POLICY ISSUES

Agenda item 5

For approval

TARGETING IN EMERGENCIES

NOTE TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

This document is submitted to the Executive Board for approval.

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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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Targeting is a process that spans the life of a food aid operation, not just the initial phases of identifying beneficiaries; finding the right balance between inclusion and exclusion errors, opportunity costs and programme costs is a complex task. This paper establishes basic principles to guide decision-making in a range of emergency situations, drawing on the decades of experience in WFP and its partners in targeting food aid during emergency interventions. The principles offered here are intended to improve WFP's ability to find the right balance, bearing in mind that every emergency requires situation-specific analysis and targeting approaches.
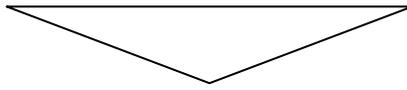
Section I reviews the definitions of targeting and WFP policies related to targeting in emergencies. The process of targeting and targeting errors are discussed in Section II. Section III offers recommendations for good targeting practice.

Vulnerability analysis and mapping, early warning and emergency needs assessment results are used to establish a basis for food assistance and set initial targeting parameters. Geographic targeting is necessary to confirm the scope of a food crisis and sometimes is the only feasible level of targeting. In most cases, however, geographic targeting must be complemented with household/individual targeting. Partner organizations and local community structures are valuable information sources for developing household-level targeting criteria. Substantial beneficiary participation in defining targeting criteria should be standard practice in responses to slow-onset and recurrent emergencies, and increasingly the practice as sudden-onset crises begin to stabilize.

Besides reporting on compliance with initial programme targeting objectives, monitoring systems should regularly re-assess targeting criteria and inform subsequent adjustments. Targeting costs increase in proportion to the level and detail of targeting. WFP needs to analyze benefits and budget for costs associated with different targeting approaches.

DRAFT DECISION*

The Board endorses "Targeting in Emergencies" (WFP/EB.1/2006/5-A) and requests that the following recommendations be added to the policy compendium:

"Targeting is the central element of all WFP food aid operations. Targeting should be a conscious and integral management activity at all stages of the programme cycle. As an emergency develops and population needs change, target groups, targeting methods and WFP practices must also evolve. Successful targeting requires regular, systematic analysis of a multiplicity of factors, including the gender dimensions of an emergency. Setting clear project objectives from the start that take these factors into account will later allow for targeting flexibility without compromising the goals of a project. The selection of programme and delivery mechanisms that ensure that food reaches those who need it is an equally important aspect of targeting.

The constraints inherent in emergencies will inevitably lead to targeting errors. The main targeting objective of WFP in emergencies is to achieve a balance between targeting exclusion errors, which can be life-threatening, and potentially disruptive or wasteful inclusion errors. In acute emergencies, inclusion errors are more acceptable than exclusion errors. Other targeting objectives include providing a safe environment for food deliveries and maintaining flexibility to adapt to rapidly changing situations.

Targeting costs increase in proportion to the level and detail of targeting. WFP should analyze benefits and budget for costs associated with different targeting approaches, keeping in mind that cost-efficiency for WFP may imply increased transaction or opportunity costs for recipients."

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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.

I. WFP AND TARGETING IN EMERGENCIES

A. Introduction

1. Targeting, or identifying food insecure communities and reaching households and individuals with food assistance, is the central element of all WFP food aid operations. It informs every aspect and the entire duration of a WFP programme from initial problem and vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM), early warning and needs assessment to programming adjustments, monitoring and finally evaluation. In emergency situations, when conflicts and/or natural disasters have disrupted national and community capacities and information is often incomplete or changing, targeting challenges are particularly formidable.

2. Complex emergencies and natural disasters have different impacts on women and men. In complex emergencies, women and children comprise the largest section of civilians affected by the conflict; and up to 80 percent of the IDPs and refugees are women and children. This leads to a dramatic increase in the number of women heads of household and consequently affects targeting decisions.

3. General food distributions (GFDs) in emergencies and protracted crises – including both blanket and targeted GFD[1] – comprised approximately 50 percent of WFP's operational expenditures in 2004 (Annual Performance Report [APR] 2004). While WFP has adopted policies related to targeting within other types of emergency interventions (See Box 1), there is no consolidated policy in WFP that concentrates on targeting crisis-affected populations with general food distributions – the largest proportion of WFP emergency assistance.

4. The purpose of this paper is to establish basic principles that can guide decision-making in a wide range of emergency situations, drawing on the decades of experience in WFP and its partners in targeting food aid during emergency interventions. The paper derives its conclusions from (i) the results of a WFP thematic review of targeting in emergencies undertaken by the WFP Office of Evaluation, (ii) consultations with operational partners, (iii) a desk review of recent literature, (iv) selected case studies and reviews of past WFP evaluations, and (v) the existing body of targeting policies and practices that has been developed over the years to guide WFP staff.

