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POLICY ISSUES

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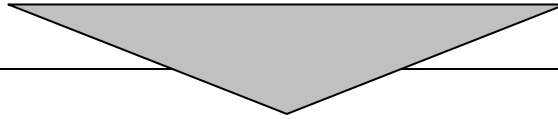


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REVIEW OF PROGRAMME HARMONIZATION AND PROGRAMMING PROCESSES WITH REFERENCE TO WFP'S PROGRAMME CYCLE

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Note to the Executive Board



This document is submitted for approval by the Executive Board.

The Secretariat invites members of the Board who may have questions of a technical nature with regard to this document to contact the WFP staff focal points indicated below, preferably well in advance of the Board's meeting.

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Executive Summary



The Secretary-General's reform of development programming focuses on the Common Country Assessment/United Nations Development Assistance Framework (CCA/UNDAF); the harmonization of programme cycles; and developing common terminology, document structure, and programme implementation processes. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Executive Boards have adopted a common programming process based on the common agreed programme cycle.

In this paper, the Executive Director recommends that WFP's Executive Board approve a similar country programming procedure as follows:

- In line with the proposed undg procedures, the Executive Board will henceforth consider country programme outlines, and no longer discuss Country Strategy Outlines (CSOs) and Country Programme documents.
- The Executive Board will change its schedule for the Second Regular Session and the Annual Session consistent with the UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF schedules. The Second Regular Session would meet the week after the Annual Session to discuss country programme outlines.
- Where the CCA and UNDAF are ongoing or completed, WFP would decide to have either a country programme or a development project, based on specific criteria.
- WFP-specific country information would be added to a common country programme format; the document length would be approximately 15 pages, inclusive of the results matrix and budget plan. The development project format would be aligned, to the extent possible, with the country programme format.
- WFP's emergency and PRRO portfolio would continue to be discussed at all regular sessions of the Executive Board, as would individual development projects.

This procedure would synchronize WFP with the other three undg ExCom agencies and with the Secretary-General's reform process.

Draft Decision



The WFP Executive Board, in reviewing the document and noting the WFP-specific recommendations for harmonizing programme procedures with UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF, takes note of the brief draft outline of the country programme format annexed to this document; and approves adoption of the UNDP/UNFPA programme approval procedure, with WFP-specific adjustments as cited in *paragraph 14*, points *a* to *f*, to make the process most efficient for WFP's work.



INTRODUCTION

1. The recommendation of this paper is in keeping with the World Food Programme's (WFP) Executive Board decisions and recommendations on governance at its Third Regular Session in 2000, as follows:
 - "a) The Board should focus on strategy, policy, oversight and accountability, and on the related decision-making processes (including for the allocation of resources), operating through four interlinked frameworks ...;
 - "g) The Board is invited to review programming principles for country programmes and for projects and operations outside country programmes, including its own processes of making decisions on programmes and projects (this does not imply endorsement of paragraph 20)."
2. Paragraph 20 of the report of the Working Group on Governance (WFP/EB.A/2000/4-D), although not adopted, raised some programming issues that have not yet been addressed. These include rationalization and simplification of approaches (to country programmes and projects) and the level of the delegated authority of the Executive Director.
3. Furthermore, the Board has also raised a range of issues, including the definition and scope of a country programme, the need for better information about emergency operations, and making effective use of the Board's time.
4. The Board discussed the Issues and Options paper in an informal consultation at its Annual Session in May 2002 and recommended that the Secretariat present a paper in September 2002, for consultation in an informal meeting and subsequent approval at the Board's Third Regular Session in October 2002. The Board requested that the paper clarify WFP-specific issues that needed to be taken into account in simplifying and harmonizing programming processes.

BACKGROUND

5. WFP is a member of the Executive Committee (ExCom) of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) and a leader with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in the United Nations Secretary-General's Reform process. Initiatives launched to reform development programming include the harmonization of programme cycles and the Common Country Assessment/United Nations Development Assistant Framework (CCA/UNDAF) process, to which WFP fully subscribes.
6. On 25 October 2001, WFP's Executive Board stated:

"Reaffirming its strong support for the coordination of United Nations development activities and the harmonization of programming, the WFP Executive Board noted that its approval process for Country Programmes and its calendar are slightly different from those adopted by UNDP and UNFPA. The WFP Board is examining its governance procedures and programming processes. When that process is complete, the WFP Board will be able to communicate its decision for Country Programme approval procedures specific to the World Food Programme. The Board also appreciates continued full WFP participation in UNDG discussions concerning harmonization of programming."



