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**Executive Board  
Second Regular Session**

**Rome, 8–11 November 2010**

## **EVALUATION REPORTS**

**Agenda item 6**

*For consideration*

# **E**

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## **SUMMARY EVALUATION REPORT OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY PROTRACTED RELIEF AND RECOVERY OPERATION 103871**

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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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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Occupied Palestinian Territory underwent protracted emergency and renewed crisis during the period under review, including major conflict at the end of 2008. The overall humanitarian situation deteriorated, particularly in the Gaza Strip, and the number of vulnerable people increased. The need for humanitarian assistance in the Occupied Palestinian Territory will continue for the foreseeable future, and the territory remains highly vulnerable to political developments.

Given growing impoverishment and chronic food insecurity, the protracted relief and recovery operation's objectives are broadly appropriate. The operation is coherent with other WFP programmes in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and is in line with wider WFP policies and objectives, including those for food-based security nets, protection and livelihoods. External coherence with Palestinian Authority policies is good, but has been diminished by the reversion to relief rather than recovery activities.

Conflict in the Gaza Strip was the main change in circumstances during the operation. WFP's response – replacing the Gaza Strip component of the protracted relief and recovery operation with an emergency operation – was successful, appropriate and justified.

After challenges in the early phases, the operation's relief components in support of vulnerable groups have been meeting their targets, despite some significant disruptions to the pipeline. However, recovery components have failed to meet theirs, particularly in food-for-work interventions. This is because of financial shortfalls, leading to the prioritization of relief interventions; capacity limitations among collaborating partners; and restrictions on the use of some donors' contributions.

Fluctuating and generally high logistics costs have been unavoidable, and are mainly a consequence of the procedures involved in transporting food into the Occupied Palestinian Territory. WFP has developed a strong supply chain, but this has been disrupted by problems that are largely outside WFP's control.

Cost efficiency has to be seen in the context of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, where food aid is not generally the most effective or efficient means of meeting food security needs. A comparison of costs of wheat flour delivery modes reveals that the most cost-efficient are local purchase and the current wheat swap arrangement. The most expensive mode is delivery of imported wheat flour. In assessing local purchase options, WFP should consider not only the downside of higher prices, but also the upside of more flexible and timely delivery, along with support for the local economy.

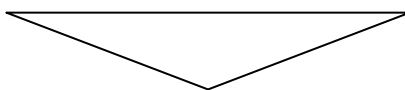
WFP food assistance through general food distribution, food for work and food for training has helped to mitigate the worst effects of economic decline on the food security of Palestinian households, and has benefited large numbers of impoverished and food-insecure people. Uneven food distribution did not significantly affect this general picture.

School feeding is popular with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education as well as with teachers, parents and pupils, generating considerable pressure for expansion. To ensure a rational expanded programme that attracts long-term funding, school feeding's impact on other programmes should be assessed, and its objectives should be clarified in light of this impact.

WFP food assistance to the Ministry of Social Affairs' programme of support to hospitals, orphanages and homes for the elderly is seen as critical; the Palestinian Authority's capacity to meet the needs of people in institutional care has been declining, and WFP support provides an interim measure until the Authority is able to resume its full responsibilities.

The evaluation makes 24 recommendations for improving WFP's operations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. These cover all operation components, procurement and logistics, finance, advocacy, planning, and monitoring and evaluation.

## DRAFT DECISION\*



The Board takes note of "Summary Evaluation Report Occupied Palestinian Territory Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation 103871" (WFP/EB.2/2010/6-F) and the management response in WFP/EB.2/2010/6-F/Add.1 and encourages further action on the recommendations, taking into account considerations raised by the Board during its discussion.

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\* This is a draft decision. For the final decision adopted by the Board, please refer to the Decisions and Recommendations document issued at the end of the session.

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## BACKGROUND

### Context

1. The Occupied Palestinian Territory underwent protracted emergency and renewed crisis during the period under review (September 2007 to August 2009), including major conflict at the end of 2008. The overall humanitarian situation deteriorated, particularly in the Gaza Strip, and the number of vulnerable people increased.
2. Policies of closure and blockade are fundamental to the humanitarian crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Other policies that contribute include land requisitions, house demolitions, displacement, and restrictions on access to land and basic services. In the West Bank settlement activity, the construction of the West Bank barrier and the closure policy have continued.
3. In the third quarter of 2009, unemployment was estimated at 42 percent in the Gaza Strip and 18 percent in the West Bank. Occupied Palestinian Territory per capita income in United States dollars is 78 percent of its 1999 level. In the Gaza Strip, 61 percent of the population was food-insecure in June 2009, and 80 percent receives humanitarian assistance of some kind. In the West Bank, food insecurity affected 25 percent in March 2009. The situation in the Gaza Strip became radically different from that in the West Bank, with major implications for the programming of humanitarian responses.
4. Refugees comprise 65 percent of the Gaza Strip's population of 1.42 million people, and 27 percent of the West Bank's 2.34 million people. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) has primary responsibility for supporting the refugee population; WFP is supporting the non-refugee population.
5. The need for humanitarian assistance in the Occupied Palestinian Territory will continue for the foreseeable future, and remains highly vulnerable to political developments.

