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SUMMARY OF THE WORK OF THE FIRST REGULAR SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD, 2008

In accordance with the methods of work of the Executive Board, the present document reflects the main points of its deliberations to be taken into account by the Secretariat in the implementation of the Board's decisions and recommendations, contained in the document WFP/EB.1/2008/15.

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CURRENT AND FUTURE STRATEGIC ISSUES

Current and Future Strategic Issues (2008/EB.1/1)

WFP Strategic Plan (2008–2011): First Draft (2008/EB.1/3)

1. The outgoing President of the Board welcomed all participants, particularly new members of the Board and new colleagues, and expressed appreciation to outgoing members. During 2007, the Board had taken important steps in the areas of policy, resource management and financial oversight and had made important progress on its governance and oversight agenda.
2. The Executive Director welcomed the incoming President, new members of the Bureau and all present. She presented the Board with an overview of the current context and challenges for WFP. World food prices were at record highs, with grain stocks at their lowest levels ever. Progress had been made on the draft of WFP's Strategic Plan 2008-2011, which sought to address those challenges; it had been discussed in several consultations with the Board, and the Executive Director expressed her hope that there would be consensus on it by the Annual Session of the Board in June.
3. The right to food was high on the global agenda. WFP enjoyed the backing of 87 nations and public support had grown to record levels, including through internet-based interactive tools. WFP had helped focus attention on hunger at the World Economic Forum in Davos, where it had provided a forum for humanitarian action; and in the introduction to a recent landmark edition of the scientific journal *The Lancet* dedicated to hunger. In 2007, WFP had received the second-largest amount of contributions on record. It had worked in partnership with 3,000 community-based and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the Rome-based agencies and other United Nations organizations. United Nations coherence and "Delivering as One" pilots were central to WFP's work, and WFP was a leader within the United Nations on governance and ethics issues.
4. Some of the steps WFP was taking to face current challenges and provide solutions to hunger were: assessing the effect of food price increases on operations; ensuring that vulnerability analysis and needs assessment were capturing the new face of hunger; increasing local and regional purchases from the developing world and exploring new procurement and market potential; monitoring the most vulnerable countries more closely; conducting consultations with hunger and food security experts; developing humanitarian response options together with NGOs; setting up an internal task force to explore the most effective programme responses; and engaging the Board in examining the impact of food prices and possible responses.
5. The Executive Director introduced the Fill the Cup Campaign to call attention to the attainable goal of feeding every hungry school child. The campaign was to be launched officially on 7 February in Milan by the President of Ghana His Excellency John Agyekum Kufuor and WFP Goodwill Ambassador Kakà.
6. Members of the Board thanked the outgoing President and other Bureau members and welcomed unanimously new Board leadership and members. They expressed their support to WFP staff members and condolences for workers who had been injured, detained or killed. The Board commended the Executive Director on her work in analysing the situation of hunger and formulating strategies for the direction of WFP. One Board member expressed regret that there had been no specific presentation made to introduce the



first draft of the Strategic Plan during the session and added that informal consultations could not replace the Executive Board.

7. Board members recognized progress made in formulating the Strategic Plan. They asked for more specific information on the tools to be used to attain the Strategic Objectives. They encouraged WFP to further integrate its development assistance into country-led processes and to ensure linkages between the Strategic Plan and the WFP gender policy. Many Board members warned against the prioritization of Strategic Objectives as being too restrictive; others asked that the criteria for setting necessary priorities should be made clear. While some members encouraged WFP to align its programme categories with donor funding categories, others warned against strict compartmentalization of relief and development activities.
8. Members asked for clearer articulation of WFP's partnerships with other United Nations agencies, NGOs and governments, emphasizing the need for coordination to avoid duplication of efforts and to identify gaps in service provision. Greater involvement of host governments and beneficiary communities would improve local ownership and programme sustainability following hand-over; the Board commended WFP's increasing use of local procurement as a positive step in this direction. Board members asked for more clarification on the issues of capacity-building; on how monitoring and evaluation would be incorporated into the Plan; and on the main changes in approach being taken by WFP in the new Strategic Plan.
9. Responding to these comments, the Executive Director reminded the Board that additional informal consultations on the draft of the Strategic Plan would be held before the 2008 Annual Session, and that many of the specific points raised could be discussed in greater detail then. She thanked the members for their support and reiterated WFP's commitment to integrating its own and the Board's ideas into the Strategic Plan, including the need to identify innovative financing mechanisms, enhance partnerships and increase capacity-building.
10. Following this item, the Executive Director made a short presentation about WFP staff in the field facing challenging situations, paid tribute to the victims of the Algiers bombing in December and announced the winners of the WFP staff awards.