7. Reference to country programming procedures have arisen as well in other international fora, including the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and during General Assembly discussions on the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review (TCPR). Resolution 56/201, "Triennial Policy Review of Operational Activities for Development of the United Nations", took note of the Secretary-General's report and welcomed the efforts undertaken so far to improve the functioning and impact of the operational activities for development of the United Nations system. It also encouraged the organizations of the United Nations system to continue these efforts, with a view to improving further the effectiveness and increasing the relevance of the United Nations operational activities for development.
8. The General Assembly and ECOSOC, while discussing the TCPR, stressed the primary responsibility of each national government for its country's development and recognized the importance of national ownership of Country Programmes. General Assembly Resolution 56/201 called on the United Nations system for increased coordination and collaboration and simpler rules and procedures to reduce transaction costs for recipient governments.
9. The General Assembly further requested the Secretary-General, after consultation with the funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, to present a progress report to the Economic and Social Council, at its substantive session of 2002, on an appropriate management process with clear guidelines, targets, benchmarks and time frames for implementing the resolution. At the session in July 2002, the Secretary-General reported on the United Nations system's work to examine opportunities for simplifying and harmonizing programme preparation and approval. Areas of attention included linking UNDAF and agencies' country programmes, terminology and structure of documents, and programme implementation. The CCA and the UNDAF are to be used as a common planning framework, with a "replacement" or "simplification" effect on the procedural requirements of individual country programming for funds and programmes.
10. The UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board decided to adopt a common programming process based on the existing common planning framework. UNDP and UNFPA country outlines will be developed by national governments in consultation with all relevant partners. To date, the unique timing and documentation requirements of UNICEF's processes have made it difficult for UNICEF to fully replace its country-level children situation analysis (country note). UNICEF, however, has adapted to this process, as outlined in paragraph 13 below.
11. WFP continues to participate in working groups in New York, examining opportunities for harmonizing and simplifying programme procedures, including preparing a draft basic common framework for country programme documents (referred to in the Annex) and revised CCA/UNDAF guidelines.

ISSUE FOR DECISION

12. The WFP Executive Board has been invited by the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA and UNICEF to change its approval method for country programmes. The approval process that UNDP and UNFPA have chosen is as follows:
 - a) a Common Country Assessment (CCA) is prepared, followed by preparation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework;
 - b) a six-page draft country outline is prepared, with the UNDAF document made available in the original language on the agency's website;



- c) a draft country outline is presented for discussion to the Annual Session of the Executive Board in June;
 - d) country offices are informed by agency headquarters of Executive Board comments and country programmes are prepared by the Secretariat for posting on each organization's website by October of the last year of the current country programme;
 - e) country programmes are approved at the Board's January session, on a no-objection basis, without presentation by the Secretariat or discussion by the Board, unless at least five Members inform the Secretariat in writing before the session of their wish to discuss a particular Country Programme at that session.
13. UNICEF has adopted a similar procedure, with a few minor variations that include preparing country notes for discussion and then revising them with a results matrix and any reallocations within the approved aggregate programme budget for approval on a no-objection basis, as per UNDP/UNFPA's step *e* above.
14. The Executive Director recommends that the Executive Board approve a procedure for programme approval similar to that of UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF, defined in paragraph 12, steps *a to e*, with slight adjustments that are WFP-specific:
- a) The Executive Board would change its current schedule for the Second Regular Session and the Annual Session consistent with the UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF schedules. (The Secretariat is exploring the possibilities of a change in the Board's meeting calendar, in consultation with the other Rome-based organizations.)
 - b) The Executive Board would discuss country programme outlines in its Second Regular Session rather than at its Annual Session.
 - c) The Second Regular Session of the Executive Board would be held in June immediately after the Annual Session.
 - d) Where the CCA/UNDAF are ongoing or completed, WFP would decide to have either a country programme or a development project, based on existing criteria, e.g. volume of food resources and number of thematic areas.
 - e) WFP-specific country information would be added to the common country programme format that is being prepared by a joint UNDP/UNFPA/UNICEF/WFP working group. That specific information would include contextual references to the relief-development linkages. The length of the document would be approximately 15 pages, inclusive of the results matrix and budget plan. To ensure maximum consistency in presentation of information, the development project format will be aligned with the country programme format.
 - f) WFP's emergency and PRRO portfolio would continue to be discussed in all the regular sessions of the Executive Board.
15. The *advantages* to WFP of adopting this approval process for country programmes would be:
- a) WFP would be synchronized with the other UNDG ExCom agencies, compatible with the Secretary-General's reform process, and would be using the common planning framework, the CCA/UNDAF.
 - b) The Executive Board would spend less time discussing country programmes.
 - c) Transaction costs would be reduced for national governments and other development partners.



- d) Using the CCA/UNDAF as the common programming framework may make it easier for WFP and development partners to engage in collaborative or joint programming.
- e) Harmonizing with other funds and programmes would allow WFP a stronger voice in preparing common formats and programming procedures.