### Description of the Operation

6. Table 1 summarizes recent, current and planned WFP operations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

<b>TABLE 1: RECENT, CURRENT AND PLANNED WFP OPERATIONS IN THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY</b>			
<b>Title</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>WFP budget (US\$ million)</b>	<b>Beneficiaries and activities (planned)</b>
PRRO 103870	September 2005–August 2007	81 (revised to 103)	Total: 480 000 Chronically poor: 188 300 Institutional feeding: 10 600 FFW/FFT: 281 100 new poor Support to olive producers
PRRO 103871 (subject to the evaluation; West Bank only from 2009)	September 2007-August 2009 (extended to June 2010)	107 (revised to 172)	Total 665 000 Destitute and institutional feeding 188 000 Vulnerable groups 75 000 FFW/FFT 189 000 FFE 90 000
EMOP 108170 (Gaza)	January 2009–December 2010	78 (for 2009)	365 000 (in 2009)
SO 108150 (Gaza)	Mid-January–end December 2009	3.3	Strengthening logistics coordination
EMOP 107740 (West Bank)	Sept. 2009–August 2010	6.7	Pilot project to provide cash vouchers for 5 500 families

PRRO = protracted relief and recovery operation; EMOP = emergency operation; SO = special operation; FFE = food for education; FFT = food for training; FFW = food for work

7. The objectives of PRRO 103871 were to meet the food needs of the most vulnerable food-insecure non-refugees and to support the Palestinian Authority (PA) in poverty reduction through productive activities and skills development. Its three basic components were:
  - protracted and emergency relief, mostly through general food distribution (GFD) to those most vulnerable, but also through school feeding;
  - recovery through support for productive activities and skills development through FFW and FFT;
  - enhanced knowledge, partnerships and advocacy.
8. The aim was to support needs-based interventions based on the socio-economic and livelihood profiles of beneficiaries.
9. The PRRO planned to assist 665,000 beneficiaries over two years, primarily through provision of 164,605 mt of food at a total overall cost of US\$107.2 million. Subsequent revisions extended the operation to June 2010 and increased the overall budget to US\$171.9 million.
10. In the course of PRRO 103871, WFP responded to the December 2008 conflict in the Gaza Strip with EMOP 108170 “Operation Lifeline Gaza”. As of January 2009, PRRO 103871 continued only in the West Bank, with 410,000 planned beneficiaries.

## Evaluation Features

11. The core method for the evaluation was to “implement traditional evaluation methods based on programme theory and logical framework approaches and to employ internationally agreed evaluation criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability”.
12. Methodological tools included documentary research, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used.
13. The PRRO logframes did not provide a coherent framework for the evaluation, which consisted largely of assessment against general objectives and summary targets. Baseline data proved to be very limited.
14. The evaluators thought that the process of evaluation was unduly protracted, and that stakeholder comments should be solicited as soon as the first draft of the evaluation report is ready. They also urge that the evaluation team be debriefed by OE at the end of the evaluation process.

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## PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

### Operation Design: Relevance and Appropriateness

#### ⇒ *Appropriateness*

15. Given the growing impoverishment and chronic food insecurity in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, PRRO objectives were broadly appropriate, though generally food rations are not the most effective or efficient means of meeting food security needs there. The project design’s favouring of productive activities and skills development – planned as 57 percent of the project – was also appropriate, as such recovery activities have greater impact and sustainability than relief or welfare components.
16. Infrastructural and economic conditions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory are comparatively developed, with market mechanisms well able to deliver food supplies unless deliberately disrupted. Policies of blockade and closure in particular have caused serious economic decline, especially in the Gaza Strip, and continuing increases in unemployment, impoverishment and hardship. These policies are also important factors determining market conditions and price mechanisms, but they have not generated food shortages: the problem has not been the availability of food but the declining purchasing power of large sections of the population.
17. In contrast to WFP operations in other parts of the world where the economic infrastructure is very weak, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory it is the economic value of the resources transferred to the vulnerable that matters, and not whether the resource is food, vouchers or cash. Voucher or cash mechanisms have considerable advantages given that: i) market mechanisms are able to provide food for purchase with vouchers or cash;<sup>1</sup> ii) food distributions involve very substantial overhead costs for transportation and distribution and are subject to disruptions; and iii) the management costs can be lower and the challenges different for voucher and cash schemes than for GFD.
18. However, it would be unwise to switch from GFD to vouchers or cash unless systems are in place. Programmes need to remain coherent with those of major stakeholders, and

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<sup>1</sup> During armed conflicts it may be impossible to deliver food to those who need it no matter what the mechanism.

changes will need to be introduced gradually. Nevertheless, the implications of this analysis of cash and vouchers should be carefully considered.

