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**Executive Board
Annual Session**

Rome, 8–12 June 2009

REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ON OPERATIONAL MATTERS

Agenda item 11

*For information**



Distribution: GENERAL
WFP/EB.A/2009/11-B/3
24 April 2009
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

PROTRACTED RELIEF AND RECOVERY OPERATIONS APPROVED BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (1 JULY–31 DECEMBER 2008) — NEPAL 10058.6

Food Assistance to Bhutanese Refugees

Number of beneficiaries	102,000 (yearly maximum)
Duration of project	24 months (1 January 2009–31 December 2010)
WFP food tonnage	36,862 mt
Cost (United States dollars)	
WFP food cost	18,824,141
Total cost to WFP	26,797,786

* 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 started to enter Nepal in the early 1990s following the enforcement of restrictive citizenship laws by the Government of Bhutan. In 1992, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and WFP, at the request of the Government of Nepal, started providing food, shelter and non-food assistance. In 1993, Nepal and Bhutan initiated negotiations to find solutions for the Bhutanese refugees living in Nepal. However, no progress has been made in either repatriating the 108,000 refugees to Bhutan or integrating them in Nepal.
2. In 2008, the Government of Nepal finally agreed to consider third-country resettlement as a viable option for the refugees. While some of the refugees may choose to stay in Nepal, or hold out hoping that Bhutan may eventually agree for some to return, the majority of the refugees are likely to be resettled in Australia, Canada, Denmark, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway and the United States of America. As of October 2008, approximately 5,000 people had already resettled in seven countries. Over the next five years, 15,000 to 20,000 refugees per year are expected to be resettled in a third country.
3. WFP and UNHCR have regularly carried out joint assessment missions (JAM) since the beginning of the operation. The findings of the latest JAM, conducted in June 2008, constitute the basis for the new phase of this protracted relief and recovery operation (PRRO). As per JAM recommendations, in January 2007, WFP assumed the responsibility of the management of food distribution previously handled by UNHCR. The 2008 JAM found that the camps continue to be well managed, noted that the refugees remain entirely reliant upon external assistance for their daily subsistence and recommended continued support.
4. This two-year PRRO is in line with WFP's Strategic Plan for 2008–2011 and follows the Programme's vision, mission and Strategic Objectives, mainly in saving lives and protecting livelihoods (Strategic Objective 1) and reducing chronic hunger and undernutrition (Strategic Objective 4). Approximately 102,000 refugees in seven camps will benefit from WFP food assistance programmes in 2009; the number is expected to decrease to 81,000 in 2010. An estimated 2,500 malnourished children, pregnant and lactating women and chronically ill patients will receive additional assistance under a supplementary feeding programme in 2009; the number is expected to decrease to 2,000 in 2010.
5. WFP will continue to support supplementary activities including vocational training, home gardens and income-generating activities that promote self-sufficiency among the refugee population. WFP will also continue to ensure the active participation of women refugees in the management and distribution of food. This PRRO will continue to complement the activities of UNHCR, the Government and non-governmental organization partners.