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Agenda item 11

For information*

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PROTRACTED RELIEF AND RECOVERY OPERATIONS APPROVED BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (1 JULY–31 DECEMBER 2010) — NEPAL 200136

Food Assistance to Refugees from Bhutan

Number of beneficiaries	70,000
Duration of project	3 years (1 January 2011–31 December 2013)
WFP food tonnage	30,876 mt
Cost (United States dollars)	
WFP food costs	15,966,785
Total cost to WFP	26,431,989

* In accordance with the Executive Board's decisions on governance, approved at the Annual and Third Regular Sessions, 2000, items for information should not be discussed unless a Board member specifically requests it, well in advance of the meeting, and the Chair accepts the request on the grounds that it is a proper use of the Board's time.

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NOTE TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

This document is submitted to the Executive Board for information

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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ABSTRACT

1. Bhutanese refugees began entering Nepal in the early 1990s following the enforcement of restrictive citizenship laws by the Government of Bhutan. In 1992, at the request of the Government of Nepal, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and WFP started providing food, shelter and non-food assistance. Despite discussions since 1993, no progress has been made between the governments of Nepal and Bhutan in either repatriating the refugees to Bhutan or integrating them in Nepal.
2. After years of uncertainty and pressure from donor countries, the Government of Nepal agreed to allow the refugees to resettle in third countries. Although some refugees may choose not to resettle, or may continue to hope that Bhutan eventually allows their return, the majority are likely to be resettled. More than 36,000 refugees resettled between 2008 and September 2010.
3. With a population of 28 million people, Nepal is one of the poorest countries in South Asia. After a decade of civil conflict, it stands at a critical juncture. Despite the signing of the 2006 Comprehensive Peace Agreement, political instability continues, and many of the underlying causes of the previous conflict persist. This, combined with changing climate patterns – particularly drought – and sustained high food prices, has exacerbated an already difficult situation for Nepal's most vulnerable people.
4. WFP and UNHCR conduct regular joint assessment missions (JAMs). The last of these, in June 2008, found that refugees remain entirely reliant on external assistance for their daily subsistence. Recommendations from this JAM and the 2010 WFP country portfolio evaluation informed the design of a new phase for the protracted relief and recovery operation (PRRO).
5. This new three-year PRRO will contribute to Strategic Objectives 1 and 3 of WFP's Strategic Plan (2008–2013), mainly in saving lives and protecting and rebuilding the livelihoods of the refugee population. Approximately 70,000 refugees will benefit from WFP food assistance in 2011; 55,000 in 2012; and 40,000 in 2013. An estimated 2,100 malnourished children, pregnant and lactating women and chronically ill patients will receive additional assistance under a supplementary feeding programme in 2011. This number of beneficiaries is expected to decrease to 1,650 in 2012, and 1,250 in 2013.
6. WFP will continue to support supplementary activities, including vocational training, reclamation gardening and income-generating activities that promote self-sufficiency among the refugee population. It will also continue to ensure the active participation of women refugees in food management and distribution.
7. This PRRO will complement other interventions implemented by UNHCR, the Government of Nepal and non-governmental organizations.