⇒ *Coherence*

19. The PRRO has been coherent with other WFP programmes in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and broadly coherent with wider WFP policies and objectives, including those on food-based security nets, protection and livelihoods.<sup>2</sup> External coherence with PA policies has been good, albeit diminished by the operation's shift from recovery back to relief activities. Coherence with the Consolidated Appeals Process and with other United Nations agencies has been good. Project design is broadly in line with that of the policies of major donors.<sup>3</sup> Coherence with the policies of local and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations is variable, which is inevitable given how much the policies differ. The programme is coherent with, and related to, the policies of WFP's main international NGO cooperating partners.

⇒ *Project design*

20. There were no evaluations of the WFP operations preceding PRRO. The nutrition portfolio of PRRO 103870 was reviewed in 2006, when the main nutritional problem in the Occupied Palestinian Territory was identified as micronutrient deficiency, and core recommendations included supporting the establishment of a nutrition surveillance system and introducing school feeding. School feeding was also identified as a priority in the 2006 after-action review, and was introduced as a pilot.

21. The after-action review also identified the need to improve results monitoring of the activities carried out under the PRRO. WFP has begun to do so, although monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems need to be strengthened further. The review recommended that targeting should be based on beneficiaries' socio-economic status and differentiated needs, and that a food security monitoring system (FSMS) be set up, including indicators for assessing impacts from different types of interventions, and for identifying who needed support at a given time. The FSMS has been set up through the WFP/Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Socio-Economic and Food Security (SEFSec) survey reports.

⇒ *Logical frameworks*

22. Two logframes were developed for PRRO 103871; the original was revised in 2009 to align it with WFP's revised Strategic Objectives for 2008–2013. Neither logframe offers an adequate framework for monitoring the project outcomes, and WFP has not used them for this purpose. Outcome indicators in the logframes are impractical as a means of measuring the impact of project activities on people's well-being. In particular, the indicator regarding the proportion of household expenditure devoted to food is unrealistic. Intermediate indicators are only weakly linked to their respective outcomes and outcome indicators. This means that only very rough judgements about the possible impacts of the interventions can be made, mainly by viewing them as an economic transfer.

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<sup>2</sup> The original project document did not make reference to WFP's pre-2008 Strategic Objectives, although they are used in the revised logframe of May 2009. These Strategic Objectives do not apply easily to conditions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

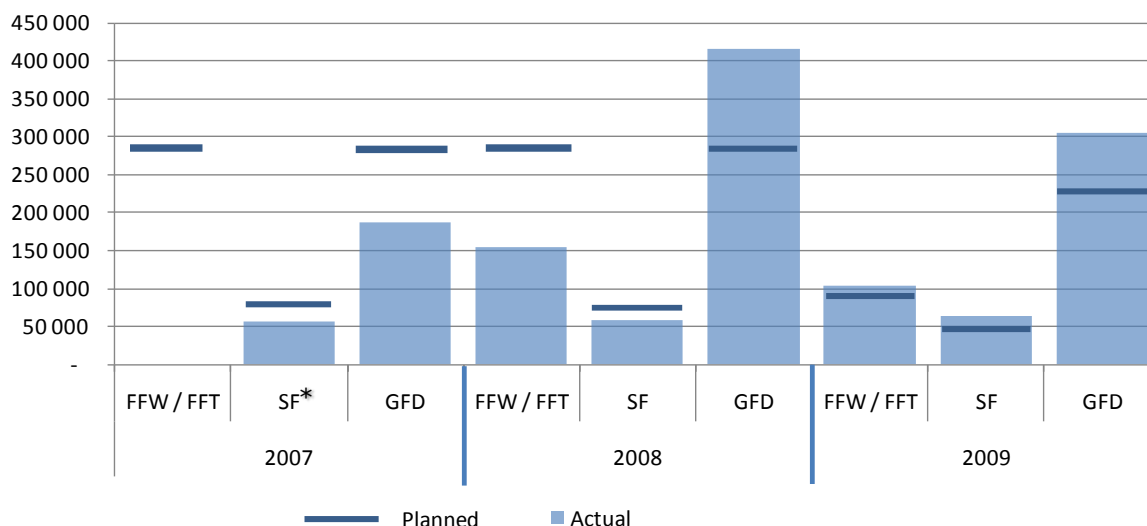
<sup>3</sup> Most donors are debating the appropriateness of food aid in the context of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and most of them support shifting from food aid towards alternative modes such as cash- and voucher-based schemes. WFP's move in this direction is thus generally coherent with donor policies.



