

**TEXT OF ORAL PRESENTATION BY THE WFP SECRETARIAT TO
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COLLABORATION AMONG UN ROME BASED AGENCIES**

Introduction

WFP is committed to Rome-based agency cooperation as a central part of its overall partnership strategy to contribute to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). There is already substantial cooperation among the three main Rome agencies, and we continue to explore additional possibilities for working together. In my opening remarks today, I plan to:

- Describe the highlights of our ongoing cooperation with FAO and IFAD in three areas: 1) field operations; 2) policy and advocacy; and 3) shared administrative and operational support services.
- Explain some of the new areas of cooperation we have launched this year.
- Outline a few challenges the Board may wish to reflect upon as it discusses the future of WFP cooperation with the other Rome agencies.

Operational Cooperation

WFP's operational cooperation with FAO at the country level is more extensive than you might think. In 2006, FAO was WFP's second largest partner, cooperating in 84 projects in 55 countries. Major areas of collaboration included the promotion of agricultural and crop production (**50** projects), joint assessments and preparedness. In post-emergency situations, when FAO provides seeds and tools, WFP often assists in transporting the items, as well as providing food assistance to ensure that beneficiaries do not eat the valuable seeds. WFP and FAO are developing innovative approaches to operational cooperation in areas such as the Home-grown School Feeding Programme (HGSFP), which links school feeding to agricultural development by expanding local markets through the purchase of home-grown food commodities. A good example is Ghana, where the concept is being integrated into the WFP Country Programme.

Cooperation in needs assessment is a particularly important part of the WFP-FAO partnership. We work together closely on inter-agency implementation of needs analysis frameworks (NAFs), and FAO and WFP joint crop and food supply assessment missions (CFSAMs) are highly valuable to humanitarian food security interventions. In Somalia, WFP and FAO are using the Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) system and guidance developed by the FAO Food Security Assessment Unit. IPC is also being piloted in Côte d'Ivoire, the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Somalia as part of the Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP)/NAF. WFP plans to extend the pilot to other countries before revising the IPC guidelines with FAO.

In 2006, WFP and IFAD cooperated on **10** projects in **8** countries. Major areas of collaboration included the promotion of agricultural and crop production, land and water development, and road development. WFP provided food assistance to communities benefiting from IFAD micro-credit schemes to improve infrastructure or learn the skills needed to successfully launch an income-generating activity.

The organizations also collaborated in disaster recovery, providing communities with opportunities for sustainable development and help to resist future shocks. The best examples of WFP-IFAD cooperation have historically been in Asia. In India, WFP and IFAD's working closely together has led to more integrated programming amongst UN agencies. By combining the agencies' food and cash resources, sustainable livelihoods have developed for 600,000 of the most food-insecure tribal people.

We have not yet built the same degree of cooperation with IFAD in Africa, which is the main area of WFP activity. It will be increasingly important to WFP's future cooperation with IFAD to develop similar success stories in Africa. This is possible, as evidenced in **Mali**, where WFP, IFAD and the Government recently signed a Letter of Understanding for rural development through asset creation.

Policy and Advocacy Cooperation

Beginning with our joint participation in the 2002 Monterrey Financing for Development conference, the Rome-based agencies routinely work together on common events and statements to UN intergovernmental meetings, such as ECOSOC and the General Assembly, to raise awareness and political support for reducing hunger and rural poverty. In the last year, WFP, FAO and IFAD have collaborated in presenting papers and inputs to the International Forum on the Eradication of Poverty held in New York and preparation of the 2007 ECOSOC session.

These joint advocacy messages are based on the "twin track" strategy to reduce hunger and rural poverty. The twin track recognizes that fighting hunger requires both: 1) direct action now to immediately alleviate hunger for the most vulnerable and 2) longer-term agricultural, food security, nutrition and rural development programmes to eliminate the root causes of hunger. WFP's food assistance and related interventions play a leading role in implementing the first "track" of direct action to assist the most vulnerable hungry poor. But we can also in some cases play a supporting role on the second "track" of agricultural and rural development led by FAO and IFAD.

The heads of the Rome-based agencies have acted together to raise awareness on hunger and rural development issues. The three agency heads visited Ghana in December 2006 to reaffirm their determination to strengthen joint efforts to reduce hunger and poverty in Ghana's food-insecure northern regions. WFP Executive Director Morris and FAO Director-General Diouf jointly addressed the September 2006 special General Assembly meeting on assisting the Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

The Rome-based agencies, which are co-founders of the International Alliance Against Hunger (IAAH), co-signed a letter in October 2005 inviting all field staff to support the IAAH and national alliances in their countries. To date, there are 19 active national alliances and many more in various stages of development, providing a forum for mobilizing a wide range of government, UN, and civil society actors to advocate for the actions needed to fight hunger at the national level.

Administrative and Support Services Cooperation

There are opportunities for all three Rome-based agencies to benefit from combined efficiencies from back office cooperation and to pool our purchasing power. This has already resulted in large savings in insurance, travel, and electricity costs (for instance, in 2005, a 9-15% savings was achieved through a joint tender by FAO, WFP and IFAD to purchase **electric energy**). In the **procurement** area, specifications for the purchase of goods, tender results, tender documents, contract templates and terms and conditions are shared with the objective of converging towards common standards. Clauses are included in tender documents to extend the validity of bids to all sister institutions, and joint training courses are run on procurement.