ANNUAL REPORTS

Annual Report for 2007 to ECOSOC and FAO Council (2008/EB.1/2)

11. Introducing the Annual Report, the Secretariat indicated that this year's report highlighted activities in support of United Nations reform and inter-agency cooperation, including the humanitarian cluster system, the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and the Consolidated Appeals Process, and outlined WFP's increasing involvement in United Nations "Delivering as One" pilots. The report took into account comments made last year by the Board. It provided more information on the zero tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse, and presented joint programmes (JPs) thematically; major areas of JP programming were HIV/AIDS, education and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Because collaboration among the Rome-based United Nations agencies had been reported in a separate paper, presented to the Board in 2007, that section in the report was concise. During 2007, climate change had emerged as a priority for the entire United Nations system.



12. The Board welcomed the document as reflecting WFP's commitment to collaboration, including with other United Nations agencies, the World Bank and NGOs, and applauded WFP's achievements. A major concern was the extent to which the CERF represented an additional funding source for WFP, rather than a diversion of direct donor funding. Among other issues, Board members wanted more information on the impact of inter-agency collaboration within countries and on WFP programmes; whether the cluster approach had led to savings and increased efficiency; gender mainstreaming in logistics and humanitarian operations; targeting, monitoring and evaluation; and the roles of different agencies in JPs and collaboration programmes. The report's reference to the United Nations as a donor was regarded as inaccurate, or a different terminology was needed.
13. Responding to these comments, the Secretariat noted that there was some difficulty in assessing whether CERF represented additional or alternative funds and to identify the original donors of funding that WFP received via the United Nations. The Secretariat clarified that all "Delivering as One" activities were pilots, which would be evaluated before deciding whether to support further roll-out. The greater focus on food security requested by some Board members was challenging in countries where food security was regarded as part of social safety nets rather than a separate theme. It was also difficult to assess which of WFP's child hunger joint activities with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) could be ascribed to the Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition Initiative (ECHUI).
14. As joint leaders of the telecommunications cluster, WFP and UNICEF were in agreement that the cluster should have only one lead agency, but because not all agencies agreed, no change was imminent. WFP would be prepared to head the cluster. WFP wanted to see its staff members chosen as United Nations Humanitarian Coordinators, in addition to the Resident Coordinator posts already held by staff members. The Secretariat believed that involvement in the United Nations Development Group was beneficial to WFP and that UNDG benefited from the practical experience WFP brought to its discussions.

POLICY ISSUES

WFP's Private-Sector Partnership and Fundraising Strategy (2008/EB.1/4)

15. The Secretariat presented the document on WFP private-sector partnership and fundraising strategy, which had been discussed previously with the Board at informal consultations. The document retained the overarching private-sector policy framework approved by the Executive Board, while adding a specific quantitative goal for the cash component. It proposed a self-financing model for private-sector partnership and fundraising, with regular updates to the Board.
16. Board members commended the Secretariat on the strategy and the self-financing arrangements, which had the potential to support WFP operations. They emphasized the importance of appropriate screening of potential private-sector partners and of taking care that publicity generated did not compromise the neutrality of the United Nations. Attention was drawn to the importance of maintaining a firewall between fundraising from the private sector and providing benefits to it; it was requested that the External Auditor keep the matter under review. They urged that fundraising be fully aligned with the Strategic Plan and its objectives, with emphasis on the added value for the beneficiaries of WFP's activities.



17. The Secretariat was asked how agreements would be structured with the private sector and was asked to provide more details on marketing and communications strategies. Several members put forward that a 20 percent management fee was not sufficient, saying the industry average of 25 percent was more appropriate, especially given the climate of decreasing resources and increasing costs. The Board asked how the Secretariat would determine its interest rate for loans. It was suggested that the resource base be expanded and that country offices be involved in that expansion. Some members encouraged emphasis on smaller, private companies and individuals rather than on large, publicly-traded corporations, especially in countries whose economies were led by small- or medium-sized enterprises. There was concern that given the potential in the private sector, US\$200 million was too low a benchmark for 2017 fundraising.
18. Members stressed the fact that governance of WFP remained the sole responsibility of the Board and inter-governmental bodies. The Board looked forward to clear and transparent reporting on progress made on the strategy and to providing oversight of that progress. The Secretariat was encouraged to incorporate into the strategy elements from the recent meeting of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Finance Committee.
19. The Secretariat responded to the Board's observations and concerns by stressing that it was taking appropriate steps to screen private-sector partners. The management fee would be looked into; other organizations' rates varied from 17 to 30 per cent, sometimes depending on the volume handled in a given year. WFP was aiming to take on 20 global humanitarian partners; it also welcomed contributions from smaller, private-sector enterprises and individuals.