ANNEX¹: SUMMARY OF CURRENT AND PROPOSED ELEMENTS OF WFP COUNTRY PROGRAMMES, AS COMPARED WITH UNDP/UNFPA FORMAT

Current WFP Format (maximum length 7,500 words, excluding annexes)	UNDP/UNFPA Format (maximum length of seven pages, i.e. five pages of body text and two pages for results framework)	Suggested Format (15 pages, including annexes)
Executive Summary (not exceeding 500 words)	No Executive Summary	Executive Summary (one page)
<p>1. Strategic focus of the WFP Country Programme</p> <p>This section highlights the country programme goals and objectives, with reference to the Country Strategy Outline (CSO), geographical and beneficiary targeting, relevance of commitments made by WFP at important conferences/summits, and the phase-out strategy and measures that the government is making or will make to assume greater responsibility for the programme.</p>	<p>1. Situation Analysis</p> <p>This section will contain a succinct analysis of the most pertinent development issues relevant to the work and mandate of the agency, and trends in achieving the goals of relevant international conferences (World Summit on Sustainable Development and Millennium Declaration), as well as references to the most relevant parts of CCA/UNDAF and Millennium Development Goals (MDG), and the status of and trends in national development policies.</p>	<p>1. Situation Analysis (three pages)</p> <p>This section will contain: an analysis of food insecurity at the national level (including the contexts of emergency and recovery/rehabilitation) and identification of the needy, highlighting regional and provincial disparities; an analysis of food availability (touching upon the potential for increased food production) and access (physical and economic access) using vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM); a list of food security and hunger issues identified in the CCA/UNDAF and linked to the MDGs; a summary of national food security and food aid policies and poverty reduction strategies; and a highlight of policies related to the five core enabling development priorities.</p>
	<p>2. Past cooperation and lessons learned</p> <p>This will be a brief overview of key results achieved in the past programme, a description of lessons learned and cooperation strategies employed, and lessons that can be applied to future country programmes.</p>	<p>2. Past cooperation and lessons learned (two pages)</p> <p>This will include an assessment of WFP's performance to date in all programme categories, covering the previous five years; an analysis of the effectiveness of targeting food aid, including achievements, cost-efficiency and strengths and weaknesses in planning and implementation; and evaluation findings and lessons learned that can be applied to future programming.</p>

¹ Revised guidelines for preparation of a Country Programme and formats for the Country Programme document and development project will be available in the WFP Programme Design Manual (PDM) on the WFP intranet website. The PDM will include detailed instructions and explanations of all sections.





<p>2. Programme of Country Activities</p> <p>In this section, the development programme is considered in the operating environment context, including total WFP activities in the country and an overview of all basic and supplementary activities with beneficiary coverage, food value and tonnage. This section also provides an in-depth description of each Country Programme basic activity, intended outcomes and outputs, support activities, key assumptions and risks, beneficiary coverage, cost estimate and partnership arrangements.</p>	<p>3. Proposed Programme</p> <p>This section explains how the proposed programme contributes to UNDAF objectives. It covers strategic approaches (technical and programmatic) in addressing development issues or post-conflict/recovery issues, intended outcomes and outputs of the Country Programme, coordination and implementation strategies and partnership strategy, and a description of the agency's niche in addressing the identified country development challenge.</p>	<p>3. Proposed Programme (three pages)</p> <p>This section includes the strategic focus of the Country Programme, highlighting WFP's niche in addressing the food insecurity problem (linked with the situation analysis), post-conflict/recovery issues, key programme interventions (activities) and target groups and geographical coverage, and intended outcomes and outputs of activities (CP outcomes drawn from UNDAF outcomes). It also covers key assumptions and risks and implementation strategies, coordination mechanisms, and the partnership strategy (with other United Nations agencies, especially Rome-based agencies FAO and IFAD). It will elaborate a phase-out strategy, highlighting national ownership leading to sustainability of interventions.</p>
<p>3. Programme Management Process</p> <p>This section describes the arrangements for appraising the Country Programme activities, programme implementation arrangements, exit strategy and sustainability of operations, reporting and monitoring and evaluation arrangements for the Country Programme.</p>	<p>4. Programme Management, Monitoring and Evaluation</p> <p>This will be a brief description of key outcome/purpose and output indicators to be monitored during the course of the programme, as contained in the results framework and proposed management strategy with regard to implementation, resource mobilization, proposed changes in the country office structure and staffing and financial resources matrix.</p>	<p>4. Programme management, monitoring and evaluation (two pages)</p> <p>This will be a brief description of the programme management process, including activity appraisals, logistics, review and approval process of the Country Programme activities, annual workplan and resource allocation. It will also include descriptions of reporting specifications and frequency of reporting, institutional monitoring arrangements, evaluation arrangements, the resource mobilization strategy and country office capacity for implementation (its structure and staffing issues).</p>
<p>Annexes—CSO Summary, Logical Framework, Budget Summary, Map, List of Acronyms</p>	<p>Annex—Results and Resources Framework</p>	<p>Annexes (four pages)</p> <p>This section will include the logical framework (two pages), budget summary (one page), beneficiary coverage per activity and food allocation and cost in US\$ value, and map (one page).</p>