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MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STRATEGIC EVALUATION OF WFP'S ROLE IN SOCIAL PROTECTION AND SAFETY NETS

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NOTE TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

This document is submitted to the Executive Board for consideration

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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BACKGROUND

1. The Secretariat welcomes this strategic evaluation of WFP's role in social protection and safety nets. While social protection and safety net provision is a national government obligation, in the international arena WFP is the agency tasked with providing safety nets for countries that are unable to help some of their citizens meet their basic food requirements.
2. The evaluation report recognizes many of the challenges in the policy and strategic contexts and in choosing the appropriate instruments for delivering food assistance as part of safety net approaches. Major initiatives have been launched to meet WFP's safety net objectives; an update of the safety net policy is being developed and is scheduled for presentation to the Board at its Annual Session in 2012. WFP regards it as critical that people understand its work in delivering food assistance as part of safety net approaches, and that governments acquire the capacity to set up safety nets that incorporate food assistance.
3. Management responses and actions for implementing the evaluation recommendations are presented in the matrix.

**MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STRATEGIC EVALUATION OF
WFP'S ROLE IN SOCIAL PROTECTION AND SAFETY NETS**

Recommendations	Action by	Management response and action taken	Implementation deadline
<p>Recommendation 1: Focus WFP social protection and safety net efforts on its comparative advantages. The planned revision of the 2004 safety nets policy should incorporate broader social protection concepts and clarify WFP's roles, based on its comparative advantages. The policy should explain the importance of establishing purpose, desired outcomes, partnerships and standards of good practice. WFP's primary purpose – <i>protection</i> – should be made explicit, but the policy should also recognize appropriate interventions aimed at <i>prevention</i> and <i>promotion</i>, emphasizing linkages to other programmes. Emphasis should remain on contributions to food-based safety nets through operational and non-operational activities, and examples of WFP activities for these different roles should be provided. Policy guidance should be disseminated to promote WFP's role in safety nets and social protection.</p>	<p>Policy, Planning and Strategy Division (PS)</p>	<p>Agreed. The updated safety nets policy is scheduled for presentation at the Board's 2012 Annual Session; preparation has commenced, and a consultation with many country directors, regional bureaux and Headquarters staff, and external experts will take place in June 2011. WFP's role in safety nets will be fully clarified: emphasis will continue to be on safety nets that use a variety of food assistance tools in addition to food in kind.</p>	<p>June 2012</p>
<p>Recommendation 2: Develop WFP organizational capacities. An organizational change should be initiated, aimed at building WFP's capacities for safety net and social protection approaches. This initiative should be led by a senior manager at Headquarters, supported by advisers from Headquarters, regional bureaux and country offices as needed. A five-year plan should be developed, focusing on translating policy and strategy into practice by addressing the systems, processes and cultural issues noted in this evaluation report.</p>	<p>PS</p>	<p>Agreed. The recommendation is recognized as relevant at both the policy and strategy levels. WFP's transformation from a food aid to a food assistance agency involves using a broader range of instruments that allow it to pursue safety net objectives beyond protection. The Cash for Change initiative is contributing to the institutional and process changes necessary to mainstream cash and voucher instruments within WFP. Training and other activities will be rolled out to build staff capacity in choosing, designing and implementing instruments for safety net approaches, as explained below for recommendation 3.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>



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Recommendations	Action by	Management response and action taken	Implementation deadline
<p>Recommendation 4: Position WFP social protection and safety net efforts in the external environment. WFP should increase its engagement in policy and coordination fora and promote the positive role(s) it plays, building on its comparative advantages; increased literacy; evidence gathered, including an in-depth study of examples from Latin America and other more advanced WFP programmes; increased staff skills at all levels; and the revised policy. Country offices not yet engaged in safety nets and social protection should begin to involve WFP in existing national platforms, or work with partners to establish new platforms. Additional unrestricted and multi-year contributions should be mobilized to support such country office programmes.</p>	<p>PS</p> <p>Office of Hunger Solutions (HS)</p> <p>Government Donor Relations Division (ERD)</p>	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>Taking into account the new range of instruments available, the updated safety net policy will clarify WFP's experience, roles and comparative advantages in supporting government safety net systems and contributing to social protection approaches. This will include defining the roles of the various food assistance instruments in safety net approaches.</p> <p>WFP recognizes the valuable contribution it can make to developing policy and capacity for the use of food-based safety net programmes. Efforts are being led by HS, which engages with heads of State and government, and chief executives of regional economic communities in Africa and other government bodies in Latin America and Asia.</p> <p>WFP participates in international events to ensure that its role and comparative advantages as implementing partner and technical adviser for safety nets are understood. For example, WFP seconds staff to the New Partnership for Africa's Development Planning and Coordination Agency and the Economic Community of West African States in support of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme.</p> <p>In 2010, ERD presented "Resourcing for a Changing Environment", (WFP/EB.1/2010/5-B/Rev.1) which highlighted WFP's advocacy for increased flexibility and predictability of funding through multi-year contributions, which would improve support for WFP programmes.</p>	<p>June 2012 (updated policy)</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>





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<p>Recommendation 5: Contribute to the development of national social protection systems. Where there is need for social protection, and space to contribute, the country office should analyse what WFP can do to help governments develop systems and improve their social protection and safety net activities; what they can do as part of larger consortia; and what roles are best left to others with more appropriate mandates and skills. Where possible, this analysis should be linked to development of the WFP country strategy, conducted transparently in collaboration with governments and main actors, and based on existing national strategies and policies.</p>	Hand-Over and Partnership Branch (ODXH)	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>Guidance materials and tools being developed for country offices will help them design national capacity development activities in consultation with governments, national institutions and development partners. These will also be used in the preparation of country strategies, country programmes, development projects and protracted relief and recovery operations.</p> <p>The goals of capacity development activities are to: i) promote national ownership of programmes assisted by WFP; and ii) improve food security programmes that are already nationally managed.</p> <p>A new approach to institutional gap analysis is being prepared, covering: i) socio-political situations; ii) national food security policies and strategies; and iii) programme delivery structures. WFP will focus on the second and third areas, including providing technical assistance. Based on the results of gap analyses, WFP will design capacity development programmes together with governments.</p>	December 2011
	HS	<p>HS, regional bureaux and technical units support country offices in helping governments design food and nutrition programmes – including safety nets – that attract new partnerships and funding from vertical funds such as the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program.</p>	Ongoing
<p>Recommendation 6: Continuously improve adherence to social protection good practice standards. As WFP institutionalizes capacity development for safety nets and social protection, leadership should focus on monitoring programme impact and quality according to indicators of good practice, linked to country project and programme reporting. Monitoring should take into account lessons emerging from WFP communities of practice and other knowledge management systems. Based on this monitoring, leadership should adjust systems, processes and resourcing to strengthen WFP's contribution at the global, regional and country levels. As indicators are defined and data collected, external impact evaluations should be conducted.</p>	PS, ODX	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>The updated policy will provide a foundation for effective monitoring and reporting by laying out WFP's role in social protection and safety nets, and articulating how food assistance forms part of a safety net, what the objectives of WFP participation in safety nets should be, and how to work with partners to support government-led safety net and social protection systems. It will also describe how to use combinations or sequences of instruments to achieve food assistance and safety net objectives more effectively.</p> <p>An impact assessment of various instruments used in safety nets is under way in six countries, to increase knowledge about the design of instruments for safety net food assistance; results will be available in 2012.</p>	June 2012 (updated policy)