RESOURCE, FINANCIAL AND BUDGETARY MATTERS

Progress Report on the Implementation of the External Auditor's Recommendations (2008/EB.1/5)

20. The Secretariat introduced the report in the presence of the External Auditor. The Secretariat had been making such reports at every Board meeting, but it had been suggested by the FAO Finance Committee and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions that the frequency of the reports could be examined.
21. Several Board members suggested that receiving one progress report per year would allow for sufficient detail. Board members asked if there was a link between the External Auditor's recommendation on profile-raising and the WFP private-sector partnership strategy. Requests were made for updates on compliance with the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) and the WFP Information Network and Global System II (WINGS II); Board members were interested to know the consequences of deferring certain aspects of WINGS II until after the second release.
22. The Secretariat responded that a decision on the frequency of publishing would be based on recommendations made by various advisory committees; until these were received the current practice of reporting at each meeting would continue. In the context of decentralization, a review and streamlining of the functions of Headquarters, Regional Bureaux and country offices had been undertaken. WFP was on track for IPSAS implementation, working closely with other United Nations organizations, and had made additional improvements to the financial accounting reporting.



23. The External Auditor commended WFP on implementing IPSAS in 2008, ahead of many of the United Nations organizations that were to begin implementation in 2010. The Deputy Executive Director commented that given the interest in WINGS II, the Secretariat would offer to hold an informal information session on the project to bring interested members up to date on progress made toward release.

Update on the WFP Management Plan (2008–2009) (2008/EB.1/6)

24. The Chief Financial Officer explained that while the document was presented to the Board for information, and therefore normally would not be discussed, the Secretariat decided to put it on the agenda given the importance of the issues contained in the document. The Director of the Office of Budget and Financial Planning presented the update, explaining that US\$5.4 billion was budgeted for operations in the WFP Management Plan (2008–2009). However, the impact of escalating food and fuel prices and the weakening of the United States dollar would add an additional US\$734 million to the cost of operations, and new projects and increases had added US\$228 million. Thus, conservative estimates were that US\$6.4 billion would be required to meet current operational requirements for 2008–2009. Revisions to individual project budgets would follow the General Rules and be approved by the Executive Director or the Board.
25. Board members wondered exactly what WFP planned to do in the face of rising prices and requested more information on the impact the increases would have on operations and staffing. It was suggested that the Secretariat's estimate of the additional funding required could be too conservative. Board members requested frequent updates on the impacts of fluctuations in food and fuel prices and the exchange rate on WFP costs and its Programme of Work. They also asked whether WFP had taken prior account of the risk of such sharp price increases and how to deal with them, including through hedging. The Board stressed the importance of enhanced cooperation between United Nations agencies in future activities and the need to be flexible.
26. Members of the Board urged WFP to prioritize in order to deal with rising costs and to avoid having donors set the priorities through earmarking of contributions. Others cautioned against cutting into assistance to beneficiaries. Many agreed that there were no short-term solutions to the cost increases.
27. The Secretariat indicated that the current cost increases were unprecedented in the history of WFP. The agency was reaching out to experts to help analyse the problem and propose solutions; it was vital to work together. The Secretariat agreed with Board members on the importance of providing the Board with regular, structured information. Effective risk management and needs assessments would help ensure money was channeled efficiently; measures such as local purchase had an important role to play. The Secretariat was looking into the possibility of hedging, but there were stipulations on contributions that could affect the use of that option. A review of staff was ongoing and a reduction in the number of PSA-funded posts had been agreed. A reassignment exercise was underway to place as many staff as possible on alternate positions. One concern was how to keep staff motivated and committed during this exercise.
28. The issue of security would mean additional resource requirements; since the Algiers bombing in December, many United Nations field locations were being considered for security level upgrading, which would involve extra costs.



EVALUATION REPORTS

Peer Review of the Evaluation Function at the World Food Programme (2008/EB.1/7)

29. The Chair of the peer review panel presented the evaluation summary. One purpose of peer reviews was to stimulate discussion; the Secretariat – especially its Office of Evaluation – had been open and cooperative with the panel, as had the Board. The review had concentrated on assessing the independence, credibility and utility of WFP's evaluation function. The Chair highlighted three points in his presentation. First, although many country offices had monitoring systems that served their own needs very well, there was no comprehensive WFP-wide monitoring system to provide reliable feedback and learning at different levels. Second, interactions with stakeholders were limited; more should be done to consult governments, share experiences with international and national partner organizations, and improve accountability, especially to beneficiaries. Third, decentralized evaluations were weak and needed improved quality, resources and management support.
30. The Secretariat presented its response to the panel's 34 recommendations, emphasizing its commitment to improving evaluations, including a new evaluation policy. Two of the recommendations required discussion and decisions from the Board.
31. The Board welcomed the panel's recommendations and the Secretariat's response. It underlined the importance of maintaining the independence of the evaluation function, providing it with adequate resources and better learning from mistakes. There was still a gap between policy and practice in evaluation. Many members felt that evaluation findings did not seem to contribute to policy formation or results-based management. Capacity-building of staff and stakeholders was also needed; WFP should aim to become a learning-based agency.
32. Responding to these and other Board comments, the Chair of the peer review panel described how panel members were selected according to criteria set by a task force and the United Nations Evaluation Group norms for evaluations. Members came from bi- and multilateral agencies, non-governmental organizations and consultants; panels included evaluation experts in humanitarian and development areas. The United Nations intended to increase its use of peer evaluations.
33. The Board did not have a unified position on the establishment of a sub-committee on evaluation as suggested in the peer review, but made a number of alternative suggestions for improving reporting to the Board.
34. The Secretariat explained that the Office of Evaluation had provided the management response to this evaluation because it covered that office. The Office of Evaluation would continue to hold annual informal consultations with the Board to discuss evaluation topics, including how to report evaluation findings to the Board. Summaries of all operation evaluations would be presented annually and of all strategic evaluations once every two years. Measures were being put in place to increase quality assurance, stakeholder consultations and the utility of evaluations. The Office of Evaluation was working to increase staff interest in evaluations and, resources permitting, hoped to publish lessons learned on a Web site. A percentage of posts in the Office of Evaluation were filled by externally recruited evaluation professionals, while staff from within WFP provided useful insight into WFP operations. The new evaluation policy would address many of the issues

