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MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO THE EVALUATION OF MOTHER-AND-CHILD NUTRITION INTERVENTIONS

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NOTE TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

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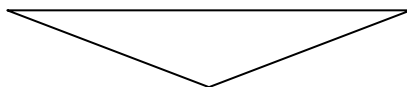
The Secretariat invites members of the Board who may have questions of a technical nature with regard to this document to contact the WFP staff focal points indicated below, preferably well in advance of the Board's meeting.

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DRAFT DECISION*



The Board takes note of “Management Response to the Evaluation of Mother-and-Child Nutrition Interventions” (WFP/EB.A/2006/5-A).

* This is a draft decision. For the final decision adopted by the Board, please refer to the Decisions and Recommendations (document WFP/EB.A/2006/16) issued at the end of the session.



BACKGROUND

1. The “Summary Report of the Thematic Review of WFP-Supported Mother-and-Child Nutrition Interventions” (WFP/EB.1/2006/7-C) was discussed by the Board at its First Regular Session in 2006; Board members subsequently requested a more detailed management response to the recommendations made in the report. This document and the annexed matrix present a comprehensive response to the original recommendations, taking into consideration the questions and suggestions raised by Board members.
2. The mother-and-child nutrition (MCN) review team examined the applicability of four programming principles: (i) targeting of households where insufficient access to food leads to malnutrition; (ii) community involvement and community-based approaches; (iii) partnership and integration with other social care programmes; and (iv) provision of a quality food ration that includes micronutrient fortification.
3. The MCN review recommended that WFP should:
 - i) improve targeting mechanisms for support to MCN programmes;
 - ii) collaborate more with community-based organizations (CBOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to increase community involvement in MCN food-assistance programmes;
 - iii) adopt a more strategic approach towards partnerships for MCN programmes;
 - iv) expand its role in establishing local production of fortified blended foods;
 - v) focus on nutrition issues, including scaling up MCN interventions and enhancing their coherence; and
 - vi) improve the quality of its MCN programmes.

Issues Raised During the Board’s First Regular Session in 2006

4. Board members requested clarification and greater detail in the management response on the seven issues outlined below.
 - i) The collection of nutrition data as a tool for targeting and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) needs stronger commitment from WFP management. The recommendation on targeting principles — needs-based or opportunity-based — requires a clear response.
 - ii) More attention should be given to the importance of partnerships with national and international NGOs and with United Nations agencies other than the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the World Bank.
 - iii) Communities need to be involved in the design and the implementation phases of programme development. WFP should indicate more clearly how it will ensure that projects are community-driven and based on participatory approaches.
 - iv) Scaling up local production of blended food is a positive evolution that needs to be pursued. Procurement procedures may have to be more flexible to accommodate this process.
 - v) To further improve the quality of MCN programmes, more resources are needed to ensure that complementary activities to improve nutrition are undertaken. Country offices need to have staff with the skills to deal with technical aspects of nutrition.



- vi) MCN programmes should be in line with existing national health policies and with WFP policies. WFP should ensure that policies are adequately reflected in its programmes. National institutions and their staff should be more involved in implementing these programmes.
- vii) There is a need for a commitment to research into the effects of MCN programmes and the cost-effectiveness of the food they provide.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

5. The management response matrix, which was revised to include more details of actions and commitments relating to the recommendations, is annexed to this document. The main issues are addressed below.

Nutrition Data in Needs Assessment and Targeting

6. Vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM) units in country offices and Headquarters systematically collect data on food consumption through comprehensive food security and vulnerability assessments (CFSVAs) and assess dietary diversity, a proxy for micronutrients. VAM will collect nutrition indicators when undertaking CFSVAs in countries with no recent nutrition data. A database of indicators that includes nutritional status disaggregated at the sub-national level will be maintained at country offices. The number of country offices collecting baseline data on nutritional status and causes of malnutrition is growing, in line with the requirements of results-based management (RBM), VAM (now the Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping Branch [ODAV]) and the Nutrition Service (PDPN) are preparing a module on the inclusion of care and health aspects when data on nutritional status are collected.
7. Following the “Thematic Review of Targeting in Relief Operations” (WFP/EB.1/2006/7-B) and the policy paper “Targeting in Emergencies” (WFP/EB.1/2006/5-A), more detailed guidelines are being developed by the Emergencies and Transition Unit (PDPT), which will take into account different types of selection criteria for geographical targeting.

