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**Executive Board  
Second Regular Session**

**Rome, 9–13 November 2009**

# REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ON OPERATIONAL MATTERS

Agenda item 10

*For information\**



Distribution: GENERAL  
**WFP/EB.2/2009/10-C/1**  
2 October 2009  
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

## **PROTRACTED RELIEF AND RECOVERY OPERATIONS APPROVED BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (1 JANUARY – 30 JUNE 2009) – BANGLADESH 100454**

**Assistance to Refugees from Myanmar**

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**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. In late 1991 and early 1992 approximately 250,000 Rohingya refugees from Myanmar's Northern Rakhine State sought refuge in Bangladesh after fleeing ethnic and religious persecution. At the request of the Government of Bangladesh, WFP and the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) began providing assistance to the refugees in 1992. During the mid-1990s 200,000 Rohingyas were repatriated to Myanmar and by 1997 fewer than 25,000 refugees remained in two camps in Bangladesh, a population that has increased through natural growth to 30,000. There has been no repatriation since 2005, but resettlement to third countries has recently become an option for a small portion of the refugees.
2. The refugees are not allowed to engage in income-earning activities or obtain higher education in Bangladesh, and are thus wholly dependent on humanitarian assistance. In June 2008, a UNHCR–WFP joint assessment mission (JAM) was undertaken with the participation of the Government of Bangladesh. The JAM recommended that humanitarian agencies step up their efforts to help the refugees become self-reliant. This complements the advocacy efforts undertaken with the Government of Bangladesh by UNHCR, the United Nations country team in Bangladesh and the Dhaka Steering Group, comprising several diplomatic missions, to create conditions for the refugees to achieve self-reliance until the situation in Myanmar is conducive to repatriation.
3. WFP's PRRO runs from January 2009 until December 2010 involving 13,379 mt of food for 30,500 beneficiaries. WFP's assistance forms part of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for Bangladesh (UNDAF 2006–2010) and contributes to fulfilling WFP's Strategic Objective 1 to save lives and protect livelihoods in emergencies; Strategic Objective 3 to restore and rebuild lives and livelihoods in post-conflict, post-disaster or transition situations; and Strategic Objective 4 to reduce chronic hunger and undernutrition. It also supports the achievement of Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 1 to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, MDG 2 to achieve universal primary education, MDG 4 to reduce child mortality and MDG 5 to improve maternal health.
4. Continued international humanitarian support to the refugee population is necessary given that the host Government, local communities and non-governmental organizations do not have the capacity to substitute the inputs provided by WFP. The phasing out of WFP food assistance is contingent upon the refugees attaining self-reliance, which is heavily dependent on the policy of the Government of Bangladesh. Until an agreement is reached between UNHCR, the Government of Bangladesh and the Government of the Union of Myanmar on the future of the Rohingya refugees, hand-over is premature.
5. In collaboration with UNHCR and other partners WFP has increased its activities in support of livelihoods and self-reliance. WFP activities continuing under this phase of the PRRO include general food distribution, supplementary and therapeutic feeding and school meals. New activities to support livelihood development include kitchen gardens, income-generating activity training, cash transfers and a small-grants scheme.