raised in the peer panel's recommendations, including increasing outcome and impact assessment and differentiating the roles of management and the Evaluation Department.

35. The Secretariat concluded by reiterating the Executive Director's commitment to oversight and evaluation and to establishing WFP as an organization that "got the right things done in the right way".

PRESENTATIONS BY REGIONAL DIRECTORS

Regional Bureaux for Africa

36. The Regional Director for Southern, Eastern and Central Africa reported that the region continued to be severely affected by increasingly frequent droughts and floods, displacement due to natural disasters or conflict (or both) and HIV/AIDS. Repeated shocks had eroded people's resilience and was exhausting their coping mechanisms, leading to progressively greater vulnerability. The population of the Democratic Republic of the Congo was particularly hard hit by conflict and consequent displacement and would continue to require assistance in spite of the potential of the peace agreement to end conflict in the Kivus. In Somalia, as many as 1.8 million people could require assistance this year due to the effects of droughts, floods and conflict. In Kenya, post-election violence had displaced a quarter of a million people and had impacted the region as a whole, due in part to its importance as a transit route. In southern Africa, rain and flash floods had left thousands of people homeless, but governments and the humanitarian community were responding with improved capacity and better coordination. Zimbabwe suffered hyperinflation and an 80 percent unemployment rate.
37. In each of the crises, the burden was borne inordinately by women and children; families affected by HIV/AIDS; pastoralists (in the Horn of Africa); stigmatized groups; returning refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs); minority ethnic groups; people living in isolated areas; and the extreme poor in urban areas. In 2007, WFP purchased a record amount of food from developing countries across the world and Uganda was the largest supplier; several southern Africa countries had become surplus cereal producers. In spite of great strides in providing for their own citizens, governments still needed the support from the international community to help fill gaps.
38. The Regional Director for the Sudan spoke about the worsening security situation in Darfur: since September, 36 aid trucks had been attacked; the Government said it would increase patrols. In 2007, the global acute malnutrition rate rose to 16.1 percent, which is above the emergency threshold of 15 percent. In Southern Sudan, the move towards recovery and development remained a daunting task; the lack of partners made it difficult for WFP to carry out its work. Donor countries continued to provide strong support for the Sudan; 42 percent of the US\$700 million WFP required for the current financial year for its operations in the Sudan had been provided. More contributions were needed to meet food needs in the third quarter and to cover the cost of the 24 aircraft WFP used to carry 14,000 workers every month; humanitarian air operations alone cost US\$77 million.
39. The Regional Director for West Africa advised that the security environment across the Sahel had become more challenging in recent months. He highlighted the current problems in Chad, informing the Board that WFP had evacuated 121 United Nations staff and expressing appreciation to the French Government for assisting in the evacuation of 11 WFP staff from Ndjemena. WFP had prepared an emergency operation and a Special Operation that would enable WFP to assist Chadian refugees in Cameroon.



Although overall food production in West Africa during the 2007/08 agricultural campaign was satisfactory, uneven production and price increases threatened to undermine the region's fragile food security situation during 2008. Climate change, increased food and fuel prices, combined with regional factors such as late rains, localized droughts and high population growth posed an ongoing threat to food security in the region. Various governments had committed themselves to putting in place measures to increase or create national food stocks and regularly supply markets in order to stabilize cereal prices. The Regional Bureau was carefully monitoring the evolution of the situation and strengthening its capacity to assess the impact on households; it would continue to focus on issues of regional significance such as climate change, nutrition, post-conflict recovery and school feeding. WFP was assisting West Africa coastal countries in their post-conflict struggle to rebuild societies and infrastructure. School feeding not only contributed to achieving universal primary education in those countries – it was also acting as an anchor for rural communities as people returned and resettled in their traditional homelands.

40. Board members reiterated the importance of insisting on an end to obstacles to the provision of humanitarian food supplies. In the Sudan, the new peacekeeping force could help contribute to security for IDPs (especially women) in camps. Governments were called upon to fulfil their funding pledges. A message of appreciation was sent to staff in the field in the Sudan.