## Outputs and Implementation Processes: Elements of Efficiency

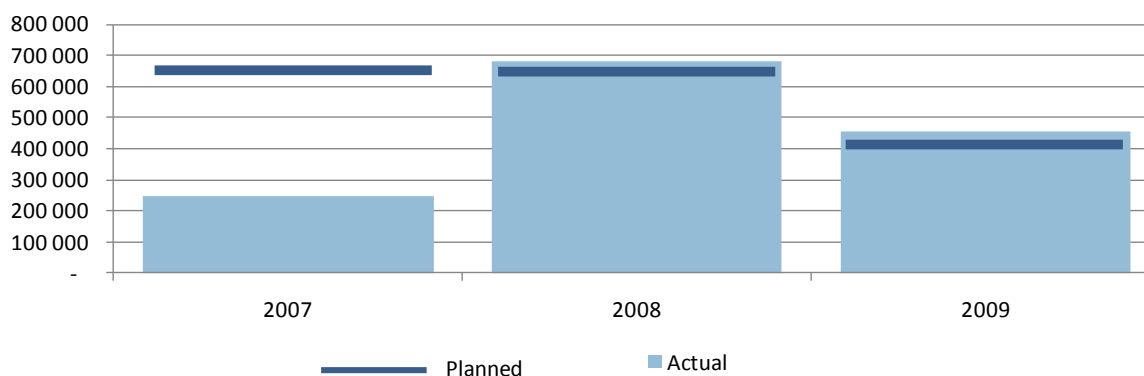
23. The numbers of planned versus actual beneficiaries for each programme activity are shown in Figures 1 and 2.

**Figure 1: Actual vs Planned Beneficiaries per Activity**



\* School feeding

**Figure 2: Actual vs Planned Total Beneficiaries**



24. The operation planned to provide 57 percent of assistance through recovery activities, and 43 percent through relief activities. In practice, the recovery component was 23 percent in 2007, 17 percent in 2008 and 19 percent in 2009. FFW and FFT were not implemented in the Gaza Strip, or in 2007 in the West Bank. Beneficiary numbers increased by 45 percent in 2008, as the number of hardship cases as determined by the Ministry of Social Affairs increased.

25. The difference between what was planned and what was implemented was mainly caused by shortfalls in funding, the constraints of working in the Gaza Strip, difficulties generated by the requirements of political restrictions (see paragraph 52), and by complications associated with two shipments of wheat flour, which created distribution delays.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> One shipment was too large given the shelf-life of the flour; another shipment contained flour that required further processing.

⇒ *Logistics and procurement*

26. Fluctuating and generally high logistics costs have been unavoidable, and are mainly a consequence of the closure policy and the elaborate procedures for transporting food to the Occupied Palestinian Territory. WFP has developed a strong supply chain, but this has been disrupted by problems largely outside the control of WFP regarding the timing of deliveries and the perceived quality of wheat flour from two major donations. Combined with decreases in donor funding, these led to a major but temporary shortage of funds in the second quarter of 2008.
27. Innovative commodity swaps and local food procurement have helped to overcome late availability of wheat flour and the complications of large numbers of very small-scale deliveries which, together with a dependence on international shipments, led to disruption of the supply chain and contributed to uneven food distributions.
28. Although rates for truck transport have remained steady, actual landside transport, storage and handling (LTSH) figures have fluctuated considerably depending on the crossings permitted and the amount of cargo passing through the port, in intermediate storage or available from local purchase. A high proportion of costs are attributable to elaborate Israeli security procedures.
29. Coordination of logistics with cooperating partners and other stakeholders has generally been good.

⇒ *Local purchase*

30. Where market conditions permit and cash can be used without restriction, local and regional purchases are more cost- and time-efficient than the alternatives. Although several local food procurement initiatives provided efficient and timely delivery systems, initial targets of one-third local procurement have not been achieved. The evaluators believe that there is good justification for favouring local purchase in view of the economic situations in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the gains in efficiency and timeliness, even if it is more expensive.

⇒ *Targeting*

31. Planned targeting of beneficiaries by category and need was generally appropriate, although there were significant shortfalls in what could be achieved and in the balance between relief and recovery activities.
32. In practice, targeting by category of beneficiary has shown mixed results. WFP's targeting review shows extremely high correlations – often of 100 percent – between beneficiaries and eligibility for benefits, but did not establish how many of those not receiving benefits were entitled to do so. The FAO/WFP SEFSec report for the Gaza Strip shows that half of those not receiving benefits of any kind – from UNRWA, WFP or others – should be doing so, while half of the 17 percent of the population at the top of the economic scale, who are classified as food-secure, are getting benefits. Interviews confirm that a wide range of factors complicate targeting of beneficiaries, including political restrictions (see paragraph 52).

⇒ *Monitoring and evaluation*

33. With the results-based monitoring toolkit now in use, WFP has developed a powerful resource for tracking how programmes operate and the results they produce. In practice, the full potential of this resource has not been realized, in part because the qualitative information entered in the database needs to be improved, which requires better training

and capacity development of field monitor assistants (FMAs). Additional monitors with a variety of expertise, such as in the technical components of FFW projects, are needed to complement the FMAs. In addition, the system does not capture as much information as it could and not every unit made full use of its reports. WFP's cooperating partners also need to improve their M&E capacities.

⇒ *Adaptation to changing needs*

34. The conflict in the Gaza Strip provided the main change in circumstances during the PRRO. WFP's response was successful and appropriate. The replacement of the Gaza Strip component of the PRRO with an EMOP was justified. Other changes were in response to political restrictions, which cannot always be avoided.