Partnering with NGOs and Communities

8. WFP acknowledges the important role of NGOs and CBOs in ensuring that its activities are community-based to the largest extent possible; this is particularly relevant in the context of MCN programmes. WFP continuously maintains and expands partnerships with NGOs and includes them in training to build their capacities. In 2005, WFP worked with 2,275 NGOs, of which 2,019 were local. In MCN projects, WFP worked with 375 NGOs — 87 international and 288 local — in 81 projects in 51 countries. The issue of partnerships with NGOs and CBOs will be addressed in the new MCN guidelines. Partnerships are sought with more specialized agencies such as the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) and the Micronutrient Initiative (MI), some of which are in the private sector, with the aim of improving WFP’s food basket and supporting local initiatives in food fortification.



Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition Initiative

9. WFP has been working with UNICEF, the World Bank and other partners in an inter-agency initiative entitled “Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition”. A concept note on the initiative, developed in 2005 with UNICEF and the World Bank, was presented to the Board at its second Regular Session in 2005. Since then, WFP and UNICEF have been developing a plan of action for the initiative, with technical inputs from the World Bank and external experts; international financial institutions, other United Nations agencies, NGOs and other donors are expected to contribute. Long-term partnership with UNICEF would help governments to mainstream child hunger issues, provide technical advice and support, and ensure that sufficient resources are available.

Food Fortification

10. The purchase of fortified blended foods (FBFs) in developing countries increased from 20,000 mt in 2000 to 60,000 mt in 2003–2004 and 115,000 mt in 2005. WFP supports local production of FBFs where commercially viable. WFP is currently procuring FBFs or high-energy biscuits (HEB) in more than ten developing countries. WFP is often the sole buyer of such products, so sustainability remains a concern. Procurement procedures allow competitive bidding to be waived when only one local supplier is available and costs are competitive compared with imports.

Assuring Resources for Complementary Activities

11. The need for sufficient cash for complementary activities is acknowledged by WFP; donor support will be sought. The review of the financial policy framework will consider ways of implementing this policy and will suggest ways of classifying and budgeting costs to enhance the effectiveness of this type of programme.

Aligning with National Priorities and Policies

12. WFP policy requires country offices to engage in government coordination efforts and United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and Poverty-Reduction Strategy processes to ensure that its activities are in line with national policies and priorities. The system for project approval has been enhanced; all documents for approval undergo technical scrutiny before submission to the Board. Nutrition focal points are in place in country offices to help to mainstream nutrition into programming and to ensure coherence. WFP has trained 1,000 of its own and partner staff over the past five years, to improve technical capacity in food and nutrition at the country office level. Some country offices are involved in studies with institutions such as universities on nutrition issues.

Enhancing Programme Quality

13. The MCN guidelines, to be updated in 2006, will be based on the four programming principles identified for MCN projects. WFP’s *Programme Guidance Manual*, which was updated in 2006 to provide improved programme support, contains sections on programming mother-and-child health and nutrition (MCHN) activities.
14. PDPN is preparing a funding proposal for a study of the composition and cost-effectiveness of different commodities, including new formulations, for use in of MCN and HIV/AIDS programmes.