Regional Bureaux for Latin America and the Caribbean; Asia; the Middle East, Central Asia and Eastern Europe

41. The Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean outlined some of the main issues and activities affecting WFP in this region, where 86 percent of hungry and food-insecure people lived in middle-income countries. WFP's emergency preparation and response activities had allowed improved response to emergencies in the second half of 2007; preparation was essential in the regions, which was normally hit by 20 to 25 major tropical storms a year. As in other areas, food prices were a major challenge and had led in some cases to declines in food consumption for the poor. Local procurement was important; WFP sought to certify small local farmers in Guatemala so that they could become suppliers of WFP resources. South-South cooperation and triangulation were increasing in the region, particularly in efforts to eradicate infant mortality; Brazil, Chile and Mexico were among those cooperating with other countries in the region.
42. The Regional Director for Asia spoke of the harsh impact of steeply rising food prices in the region, which limited many people's access to food. Several countries had imposed duties or bans on exports of grains, and WFP was negotiating exemptions from those bans on humanitarian grounds. In Afghanistan, vulnerable populations were suffering the effects of rising prices, poorly developed markets and political, security, infrastructure and transport problems. In the south WFP trucks were being targeted and on occasion stolen, looted and burnt, and WFP staff members were carrying out commendable work under difficult circumstances. On 24 January 2008, the Government of Afghanistan and the United Nations had launched a US\$81 million joint appeal, with US\$77 million earmarked for WFP operations.
43. In Bangladesh prices had risen significantly and the situation was worse in areas affected by cyclones. In Sri Lanka, the security situation had deteriorated, food prices had risen, and attention needed to be paid to the impact of local procurement given food shortages and high prices. In the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), the food security situation had deteriorated significantly. There were 6 to 7 million people in need of food



aid in 2005 and WFP was able to reach only about 15 percent of that number. Now up to half the population needed food aid and the decision on how to respond to those needs rested with the Government of the DPRK and donors. WFP stood by ready to help.

44. The Regional Director for the Middle East, Central Asia and Eastern Europe spoke of the effects of conflict, soaring food and fuel prices and an unusually harsh winter on the region. Among the main challenges was how to reach vulnerable people in Gaza, Yemen and Iraq, where staff security had to be a priority. In Gaza, 80 percent of the population were receiving food rations, but blocking of the humanitarian corridor had resulted in deteriorating conditions over the previous month, with 50 percent of people having no access to safe water. WFP needed to be ready to respond immediately to sudden appeals, such as a recent one from the Government of Tajikistan, where many families were without food or fuel. WFP was assisting displaced people in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic.
45. The Regional Bureau was monitoring prices, as sudden price hikes could lead to popular discontent and sporadic violence and put a strain on national food support. Jordan and Egypt, among others, turned to WFP for assistance in targeting and vulnerability mapping for their own food-based programmes. WFP had successfully handed over its programmes to the governments of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia, where well-defined hand-over strategies had been integrated into projects right from the start. WFP was seeking ways of assisting local farmers, including through local procurement. Cooperation among developing countries through South–South and triangular partnerships was increasing, especially involving Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Algeria. The Russian Federation as a donor for the region was a partner in providing technical expertise and food procurement. WFP was seeking to expand its collaboration with other organizations, the private sector, philanthropic organizations and trust funds throughout the region.
46. Addressing the Board on the dramatic rises in food prices, the Executive Director emphasized that this was a worldwide issue, which had been described as the biggest restructuring of agricultural markets since the Second World War. WFP was on the frontline working with those who were the first and hardest hit. Over the coming months, greater clarity would emerge about what the present situation meant globally – including who might benefit from it – while WFP’s mandate was to care for the most vulnerable.

SOUTHERN, EASTERN AND CENTRAL AFRICA REGIONAL PORTFOLIO

Summary Evaluation Report of Kenya Emergency Operation 10374.0 and Country Programme 10264.0 (2004–2008) (2008/EB.1/8)

47. The Director of the Office of Evaluation gave an introduction to the report. Among elements noted in the evaluation were: a rather large general food distribution; a community-based targeting and distribution system very appropriate in the context; the use of a single pipeline for food assistance; the need to provide complementary inputs for the food-for-work programme; and the expectations raised by the large outreach of the expanded school feeding programme. The evaluation also found that the supplementary feeding was appropriate. However, its effectiveness suffered a lack of complementary components that were outside WFP’s realm. The country programme had been found generally to have a positive effect; anti-retroviral treatment had shown impressive results, despite being underfunded and implemented on a small scale. However, synergy between operations could be improved and the school feeding programme should be reviewed.