⇒ *Partnerships, coordination and transfer of competencies*

35. The main focus of WFP's capacity development initiatives has been on improving partners' efficiency in FFW and FFT activities and assistance to vulnerable groups. WFP also provided input for United States Agency for International Development (USAID) guidelines and restrictions. Staff of the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Agriculture, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and the Cooperative Housing Foundation (CHF) were trained in warehouse management. Additional training was provided in programme implementation, donor relations and monitoring.

⇒ *Internal institutional arrangements*

36. The country office is adequately staffed, with 94 staff members appropriately deployed in East Jerusalem, Gaza City, Hebron, Nablus and Ashdod port. The country office has developed effective links among offices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, with the regional bureau and with WFP Headquarters in Rome.

⇒ *Resourcing and cost efficiency*

37. The PRRO was adequately funded in its early months and a solid pipeline was established, although it was virtually impossible to work in the Gaza Strip in 2007 owing to travel restrictions. Early in 2008, complications with wheat flour shipments accompanied by the withdrawal of some funds meant the country office was compelled to reduce staff and curtail its activities for several months. Although the PRRO was only 75 percent funded in October 2009, lower tonnages delivered than planned and the replacement of the PRRO in the Gaza Strip by the EMOP enabled the PRRO to be extended.
38. Assessment of cost efficiency has to take into account the extraordinary context of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. A cost comparison of wheat flour delivery modes reveals that the most cost-efficient are local purchase and the current wheat swap arrangement whereby imported wheat grain is exchanged either for wheat flour milled in the Occupied Palestinian Territory or sometimes for freshly baked items. The most expensive mode is delivery of imported wheat flour. In assessing local purchase options in general, WFP should take into account such advantages as flexible and timely delivery and support for the local economy in addition to cost considerations.
39. The PRRO is vulnerable to direct support cost (DSC) cuts in an already limited DSC budget, owing to the extension of the PRRO on the same budget after the Gaza Strip component was transferred to the EMOP.

## Results

### ⇒ *General food distribution*

40. The outcome for GFD in the May 2009 logframe is “adequate food consumption over assistance period of targeted households at risk of falling into acute hunger”. Indicators are the household food consumption score and the percentage of household expenditure devoted to food. The latter is an indicator of limited value, as it is very difficult to assess.
41. However, there is no doubt that WFP food assistance through GFD, FFW and FFT has helped to mitigate the worst effects of economic decline on the food security of Palestinian households and has benefitted large numbers of impoverished and food-insecure people. Uneven food distribution did not significantly affect this general picture.
42. Except for the quality of wheat flour, particularly in specific consignments, beneficiaries indicated satisfaction with the quality of the food ration contents. However, they generally expressed a clear preference for voucher schemes, often based on experience with a previous International Committee of the Red Cross scheme.

### ⇒ *Food for work*

43. The FFW activities aimed to preserve agricultural and fishery assets, promote self-reliance, restore livelihoods and contribute to longer-term food security.<sup>5</sup> The main FFW focus has been on agriculture and land reclamation, but activities also included the rehabilitation or maintenance of community centres, municipal facilities, schools, kindergartens, clinics, hospitals and houses. From 2009, FFW activities concentrated entirely on the agriculture sector, and the planned scale of work was reduced significantly. A strength of the FFW programme has been its implementation by NGOs in collaboration with municipalities and with local committees that identify the FFW activities that will be carried out and the people who will participate in them.<sup>6</sup>

### ⇒ *Food for training*

44. FFT activities for income generation and vocational training aimed to contribute to self-reliance by imparting marketable skills and producing consumer products to support the diversification of livelihoods. As with FFW, there were fewer outputs than initially planned. More attention should be paid to providing training in marketable skills and to developing partnerships that would provide complementary support to enable training programme graduates to use their new skills.

### ⇒ *School feeding*

45. WFP introduced a school feeding project into the more food-insecure areas of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, based on snacks produced in the West Bank and Egypt. School feeding’s popularity with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, and with teachers, parents and pupils, is generating considerable pressure for expansion. To ensure that such expansion is rational and capable of attracting long-term funding, school feeding’s impact should be assessed and its objectives clarified.
46. The project logframe’s proposal of improved school attendance as a primary outcome is implausible because of the already high attendance rates. More plausible outcomes might

<sup>5</sup> Because FFW was not implemented in the Gaza Strip, the fishing activities were not implemented.

<sup>6</sup> The main NGOs were CRS and CHF. The Palestinian NGO *Ard al Atfal* also participated, but this proved unsuccessful.

include post-snack improvements in concentration – and therefore academic attainment – and reductions in micronutrient deficiencies. Economic transfer has also been proposed as an outcome. Unfortunately, nothing is in place to assess any of these potential outcomes. A study of the impact of school feeding against the outcomes should be established as a priority. This should include baseline studies in schools about to be incorporated into school feeding and in those that will not be incorporated in the near future.

