural season.

At the peak of the emergency, **3.5 million people** were affected by food insecurity, global acute malnutrition (GAM) rates among children under 5 reached nearly 11 percent, surpassing the WHO threshold considered “critical,” and vulnerable rural households were forced to resort to negative coping mechanisms.

In response to this crisis, **WFP expanded interventions** to new areas, scaling up nutrition and resilience activities in affected communities across the country to support Government efforts to combat the high levels of food insecurity and malnutrition.

WFP assistance reached **1,460,000 people suffering from severe food insecurity** during the lean season, while the government and other partners provided assistance to moderately food insecure populations.

WFP also supported 113,000 people through **Cash for Assets** projects aiming to build long-term resilience.

635,000 children under 5 also received assistance for the treatment and prevention of moderate acute malnutrition.

Over the last three years, the Government, in collaboration with the international community (including WFP), has been working to improve food security and nutrition of vulnerable populations in Burkina Faso.

These efforts have led to moderate improvements to the nutritional situation and food security. However, given the magnitude of the 2012 crisis, **the situation remains fragile**; many communities still struggle to feed themselves.

Nearly 1 million people remain food insecure or at risk of food insecurity, and chronic malnutrition rates remain high, reaching 30 percent among children under 5. Approximately **500,000 children** are estimated to suffer from acute malnutrition in 2015.

Continued support is therefore needed to **ensure progress made is not lost, prevent deterioration of food security, and build resilience to future shocks** in vulnerable rural communities.

In this context, Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation 200793 will support government efforts to address ongoing food insecurity and malnutrition in Burkina Faso.

The new operation builds on the current PRRO 200509, which ends in June 2015. Activities closely align with the Government's harmonized framework for supporting vulnerable populations as well as national food, nutrition and social protection policies.

Programmes aim to reinforce recovery, help the most vulnerable communities build resilience to future shocks, and facilitate a transition to sustainable development.

The most food insecure areas will be targeted and assisted through activities which aim to:

- **Develop community and household assets that will strengthen livelihoods**, thus building **resilience** against recurrent shocks.
- **Treat and prevent acute malnutrition** in children under 5 and pregnant and nursing women.

WFP will build on **strong existing partnerships** with **Government technical departments** at national and regional levels, including ministries in charge of rural development (health, education, and agriculture). Government leadership and engagement in all activities will improve coordination and help prepare for the eventual hand over of activities to the Government.

Memorandums of understanding between **WFP and fellow UN agencies**—notably with UNICEF, WHO and FAO to reduce malnutrition, and with FAO and IFAD for resilience—will facilitate implementation.

Innovative procurement and transfer modalities will be used to support the transition from emergency response to activities that promote long-term development.

Thus, modalities for **Blanket Supplementary Feeding** will be extended: beneficiaries will receive either Super cereal Plus or vouchers to purchase locally produced micronutrient-enriched flour as part of a pilot.

WFP, through **P4P** and in collaboration with **FAO and IFAD**, will work to reinforce the capacities of **smallholder farmers** who have benefited from resilience-building activities such as Cash for Assets by offering them a market for their surplus. This will allow them to increase their revenue and become independent economic actors in local value chains.

Cash transfers, used in Burkina Faso since 2009, will continue to be an important tool for WFP assistance. According to results of evaluations conducted during the current PRRO, this modality improves household food security and nutrition while simultaneously boosting the local economy.

Gender and protection will be taken into account across all programmes, with a special emphasis on increasing women's access to land and promoting equal participation in decision-making processes.

Despite the social and political insurrection, which took place in October 2014, the transition Government has continued to maintain a focus on improving food security and nutrition in affected communities. WFP is deeply committed to supporting these efforts. Through the new PRRO, WFP aims to support the Government to **significantly decrease** the number of persons affected by food insecurity in Burkina Faso—currently some **one million people**—and continue to **fight against malnutrition** and **build resilience** of vulnerable communities.

Thank you.