48. Board members stressed the importance of supporting education for girls and orphans. They called on WFP to improve the Government of Kenya's logistical capacity to manage future emergencies and to develop a clear strategy for handing over to the Government, especially given the shift of emphasis from emergency aid to government-owned social protection mechanisms. They encouraged better coordination between UNICEF and WFP on nutrition, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health.
49. Members cited the programmes of food for work, food for assets and food for training as positive factors in helping build local capacity, and welcomed WFP's commitment to improved monitoring of the efficacy and impact of food assistance. Partnerships were especially important when resources were insufficient. The Board recognized that the current climate of instability and unrest in Kenya could lead to a shift in priorities or increased needs. Members encouraged expansion of the health component of WFP's work, given the deterioration in sanitation conditions.
50. The Office of Evaluation was encouraged to include recommendations in the executive summaries of evaluation reports.
51. The deputy country director for Kenya reported that WFP was working with UNICEF and the Ministry of Health to provide more complete nutritional packages. It would be retargeting all schools covered in the development portfolio. There was concern over low resourcing for HIV/AIDS programmes and efforts were being made to seek out additional partners. The country office had recently launched a private-sector strategy. The Government had been providing food aid for hand-over of school feeding; school gardens were one way to contribute to greater self-sufficiency, although production was affected by droughts and flooding.
52. WFP would incorporate recommendations from the evaluation into its proposal for the 2009–2013 country programme and a three-year recovery strategy document.

Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation Zimbabwe 10595.0 (2008/EB.1/9)

53. The proposed protracted relief and recovery operation (PRRO) was introduced by the Regional Director for Southern, Eastern and Central Africa. The PRRO would provide targeted support to selected groups vulnerable to hunger, including orphans and other vulnerable children, the chronically ill, the displaced and the asset-poor living in the most food-insecure areas of the country and would seek to increase the ability of vulnerable Zimbabweans to meet their food needs by providing food support to complementary health, agriculture and education initiatives.
54. The Board generally welcomed the link between food and health, and the increased emphasis on women as community participants. WFP was urged to be vigilant in monitoring food distribution in light of the year's forthcoming elections. Board members encouraged a targeted approach to linking food aid to anti-retroviral treatment (ART). The use of proper targeting would also ensure that food assistance through the school feeding programme reached those most in need. The Secretariat was asked to clarify the operation's exit strategy. It was suggested that the World Health Organization be consulted in areas where its expertise would be valuable.
55. The worsening effects of climate change were noted and it was argued that with good agricultural seasons, the need for food assistance would be greatly reduced if not eliminated. However, catastrophes such as the recent flooding had greatly increased problems.



56. The country director clarified that in order to avoid breaks in the pipeline, WFP stocked food for targeted distribution during the lean months before the harvest. Support for ART patients was also carefully targeted, while the home-based care component was designed so that as people's health improved they could be weaned off reliance on food assistance. School feeding was mostly an urban activity, with schools providing one means to address urban vulnerability.
57. Training activities, asset creation and farming support programmes were all part of the PRRO; WFP was avoiding food distribution in programmes such as conservation farming where this could prove a distraction from other motivations for engaging in the programme. Excellent progress had been made in improving the timing and promptness of needs assessments and targeting.

Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation Uganda 10121.2 (2008/EB.1/10)

58. The PRRO was introduced by the Regional Director of the Southern, Eastern and Central Africa Bureau. Frequent droughts affected harvests, while ongoing violence had led to a large number of IDPs. In addition, instability in the Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo had driven refugees into Uganda. The operation would provide food assistance to crisis-affected populations.
59. Board members asked about the impact the PRRO might have on local markets, and asked for greater clarification of the Government's role and WFP's hand-over strategy. They encouraged WFP to continue coordinating its work with other agencies, especially FAO, and to continue contingency plans in the event of an increased influx of refugees. Some Board members expressed doubt about some of the self-sufficiency activities, and requested more discussion of WFP's role in recovery and helping communities return to work. Other members thought there were now fewer IDPs than was indicated in the PRRO document; they were concerned that general food distribution could discourage IDPs from returning to their places of origin. It was suggested that food-for-work programmes be considered as a way of rebuilding infrastructure. There was a request that the link between needs assessments and the PRRO be clarified. The Board emphasized the importance of dialogue with the Government and the strengthening of cooperation with donor countries, and strongly urged WFP to implement effective monitoring methods.
60. The country director emphasized that the small rations currently provided to IDPs in the camps were unlikely to dissuade IDPs from returning home. He explained that because WFP was one of the few organizations present in the conflictive areas when the cessation of hostilities was signed, it was able to open up opportunities for the IDPs to participate in activities such as fish ponds and tree planting and could hand over those activities as more organizations moved in to work in the north. The local authorities would be empowered through training programmes in vulnerability analysis. Homes were being built for teachers to encourage them to live and work in difficult areas. WFP would focus on urgent areas of need, especially relief in the north, working with partners and non-governmental organizations; its response would be based on assessments of food security, land access and nutrition. It was hoped that a more comprehensive peace agreement would be signed soon.
61. The Board asked that the Secretariat review the PRRO in the light of discussions on the Strategic Plan and the changing context and present its conclusions at the First Regular Session of the Executive Board in 2009.



LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN REGIONAL PORTFOLIO

Summary Evaluation Report Colombia PRRO 10366.0 (2008/EB.1/11)

Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation Colombia 10588.0 (2008/EB.1/12)

62. The Secretariat presented these two items together; the results of the mid-term evaluation of PRRO 10366.0 were presented for consideration, and the proposed PRRO 10588.0 was presented for approval. The evaluation had found the PRRO to be relevant and appropriate to the needs of IDPs in Colombia, many of whom were difficult to reach. Quite a number of targets were over-accomplished. Special efforts had been made to involve women: 55 percent of beneficiaries and 80 percent of decision-makers were women. The evaluation advised against reaching more than the programmed number of beneficiaries, as this implied decreased ration sizes. It also recommended: developing effective monitoring systems to hand over to the Government at programme completion; focusing on relief rather than recovery activities at the current stage; and increasing attention to nutrition and education, outcome measurement and targeting the neediest people.
63. The proposed PRRO provided a three-year plan for 530,000 IDPs, improving their living and nutrition conditions, especially of women and children under 5, and increasing their access to education. The PRRO was rooted in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), the Government's policy for supporting IDPs, which was enforced by the law courts, and its Poverty Reduction Strategy. The Government would be contributing US\$64 million to the PRRO, of which US\$20 million would be in cash. The Government also had an ongoing programme to monitor the assistance provided to IDPs throughout the country.
64. The Board supported both the evaluation findings and the new PRRO. In both, members appreciated the collaboration between WFP and the Government and the feedback to all stakeholders, which would promote sustainability. The Board suggested that WFP share lessons learned and best practices from this experience. There were concerns about contingency planning for resource shortfalls; how the new PRRO would link to the new Strategic Objectives; the need to move from operational to policy activities; the importance of promoting national ownership of government programmes; and expanding the toolbox, especially for collaboration and cooperation mechanisms.
65. Responding to the Board's comments, the country director for Colombia explained that more careful beneficiary targeting and advocacy among donors would help ensure adequate funding. Ways were being sought to increase local procurement and build local capacity. Ultimately, all IDPs would be channeled into the Government's IDP programme. The Regional Director assured the Board that implications of the new Strategic Objectives would be kept in mind during PRRO implementation, and the possibility of using new tools would be explored.

ADMINISTRATIVE AND MANAGERIAL MATTERS

Reports by the Joint Inspection Unit Relevant to the Work of WFP (2008/EB.1/13)

66. The Secretariat introduced the Chairman of the United Nations Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) and introduced the document on WFP response to JIU recommendations. Since the last submission to the Board in 2006, JIU had issued 13 reports, 9 of which were relevant to WFP. Four of these required action by the Board, and the Chairman of the JIU requested greater Board attention to these issues.
67. The Board reiterated its commitment to oversight and control, emphasizing that all recommendations should be realistic in terms of methods, resources and measurability. The report should make very clear when recommendations were to be addressed by the Board rather than the Secretariat and distinguish between recommendations accepted and acted upon by the Secretariat alone and those actions taken following direction from the Board.
68. Responding to specific Board questions, the President of the Board said that the informal consultations on the oversight lacunae report, which had commenced during the tenure of the previous President, would continue during his presidency. The Secretariat said it had set up a group to address issues related to distribution of the costs of the United Nations Department of Safety and Security; the Board was to receive an alert on additional security requirements as a consequence of the Algiers bombing.
69. The Rome-based agencies were discussing relationships with host governments and had started to synchronize their contacts with the Government of Italy. WFP would adapt the titles of its Goodwill Ambassadors to the United Nations standard titles but felt that it was best to do so gradually.
70. Regarding oversight issues, an Ethics Officer had been appointed and recent Executive Director Circulars had provided the Terms of Reference for an Ethics Office and amended WFP's whistle-blower protection policy in line with United Nations system guidelines.
71. The Secretariat also stressed that it was committed to having a better system and that it would pursue a dialogue with the JIU and the Bureau on how to better present recommendations that addressed legislative organs.
72. The Chairman reported that JIU had consulted the Secretariat about its recommendations before they were issued. WFP was one of the most rapid and efficient United Nations agencies in responding to and implementing JIU recommendations.

OTHER BUSINESS

Oral Report on the Joint Meeting of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP (2008/EB.1/15)

73. The previous President of the Executive Board, Mr James Melanson, reported on the meeting held in New York on 25 and 28 January 2008, explaining that for ten years an annual joint meeting had provided an opportunity for the boards to explore topics of interest that crosscut their respective strategies, programmes and operational practices. At this year's meeting three main issues were discussed.