⇒ *Institutional feeding*

47. Food assistance has been provided for the Ministry of Social Affairs's programme of support to hospitals, orphanages and homes for the elderly. WFP aimed to provide institutional feeding to 8 percent of the group categorized as "destitute" by the ministry. Given the PA's declining capacity to meet the needs of people in institutional care, WFP's support was seen as a critical interim measure until the PA is able to resume its full responsibilities. With the continued erosion of the capacity of the PA, particularly since 2006, the evaluators believe this to be a relevant form of support. Project reports do not provide disaggregated figures for the numbers of people being assisted in institutions.

## Cross-Cutting Issues

⇒ *Gender*

48. The project design aimed to mainstream gender throughout PRRO 103871. Women were to form 52 percent of beneficiaries overall, about 70 percent of participants in life-skills training and other FFT activities, and 21 percent of FFW participants. Women's associations were to be responsible for preparing the snacks for schools and kindergartens, and were to be paid an incentive for this. Women's associations were expected ultimately to take over full responsibility for school feeding. Women were expected to be 50 percent of local committees for FFW and FFT. In percentage terms, these outcomes were achieved for GFD, greatly exceeded for FFT, and greatly underachieved for FFW and for participation in local committees.
49. There are indications that men participate more than women in the economically productive activities promoted under FFW and FFT although the data are somewhat unclear and contradictory. However, it is not clear that greater participation correlates with greater benefit. Further analysis would be useful to establish how participation correlates with benefits.

⇒ *Advocacy*

50. Public advocacy initiatives under the PRRO have been comparatively limited, focusing on the SEFSec documents, which have provided a valuable benchmark and a useful input into policy formation for the PA and other stakeholders. While recognizing that WFP advocacy, especially on broader issues, needs to be coordinated with other United Nations agencies, the evaluators believe that it should be given greater priority. The recommendations section gives specific suggestions.

⇒ *Protection*

51. Protection issues have not been given priority in the PRRO, but support is provided for recent staff training initiatives to improve work in this area.

⇒ *Political restrictions*

52. Restrictions imposed on United Nations agencies, including WFP, limit the level of contact they are allowed to have with certain organizations, particularly Hamas. These restrictions have had a serious effect on the efficiency of the PRRO and jeopardized its timeliness and consistency. Given the important presence of these organizations, were the restrictions narrowly interpreted they would make providing assistance extremely difficult, with practical implications that could potentially lead to a conflict with humanitarian principles.

⇒ *Sale of wheat flour by beneficiaries*

53. Some beneficiaries sell their wheat flour rations because of perceived problems with the quality of wheat flour, or because they buy bread rather than baking it at home, especially in urban areas. Given that deriving economic benefits is one of the objectives of the operation, such sale should be seen in perspective and not allowed to jeopardize support for the PRRO. Further discussion of the issue is available in the main evaluation report.

⇒ *Food rations, vouchers and cash*

54. The WFP voucher programmes in the West Bank and Gaza Strip are not part of the PRRO and were reviewed only briefly, but were seen to be valuable options for Occupied Palestinian Territory programming. They make sense not only on grounds of improved effectiveness and efficiency, but also because of the greater dignity and choice afforded to beneficiaries. Cash-based schemes are in principle even more efficient and effective than voucher schemes, but may also be more difficult to manage.
55. Research commissioned by WFP, which is coherent with broader economic analysis, shows that food insecurity in the Occupied Palestinian Territory is caused primarily by the continuous decline in the population's purchasing power and not by the unavailability of food on the market. In these circumstances, voucher schemes do not have a significant impact on the food supply situation. Nevertheless they should be introduced incrementally and in negotiation with major stakeholders.<sup>7</sup>

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## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Overall Assessment

⇒ *Relevance and appropriateness*

56. In assessing the relevance and appropriateness of the PRRO, the central issues were related to how best to respond, assuming that WFP is unable to move very far from its core work of providing food aid – which generally is not the most appropriate form of humanitarian assistance in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Given its parameters, the PRRO has been relevant, appropriate and reasonably coherent in addressing the humanitarian needs of its beneficiaries. WFP's steps towards replacing food aid with vouchers are strongly supported.

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<sup>7</sup> Please see the discussion of this issue above in paragraphs 17 and 18. Further analysis is presented in the full evaluation report.

⇒ *Effectiveness*

57. Because of weaknesses in the PRRO logframes, effectiveness has been assessed against the PRRO's general objectives and targets. The relief components of the PRRO – in support of vulnerable groups – were generally effective in meeting their targets, except in the early phase of the operation, despite some significant disruptions to the pipeline. However, recovery components failed to meet targets, particularly in FFW interventions, because of funding shortfalls, which led to the prioritization of relief interventions; the capacity limitations of cooperation partners; and the difficulties of working with the political restrictions. Unintended effects included the perpetuation of dependency on welfare, but the evaluators believe that a substantial component of welfare provision and protracted relief is justified in the circumstances of the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

⇒ *Efficiency*

58. Cost efficiency has generally been good, given the exceptional circumstances in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Local purchase has generally been justified and should be extended; increases in cost may be considerable but could be offset by savings in overheads and could also be justifiable in terms of support to the local economy – although the impact needs to be carefully assessed case by case. Reliance on international NGOs as cooperating partners has added to costs, but has been the only realistic option. Timeliness was variable. Resources were generally adequate except for during a few months in 2008. Coordination with other stakeholders was generally good.