**ANNEX: RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EVALUATION OF MOTHER-AND-CHILD
NUTRITION INTERVENTIONS AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE**

OEDE recommendations (June 2005)	Action by	Management response and action taken or to be taken (June 2006)
Recommendations concerning the programming principles		
Recommendation 1: WFP should improve targeting mechanisms for support to MCN programmes		
1.1. VAM should strive to incorporate data on nutritional status, food consumption and vulnerability to disaster, preferably at the provisional or district levels. To assess food insecurity in terms of food gaps, VAM units in country offices should increasingly define 'access to food' in terms of access to food items to meet energy and protein requirements and in terms of access to a diversified diet (proxy for micronutrients).	VAM (ODAV) VAM (country offices)	VAM systematically collects data on food consumption through CFSVAs and assesses dietary diversity, a proxy for micronutrients. To date, 23 countries have data on these indicators; between five and ten CFSVAs will be undertaken every year. VAM will collect nutrition indicators in CFSVAs in countries with no recent nutrition data. At the country office level, VAM will maintain a database of indicators that includes nutritional status disaggregated at the sub-national level.
1.2. It is strongly recommended that programming frameworks and baseline studies, which may be executed with the involvement of VAM units, include data on nutritional status and additional indicators on care and health as related to malnutrition patterns among young children.	Country offices VAM (ODAV)	An increasing number of country offices are collecting baseline data on nutritional status and the causes of malnutrition, in line with RBM requirements. VAM and PDPN are preparing a module on the inclusion of care and health aspects when nutrition data are collected.
1.3. Strategy, Policy and Programme Support Division (PDP) should further examine ways of reaching adolescent girls as part of the preventative life-cycle approach for MCN programmes, for example through links with existing school feeding programmes or through food-for-training (FFT) programmes targeting adolescent girls.	PDP/PDPF	The School Feeding Service (PDPF) will follow up this recommendation in 2006 with PDPN and Gender, Mother-and-Child Health and Nutrition Service (PDPG) to define the best approaches for addressing this issue in line with the target of FFE beneficiaries and planned activities. In 2005, WFP-supported school feeding programmes reached 0.5% of adolescent girls and boys in secondary schools. Adolescents participating in adult literacy and skills training programmes will benefit from lessons addressing HIV/AIDS prevention and nutrition and health education. WFP and partners advocate for these lessons to be included in the curriculum of primary schools. A FFT policy paper is being prepared for EB.2/2006. The policy will help to address the needs of adolescent girls, strengthening the emphasis on them in line with the Enhanced Commitments to Women (ECW) 1.
		PDPF has taken measures through the essential package of school-based interventions to promote these programmes, which could also include modules on reproductive health. PDPF has emphasized that programmes must target boys as well as adolescent girls if behavioural change is to be expected.



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OEDE recommendations (June 2005)	Action by	Management response and action taken or to be taken (June 2006)
1.4. At the country office level, there is scope for using other selection criteria for geographical targeting in addition to food insecurity, in particular (a) the presence and capacity of local implementing partners and (b) the possibility of synergy with other WFP activities such as school feeding and food for assets.	Country offices	Following the "Thematic Review of Targeting in Relief Operations" (WFP/EB.1/2006/7-B) and the policy paper "Targeting in Emergencies" (WFP/EB.1/2006/5-A), more detailed guidelines are being developed by PDPT that will take these recommendations into account.
Recommendation 2: To increase community involvement in MCN food-assistance programmes, WFP should collaborate more with CBOs and NGOs.		
2.1. If prevention is to be taken seriously in MCN programmes, more funds and other resources must be made available for community-based approaches, training, and health and nutrition education. WFP continues to have a clear role in the nutritional rehabilitation of moderately and severely malnourished beneficiaries, but this has to be linked as closely as possible with community-based preventative activities. For MCN programmes to be effective, WFP should consider engaging CBO's and local NGO's in addition to continued collaboration with governments.	Country offices PDPN/PDPG	Many country offices are developing nutrition education materials and programmes in collaboration with government and NGO partners to prevent malnutrition. Some are involved in growth monitoring and promotion activities as a preventive measure with CBOs and NGOs. Community-based approaches have proved to be valuable in the treatment of severe and moderate malnutrition in a few countries in recent years. WFP is following these innovative ways of addressing malnutrition to assess how it can replicate successful models in MCN programmes. FFE uses the essential package approach, which integrates community awareness on nutrition with school feeding, through parent-teacher associations.
2.2. The international development community recognizes the need for more development from below. WFP Headquarters units may wish to consider pilot projects in some countries on a new allocation mechanism for food aid for development through a call for proposals to major NGOs and governments at the district level on the bases of a limited range of options on the use of food aid provided by WFP. The mechanism could also include the establishment of discretionary funds or umbrella grants to involve grassroots organizations.	Operations Department (OD)	WFP's current procedures encourage NGO and government participation. As noted in 2.1, there is greater emphasis on community approaches.