74. The first issue was progress towards achieving the MDGs. A background paper had been presented, and Mali and Malawi had shared their country experiences. Globally progress had been made toward reaching the goal of reducing the proportion of people living in extreme poverty; there had been a reduction in underweight prevalence among young children, but progress on reducing child and maternal mortality was still insufficient to achieve MDGs 4 and 5. Many countries were on track to achieving universal primary education and eliminating gender disparity. Global HIV prevalence appeared to have leveled off and malaria control was improving due to the rapidly expanding use of insecticide-treated bednets. Much more was needed to expand access to safe drinking water. Across all MDGs the prospect of achieving the targets was less promising in sub-Saharan Africa and to some extent in southern Asia. Finally, more development assistance had been promised than delivered and there had not been progress in providing preferential market access for developing countries.
75. The second issue was feedback on the United Nations “Delivering as One”, which was being piloted in eight countries to more effectively address national priorities, achieve greater coherence among United Nations programmes and reduce transaction costs. The United Nations Evaluation Group was supporting a formal evaluation process over the course of four years. It was important that the pilots be country-led; employ flexible models; involve all United Nations organizations; and employ joint strategic programming responding to national priorities, in the context of UNDAF. It was also important that the “Delivering as One” initiative did not become too process-focused; while it was felt that this could be dealt with by the exercise of authority and leadership by the Resident Coordinators, emphasis was placed on the need to “firewall” the Resident Coordinators from their home agency so that they acted inclusively on behalf of all agencies. The importance of coherence in fundraising was highlighted. WFP had advised considering the question of shared premises on a country-by-country basis given cost and security issues. While the preliminary nature of the pilot initiative was stressed, there was optimism that it held potential to increase the effectiveness of the United Nations development system to support country-led development strategies.
76. The third issue was disaster risk reduction strategies. In 2006, there had been 967 major disasters around the world. The Hyogo Framework for Action, an outcome of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, set out priorities in the areas of national capacity, early warning, a culture of safety, reduction of risk and preparedness. The Director of Civil Protection of Haiti had presented an excellent case study on the approach being taken there. Disaster risk reduction cut across development and humanitarian programming. The extent of the impact of disasters on vulnerable populations depended upon how well development programmes reduced risk and built resilience.
77. One member asked about the implementation of the United Nations “Delivering as One” pilots and whether they incorporated both humanitarian and development activities of the United Nations. The Executive Director explained that the specific programme and funding modalities for “Delivering as One” pilots applied primarily to development activities, but humanitarian programmes — which had their own separate reform process — were closely coordinated at the country level in the spirit of United Nations coherence. The background documents of the sessions, and a written copy of the previous President’s remarks, were available from the Secretariat.

Address by His Excellency John Agyekum Kufuor, President of Ghana

78. The Executive Director welcomed President Kufuor, introducing him as a ground-breaking leader of Ghana, a country emerging as the voice of Africa for peace, democracy and economic transformation; a tireless champion of peace during his recent tenure as chair of the African Union; and a partner of WFP in its commitment to ending hunger.
79. President Kufuor began his speech expressing his deep appreciation for the good work WFP does for humanity. He spoke of the need for food as the most crucial of the basic human needs for food, clothing and shelter. The right to food was now considered a basic human right and the challenge of feeding the world had assumed a higher priority on the global agenda. While science and technology could contribute to food security, mass production of food and tampering with nature often led to less nutritious food, and organic food was beyond the reach of many people. Developing countries aspired to provide affordable access to both knowledge and food. Ghana's poverty reduction strategy aimed to develop a knowledgeable, healthy, well-trained and disciplined labour force capable of driving growth led by the private sector. Children suffered most from hunger, which also limited their educational opportunities; the Government of Ghana was focusing on support systems for education including the school feeding programme, for which WFP was the pace-setter. The President commended the work of WFP, saying the world owed a debt of gratitude to it for serving the needy of the world.
80. The President went on to say that countries should also commit to such protocols as the Maputo Declaration, which called for 10 percent of national budgets to be invested in agriculture and rural development, and the Abuja Food Security Summit, which advocated increased inter-African trade in food staples and integration of nutrition considerations into agricultural and food security interventions. He called on developed economies to support developing countries in reaching the MDGs.
81. President Kufuor declared Ghana a sponsor and partner in the Fill the Cup initiative and encouraged everyone to support it. He closed by thanking the Executive Director for inviting him and for having brought a group of schoolchildren beneficiaries from Ghana to share their stories with the Executive Board. His speech was followed by a performance by a group of Ghanaian schoolchildren.
82. Members of the Board expressed their appreciation for the President's address. They noted the importance of Ghana's example in fighting hunger, its progress in reaching the MDGs and its contribution to peace in the region. It was suggested that the private sector be encouraged to support school feeding as part of its social responsibility and that school gardens be revived in conjunction with school feeding programmes.
83. In response to the Board, President Kufuor emphasized the importance of providing good nutrition in school feeding and ensuring adequate education infrastructure for increased school enrolment. He reiterated his vision of cooperation among African countries.

ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

ACABQ	Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions
ART	anti-retroviral treatment
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
ECHUI	Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition Initiative
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
IDP	internally displaced person
IPSAS	International Public Sector Accounting Standards
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit
JPs	joint programmes
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NGO	non-governmental organization
PRRO	protracted relief and recovery operation
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WINGS II	WFP Information Network and Global System II