⇒ *Impact*

59. The overall impact of the PRRO, at both the macro and micro levels, can only be assessed in very general terms. The main impact has been to help arrest or reduce the decline in assets, purchasing power, food security and well-being of the sizeable target population by providing significant economic benefits. The more sustainable elements of the programme have augmented this impact, although not to the extent planned.

⇒ *Sustainability*

60. Relief activities undertaken under the PRRO are inherently unsustainable. Recovery activities have had varying degrees of sustainability, which have generally been highest for the agricultural rehabilitation activities of FFW. Sustainable FFT activities were unduly limited. The Ministry of Education and Higher Education's potential to assume long-term responsibility for school feeding represents another possible sustainable component.

61. Genuinely, sustainable income and food security will only be achievable if and when a political settlement is reached and the closure regime is lifted. For chronic humanitarian emergencies, such as in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the sustainability of resourcing for relief and recovery initiatives is itself a crucial issue, which is separate from the sustainability of the activities promoted.

62. WFP's capacity to maintain its interventions under the PRRO has been constrained by the limitations, uncertainties and timeframe of funding commitments, and the PRRO's vulnerability to destabilization or disruption because of such factors as perceived problems with wheat flour quality and onward sales of flour. Problems connected with political restrictions are likely to continue.

⇒ *Summary of main evaluation criteria*

63. The criteria can be summarized in terms of the PRRO's overall aims:
- provision of protracted and emergency relief assistance;
  - recovery through support for productive activities and skills development; and
  - provision of an enhanced knowledge base, partnerships and advocacy.
64. In Table 2, which summarizes the evaluation's findings, the relevance of relief and recovery aspects are considered in relation to whether they meet humanitarian needs, rather than whether they are the most relevant modes.

<b>TABLE 2: SUMMARY OF EVALUATION FINDINGS</b>					
	<b>Relevance</b>	<b>Effectiveness</b>	<b>Efficiency</b>	<b>Sustainability</b>	<b>Impact</b>
Relief	High	Good, despite some discontinuity	Good in relation to the Occupied Palestinian Territory circumstances	Not applicable	Good; some discontinuity
Recovery	High	Low	Limited	Limited; could be greater	Limited; less than planned
Knowledge base	High	Not fully realized (underused)	Low	Good	Not fully realized
Partnerships	High	Varied	Varied	Varied; not always stable	Limited; varied
Advocacy (public)	High in United Nations context	Good	Good	Good, improved	Fair

### **Main Issues for the Future**

65. Conditions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory mean that the need for humanitarian assistance is likely to continue for the foreseeable future. Although there is still a need to provide a social safety net for the most vulnerable, interventions with sustainable components have more impact and are more appropriate, effective and efficient than relief or welfare. Increased capacity to incorporate interventions with sustainable components is an important issue for a future PRRO.
66. Food rations are not the most appropriate or efficient form of relief or recovery assistance in the Occupied Palestinian Territory's circumstances. The dilemma for WFP is how far and how fast it should aim to transform such programmes, and whether and at what point to hand over responsibility to other agencies, such as those able to implement cash-based alternatives.
67. The future of the school feeding programme, currently still in pilot form, is a major question for WFP. There is an urgent need to assess the impact and establish the objectives of this programme before further funds are committed.



68. It will be important to assess and prioritize the sustainable elements of recovery activities, especially FFW. For FFT, this involves prioritizing training in marketable skills. WFP should establish whether it can work with other partners in FFW and FFT activities and whether it has the capacity to manage an increase in local partners.
69. Political restrictions are likely to continue to generate severe problems for this and any succeeding PRRO. Onward sales of wheat flour may also continue to generate difficulties, unless donors change their approach to this issue.
70. Local purchase is a central issue. The innovative arrangements that evolved should be developed and expanded, even where the cost implications are significant.
71. WFP's capacity to maintain its interventions under the PRRO has been constrained by the limitations, uncertainties and timeframes of funding commitments.
72. Advocacy is an important issue for the future. WFP should lobby on questions of protection and humanitarian access, with particular reference to food. Lobbying of Israeli authorities should be a priority in an advocacy strategy.

## Recommendations

### ⇒ *General food distribution*

73. **Recommendation 1:** The country office should continue its initiatives to replace GFD with voucher-based schemes. Expansion of such schemes should be on a controlled and incremental basis, with careful attention to the lessons learned from pilot projects and the requirements for adequate monitoring and management.
74. **Recommendation 2:** If its mandate allows, the country office should explore the option of replacing GFD with cash-based schemes, initially on the West Bank, even if this means having another agency implement the operation. Management requirements should be carefully determined.
75. **Recommendation 3:** Further research into targeting is needed and should sample the population as a whole. The methodological limitations identified in the targeting review, especially the focus on existing beneficiaries, should be recognized.