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OEDE recommendations (June 2005)	Action by	Management response and action taken or to be taken (June 2006)
Recommendation 3: WFP should have a more strategic approach towards its partnerships for MCN programmes		
<p>3.1. WFP Headquarters and country offices should decide how to add value and benefit from partnerships in its MCN programmes. At the country level, improved effectiveness of MCN programmes can be attained through partnerships with local NGOs and CBOs as well as continued collaboration with governments and collaboration with national nutrition institutes. Country offices should try to raise funds from in-country donors for pilots to demonstrate success and for operational research into improving MCN interventions. WFP India should share its successful experiences in fundraising for MCN activities with interested WFP country offices.</p>	<p>Country offices PDPN/PDPG</p>	<p>WFP continuously maintains and expands partnerships with NGOs and includes them in training to build their capacities. In 2005, WFP worked with 2,275 NGOs worldwide, 2,019 of which were local. In MCN projects, WFP worked with 375 NGOs – 87 international and 288 local – in 81 projects in 51 countries. The issue of partnerships with NGOs and CBOs will be addressed in the new MCN guidelines</p> <p>WFP's recent handbook <i>How to work with WFP</i> will help to enhance partnerships with NGOs at the local level. The new institutional strengthening grant from the Department for International Development (DFID) allocates significant funds to the improvement of WFP's partnerships. A strategy for optimizing partnership strategy will address ways of expanding and strengthening relationships with NGOs and other partners.</p> <p>Sharing experiences among regions and countries will be encouraged through the Practical Advice Sharing System (PASS-it-on), which concentrates on helping country offices to build on WFP experience to improve current and future programming.</p> <p>Fundraising for MCN pilots from in-country donors must be handled carefully because it competes with fundraising for other strategic objectives. Country offices are increasingly aware of funding possibilities through international agencies and NGOs that have mandates with respect to nutrition or micronutrients, for example MI and GAIN.</p>
<p>3.2. There is a need to strengthen strategic cooperation with international organizations such as UNICEF and the World Bank. Development of a cooperation model with the World Bank is specifically suggested, which could comprise MCN and school feeding interventions or the whole range of food aid for development programmes.</p>	<p>PDP</p>	<p>WFP has been working with UNICEF, the World Bank and other partners in an inter-agency initiative called "End Child Hunger and Undernutrition". A concept note on the initiative, developed in 2005 with UNICEF and the World Bank, was presented to EB.2/2005. Since then, WFP and UNICEF have been developing a plan of action for the initiative, with technical inputs from the World Bank and external experts. International financial institutions, other United Nations agencies, NGOs and others are expected to contribute. A minimum package is being devised that will bring together the commodities and services – including micronutrients – required to address undernutrition and increase households' capacity to rear healthy children. The partnerships with UNICEF and others would focus on helping governments to mainstream child hunger issues, providing technical advice and support and ensuring that sufficient resources were available. WFP signed a memorandum of understanding with UNICEF in July 2005 to strengthen collaboration; the document emphasizes the need to address child hunger jointly, reflecting the growth of the partnership.</p> <p>As mentioned in 3.1, partnerships are sought with specialized agencies such as GAIN and MI, some of which are in the private sector, to improve WFP's food basket and support local initiatives in fortification.</p>