WFP also co-sponsors with FAO and IFAD, the Rome-based Management Development Centre (MDC) and a Women's Leadership course which includes staff from all Rome-based agencies. Since its inception, 114 senior managers from the three organizations - 42 from WFP - have participated. There are also many other areas of human resource collaboration (pension fund, medical insurance and salary surveys).

WFP has also recently embarked on a joint exercise with FAO to develop a more systematic and predictable logistics relationship. WFP has loaned a senior logistics officer to FAO for several months who is working closely with staff from both agencies to review the FAO supply and logistics chain. We are already seeing the immediate benefits of this collaboration. FAO is in the process of joining the UN Humanitarian Response Depot Network. Meanwhile, WFP is already making arrangements to store personal protection equipment essential to FAO's avian influenza response in the Brindisi Depot and FAO locust experts are also looking very closely at how to use the UNHRD network for locust campaigns. WFP has also extended access to FAO of WFP standby partners for their logistics requirements on a pilot basis and has started to train FAO's operations officers in the Emergency and Rehabilitation Division. WFP is also benefiting from the intensified relationship with FAO colleagues to better understand the logistics issues related to the handling of the large variety of complex items which make up the FAO supply chain.

New Areas of Cooperation

In the spirit of the UN reform and working together to achieve the MDGs, especially MDG 1, WFP, FAO and IFAD have decided to jointly establish Food Security Theme Groups at the country level. The main purpose of the Theme Groups is to enhance inter-agency collaboration and coordination in direct support of countries' own development efforts under the interrelated areas of food security, agriculture and rural development. The heads of WFP, FAO and IFAD sent a letter earlier this year to their country-level encouraging them to form food security theme groups, unless a similar mechanism already existed. One of the most active of the newly established theme groups is in Mozambique, which is also a "One UN" pilot country for increasing the coherence of UN development activities.

Development of comprehensive regional approaches to addressing food insecurity is another promising area for Rome-based agency cooperation. WFP and FAO are working together on a multi-country consultation on food security in the Horn of Africa. It involves country level workshops in six countries (Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia and Uganda) culminating in a high-level meeting in Nairobi June 25-26 to reach consensus on practical measures that can be scaled up to better address long-term vulnerability to food insecurity in the region.

The Sahel Agricultural and Rural Development Initiative (SARDI) is another excellent example of our cooperation in Africa. The Sahelian food and nutrition crises in 2005 demonstrated that conditions in many rural areas are exemplified by high levels of poverty, food insecurity, malnutrition, and a growing rural exodus. Within this context, the Comité Inter-Etat pour la Lutte contre la Sécheresse au Sahel (Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control - CILSS) joined forces with FAO, IFAD and WFP. In March 2007, we launched the SARDI, the aim of which is to address the structural causes of food insecurity in Burkina Faso, Chad, Mauritania, Mali and Niger. The Initiative will work with all interested stakeholders, especially governments and regional organizations, to undertake actions in harmony with the respective national governments' priorities and UNDAF. The two-prong strategy includes a short-term response focused on mapping vulnerable areas and populations, reinforcing food security analysis, assessments techniques and early warning mechanisms as well as ensuring relief food assistance to the most needy. A medium- to long-term programme will be aimed at reducing rural poverty and household food insecurity by intensifying and diversifying agricultural production, stabilizing local and regional markets, and reducing the prevalence of malnutrition among children and vulnerable groups.

Challenges for the Future

All three of the Rome agencies believe our cooperation must be “purpose-driven.” We should work together only when it makes sense in terms of impact on beneficiaries and/or cost-savings in operations and administrative services. Partnerships that are “purpose driven” can be sustainable and deliver real benefits over time. Rome-based agency cooperation pursued as an end in itself is unlikely to yield the same positive results.

As the Secretariat and the Executive Board collectively looks to the future of Rome-based agencies, we need to reflect upon the following four challenges to our shared goal of increasing cooperation and partnership.

- One, how are the possibilities for Rome agency cooperation affected by the different choices that could be made on the future strategic direction of WFP? In most humanitarian and nutritional emergencies, WFP’s main partners in the UN system will be UNICEF or UNHCR, rather than FAO and IFAD. If the Board decides to sharpen further WFP’s focus primarily on humanitarian operations, this may result in less field operational cooperation with the Rome partners. We also need to take into account the different funding bases and funding mechanisms of the three agencies and how this might affect potential for future cooperation.

- Two, we need to consider in what situations Rome agency cooperation is based on Joint Programming or where to concentrate more on division of Labor among the agencies. In some situations, joint programming on a common project may be the best way to strengthen our “working together”. In other cases, however, it may be that what is required is a clearer division of labor among what the different agencies so we continue to work on separate activities, with each contributing in different ways to shared objectives.
- Three, efforts to strengthen cooperation should take into account the implications of decentralization vs. centralization of programming decisions which differs widely among the three Rome agencies. As the most decentralized of the three agencies, WFP will seek opportunities for cooperation where decision-making authority can be as close as possible to the field of implementation.
- Finally, we need to be tough minded in evaluating proposals for shared administrative services among the Rome agencies. In some cases, there will be cost efficiency gains by sharing services in Rome, but in other situations it may prove more efficient for us to perform these services in another location rather than from a shared Rome-based platform.

Conclusion

In conclusion, WFP looks forward to a discussion with the board on how we can improve our partnerships with FAO and IFAD. We will have an opportunity for that discussion both today and in more depth in the October board, when the Secretariat will present a paper on Rome-based cooperation that will hopefully reflect a common view by all three Rome agencies. Our goal should be stronger “purpose driven” cooperation that makes a real difference in the lives of hungry people.