### ⇒ *Food for work and food for training*

76. **Recommendation 4:** FFT and FFW initiatives should put much greater emphasis on assessing long-term outcomes and prioritizing initiatives with sustainable components that promote livelihoods. For FFT, this means prioritizing training in marketable skills.
77. **Recommendation 5:** The country office should consider prioritizing the planting of olive trees under FFW.
78. **Recommendation 6:** The country office should institute spot checks and assessments of work completed under FFW.
79. **Recommendation 7:** The country office should consider working with more and a variety of types of partners in FFW and FFT initiatives. Selection of cooperating partners should be based primarily on interest in and capacity for identifying and supporting programmes that promote livelihoods, rather than on targeting vulnerable people. Priority should be given to local NGOs, or to international NGOs willing and able to work with local NGOs. For this, WFP will need to expand its management capacity appropriately.

⇒ *School feeding*

80. **Recommendation 8:** The current pilot project should not be expanded until the proposed consultancy on school feeding is complete and the proposed research into impact has been planned. Important elements of an impact study are set out in Annex A of the main evaluation report.

⇒ *Institutional feeding*

81. **Recommendation 9:** Institutional feeding should be continued along current lines, but should still be considered an interim measure until the PA is able to resume its responsibilities.

⇒ *Procurement and logistics*

82. **Recommendation 10:** The country office should expand the local purchase of food items even when prices are higher, because this both supports the local economy and improves the efficiency, effectiveness, flexibility and timeliness of deliveries. The country office should develop guidelines on acceptable cost premiums for local purchase, taking such other benefits into account.

83. **Recommendation 11:** In considering local purchases, the country office should analyse all costs involved, and establish who benefits from such initiatives and their impact on the local economy.

84. **Recommendation 12:** The country office should study the effectiveness and impact of purchasing vegetable oil locally, including the option of importing oilseed for local milling.

85. **Recommendation 13:** The country office should review the option of purchasing olive oil locally, whether regularly or occasionally; if this appears feasible, a study of the impact of such an initiative should be commissioned.

86. **Recommendation 14:** WFP should develop a secure, hand-held, electronic system of receipt and delivery accounting for use at warehouses and other delivery points.

87. **Recommendation 15:** WFP should consider moving the intermediary warehouse in the Gaza Strip away from its insecure location near the border, and relocating the intermediary warehouse for the West Bank within the West Bank, to complement better the contingency stocks held by cooperating partners.

⇒ *Finance*

88. **Recommendation 16:** WFP Headquarters should develop the capacity to provide greater interim financial support in response to temporary funding crises.

⇒ *Advocacy*

89. **Recommendation 17:** In collaboration with other United Nations agencies, the country office should advocate with the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) and/or other Israeli authorities to: i) allow Palestinian trucks to start loading at Kerem Shalom as soon as cargo is available; ii) install lighting to allow movement after dark; and iii) handle transport waybills in a recognized professional manner.

90. **Recommendation 18:** In collaboration with other United Nations agencies, the country office should take a lead in explaining the practical impact of the political restrictions on the effectiveness of humanitarian operations, and the extent to which they undermine

humanitarian responsibilities. The objective would be to have the restrictions modified, in both theory and practice.

91. **Recommendation 19:** In collaboration with other United Nations agencies, the country office should advocate to mitigate the impact of closure and blockade. In particular, WFP should focus on efforts to lift restrictions on the commercial shipment of specific foods and on the reopening of the Gaza Strip crossing points.

⇒ *Planning, monitoring and evaluation*

92. **Recommendation 20:** Logframes for the next PRRO should be better aligned with the context of the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the goals to be achieved and should include relevant and – where possible – measurable indicators. The logframes should be based firmly on the realities of the operation and be clearly connected to WFP Strategic Objectives.
93. **Recommendation 21:** Monitoring and reporting procedures should be based on indicators developed in the revised logframes.
94. **Recommendation 22:** FMA training should be improved, especially with regard to qualitative assessment.
95. **Recommendation 23:** The work of programme and M&E staff should be more closely integrated.
96. **Recommendation 24:** After an initial quality check, the first draft of a WFP evaluation report should be circulated to all WFP stakeholders so that inputs and comments can be made concurrently and at an early date. The evaluation team should be debriefed by OE at or near the end of the evaluation process.

## ACRONYMS USED IN THIS DOCUMENT

CHF	Cooperative Housing Foundation
COGAT	Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
DSC	direct support costs
EMOP	emergency operation
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FFE	food for education
FFT	food for training
FFW	food for work
FMA	field monitor assistant
FSMS	food security monitoring system
GFD	general food distribution
LTSH	landside transport, storage and handling
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
NGO	non-governmental organization
PA	Palestinian Authority
PRRO	protracted relief and recovery operation
SEFSec	Socio-Economic and Food Security
SO	special operation
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
USAID	United States Agency for International Development