ANNEX: RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EVALUATION OF MOTHER-AND-CHILD NUTRITION INTERVENTIONS AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

OEDE recommendations (June 2005)	Action by	Management response and action taken or to be taken (June 2006)
Recommendation 4: WFP should further expand its role in the establishment of local production of fortified blended foods		
<p>4.1. As a contribution to global efforts to address micronutrient malnutrition, WFP should as a matter of urgency revive and expand its role in local production of fortified blended food. A compilation of WFP's experience in this area should be prepared, and research should be commissioned on chain-management issues to avoid breaks in pipelines in selected countries where WFP has established local production facilities.</p>	<p>PDPN</p> <p>OD</p>	<p>WFP is reviewing its production of fortified food, particularly its composition and micronutrient specifications, to make it more nutritious and to address the needs of young children. The potential to produce and use foods for specific nutritional objectives is being explored with other agencies and research institutions.</p> <p>WFP is expanding its work on fortification, for example through pilot activities on cassava fortification in Haiti and Zambia. Work on the supply-chain management project is ongoing.</p> <p>The purchase of FBFs in developing countries increased from 20,000 mt in 2000 to 60,000 mt in 2003–2004 and 115,000 mt in 2005. WFP supports local production of fortified blended foods where commercially viable. WFP is procuring FBFs and HEB in more than ten developing countries. WFP is often the sole buyer of this product, so sustainability remains a concern. Procurement procedures allow for competitive bidding to be waived when only one local supplier is available and the costs are competitive compared with imports.</p> <p>WFP is improving the quality of locally procured FBFs. It has developed a manual – <i>Good Manufacturing Practice and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points</i> – for use by corn-soya blend (CSB) producers in southern Africa.</p>
General recommendations on MCN programmes		
Recommendation 5: WFP should implement a corporate focus on nutrition issues including scaling up MCN interventions and enhancing their coherence		
<p>5.1. With reference to the Food for Nutrition policy paper (WFP/EB.A/2004/5-A/1) and Strategic Recommendation 3 of the Enabling Development Policy evaluation, Headquarters should monitor the implementation of WFP's corporate commitment to mainstreaming nutrition by focusing on nutrition when draft country programmes and PRROs are reviewed by Headquarters departments, and should establish a system for tracking programming decisions - when, by whom, with what result - with regular reports back to Headquarters.</p>	<p>PDPN / PDPG</p> <p>OD/regional bureaux</p>	<p>The Common Monitoring and Evaluation Approach (CMEA), to be rolled out in 2007, will incorporate selected nutrition indicators to ensure consistency in data collection and reporting.</p> <p>The system for project approval has been enhanced: all documents for approval undergo technical scrutiny before submission to the Board.</p> <p>Nutrition focal points are in place in country offices to enhance the mainstreaming of nutrition in programming.</p>
<p>5.2. Ways in which WFP support for MCN programmes can be used as an entry point in times of disaster should be examined, so that opportunities for scaling up MCN programmes to serve as food safety nets during crises can be found.</p>	<p>OD/Emergency Needs Assessment Branch (ODAN)</p>	<p>Scaling up existing project activities such as MCN to meet emergency needs is addressed in the <i>Emergency Food Security Assessment Handbook</i> of June 2005.</p>



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5.3. Headquarters should continue with the roll-out of the RBM framework, including MCN programmes, to enhance planning and target setting and M & E based on clear logical frameworks. To obtain more evidence of the effectiveness of MCN programmes, WFP might consider commissioning research into the effects of MCN food-support programmes on food gap reductions and nutrition behaviour patterns.	PDPN / PDPG	The new MCH/N guidelines will provide guidance on project development and implementation, including indicators and logframes. PDPG will support country offices and commission research on food gap reduction and nutrition behaviour change. PDPN and PDPG will assess the impact of selected MCN projects through the standard project reports (SPRs) to assess the outcomes for SP 3.
5.4. WFP country offices with substantial nutrition-related activities in their country programme should ensure that they have sufficient technical capacity in nutrition as well as drawing on in-country nutrition institutes.	Country offices	In the past five years, WFP has trained 1,000 of its own and partner staff in various countries in five-day courses on food and nutrition. WFP and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have developed an advanced training course and manual on measuring and interpreting malnutrition and mortality. About 75 WFP and partner staff were trained to design and conduct surveys. Several country offices are involved in studies with institutions such as including universities on nutrition issues.
5.5. In line with SR 1, country offices should ensure that support for MCN programmes is coherent with UNDAF frameworks, PRSPs, Sector Wide Approach (SWAPs), national nutrition policies, gender policies and other national policy frameworks.	Country offices	WFP country offices are engaged in government coordination efforts and UNDAF and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) processes. A policy paper "Engagement in PRS processes" will be presented to EB.A/2006 that considers strengthening WFP's engagement in PRSP and discusses issues such as SWAPs.
Recommendation 6: WFP should improve the quality of its MCN programmes		
6.1. PDPN should develop an MCN programming checklist based on the key programming principles underlying this thematic review, incorporating the provisional guidance on MCN available in WFP-Go. This should be done in a way that makes it applicable in protracted relief settings and possibly in emergency settings. The checklist could also support programming of other development activities in the purview of the Enabling Development policy.	PDPN /PDPG	The MCN guidelines, to be updated in 2006, will be based on the four programming principles identified as a basis for MCN projects. The <i>Programme Guidance Manual</i> was updated to provide enhanced programme support for MCHN.
6.2. To ensure that country offices receive sufficient technical backstopping on nutrition issues, Headquarters should consider developing a technical support model that goes beyond the current system whereby technical advice from Headquarters and the regional bureau staff is only made available to country offices on demand.	PDPN /regional bureaux	The new PDPG was created to provide MCHN support in the field. PDPN conducts regional and country-level nutrition training (see 5.4). Training on MCN will be included from the end of 2006.



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6.3. Headquarters should revisit its budgeting model to make more funds available for financing direct support costs (DSC) for complementary activities alongside food aid for MCN programmes. The link with food aid tonnage should be relaxed; the budget amounts to be allocated should be based on expected results in line with RBM.	Administration Department (AD)/OD	The review of the financial policy framework will consider ways of implementing the policy and suggest ways of classifying and budgeting costs to enhance the effectiveness of this type of programme. WFP intends to work with UNICEF and other partners to develop joint programmes (see 3.2).
6.4. Headquarters should commission research into selected projects to enhance understanding of outcome and cost-effectiveness patterns of the food rations provided and of any complementary inputs, if applicable.	PDPN	This could form part of the study suggested in 5.3. PDPN is preparing a funding proposal for a study of the composition and cost-effectiveness of different commodities, including new formulations, for use in different types of programme.



ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

AD	Administration Department
CBO	community-based organization
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CFSVA	comprehensive food security vulnerability analysis
CMEA	Common Monitoring and Evaluation Approach
CSB	corn-soya blend
DFID	Department for International Development (United Kingdom)
DSC	Direct support costs
ECW	Enhanced Commitments to Women
FBF	fortified blended food
FFT	food for training
GAIN	Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition
HEB	high-energy biscuit
HIV/AIDS	human immunodeficiency virus/auto-immune deficiency syndrome
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MCHN	mother-and-child health and nutrition
MCN	mother-and-child nutrition
MI	Micronutrient Initiative
NGO	non-governmental organization
OD	Operations Department
ODAN	Emergency Needs Assessment Branch
ODAV	Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping Branch
PDP	Strategy, Policy and Programme Support Division
PDPF	School Feeding service
PDPG	Gender, Mother-and-Child Health and Nutrition Service
PDPN	Nutrition Service
PDPT	Emergencies and Transition Unit
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RBM	results-based management
SWAP	Sector Wide Approach
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VAM	vulnerability analysis and mapping