5. Finding the right balance between meeting immediate needs and the increased time and cost of perfect targeting is a difficult task in an emergency, one that never arrives at perfect results. The principles offered here are intended to improve this balance. Section I reviews the definitions of targeting and WFP policies related to targeting in emergencies. The process and tools of targeting are discussed in Section II. Section III offers recommendations for good targeting practice.

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[1] "Blanket GFD" refers to distributions of a general ration aimed at an entire population such as a camp community or a geographic area where every person receives the ration; "targeted GFD" refers to distributions of a general ration to a subset of a community distinguished from the rest of the community by their need for food aid.

B. Definition

6.   WFP defines targeting as the process by which areas and populations are selected for a resource transfer in a timely manner. A targeting system comprises mechanisms to define target groups, to identify members of the target populations, to ensure that assistance reaches intended beneficiaries, and to ensure it meets their needs.[2] Targeting inclusion errors refer to people receiving food aid who do not meet the criteria. Exclusion errors refer to instances when people who do meet the criteria fail to receive assistance.

7.   Targeting can be divided into two major activities: (i) identifying and selecting communities and people in need of food assistance, and (ii) selecting delivery and distribution mechanisms to best ensure that those women, men and children are reached with assistance at the time they need it. Identifying beneficiaries is crucial to good targeting, but the programming decisions about how and when to reach those people are equally important.

C. WFP Policies Related to Targeting

8.   WFP does not have a consolidated emergency targeting policy. However, various policy statements and guidance reflect extensive WFP experience in targeting in emergencies (see Box 1).

Box 1: Selected WFP Policy Statements Related to Targeting in Emergencies

Food Aid and Livelihoods In Emergencies: Strategies for WFP (WFP/EB.A/2003/5-A):

➤   WFP should target those as risk of losing their livelihoods, in addition to those whose lives are at risk.

➤   Household-level targeting requires more time and resource, usually because of the practical constraints of understanding livelihoods and measuring coping strategies.

➤   Assisting those whose livelihoods are affected by emergencies may increase the size of WFP's target group.

Humanitarian Principles (WFP/EB.A/2004/5-C):

➤   "[a]ssistance will be guided solely by need and will not discriminate in terms of ethnic origin, nationality, political opinion, gender, race or religion. In a country, assistance will be targeted to those most at risk from the consequences of food shortages, following a sound assessment that considers the different needs and vulnerabilities of women, men and children."

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[2] WFP's working definition in the *Programme Guidance Manual* is in line with accepted definitions of targeting; for example: "the process by which areas and populations are selected to receive a resource and then provided with it" Sharp, K. 1997. Targeting Food Aid in Ethiopia. Addis Ababa, Save the Children UK.; or "directing a particular type or quantity of food, to a defined population group" Seaman, J. and Taylor, A. 2004. *Targeting Food Aid in Emergencies*. Oxford, UK, Emergency Nutrition Network.

Emergency Needs Assessment (WFP/EB.1/2004/4-A):

➢ Emergency needs assessments – providing estimates of the numbers of affected people in need and the degree of needs – are the initial basis for targeting decisions

➢ Needs assessments are strengthened by solid pre-crisis information in order to help strike a balance between accuracy and speed in determining whether or not food is needed.

Nutrition and Emergencies: WFP Experiences and Challenges (WFP/EB.A/2004/5-A/3):

➢ Supplementary and/or therapeutic feeding to target malnourished individuals is recommended.

➢ Blanket supplementary feeding of specific population subgroups (e.g. children under age five and pregnant and lactating women) is recommended as a preventative measure when acute malnutrition exceeds 15 percent.

From Crisis to Recovery (WFP/EB.A/98/4-A):

➢ Targeting should normally improve – that is beneficiary numbers should diminish and targeting errors lessen - when moving from relief to recovery operations.

➢ Needs assessments should be ongoing during the life of an operation to ensure that targeting decisions are taken as the dynamic of an operation changes.

➢ Targeting efficiency and effectiveness need to be evaluated against costs to determine the appropriate level of targeting for different stages in recovery.

Programming in the Era of AIDS: WFP's Response to HIV/AIDS (WFP/EB.1/2003/4-B):

➢ The entry point for WFP involvement will always be nutrition and food security. WFP's interventions will target beneficiaries based on their food security and nutritional status, not on their HIV status.

Gender Policy –Enhanced Commitments to Women to Ensure Food Security (2003–2007) (WFP/EB.3/2002/4-A):

➢ Equally important are means to involve women in targeting, activity selection and implementation (including monitoring).

II. TARGETING PROCESS AND ERRORS

9.   There are two main steps to identifying populations in need of food assistance: geographic targeting, and household/individual targeting. Ideally, these are two sequential targeting steps, but in certain situations – for example during armed conflict – only the first may be possible.

A. Geographic Targeting: Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping and Emergency Needs Assessment

10. Geographic targeting in an emergency refers to the identification of specific administrative units, economic areas or livelihood zones that have a high concentration of food-insecure women, men and children. The geographic locations are identified through

vulnerability analysis that weighs macro-level indicators such as rainfall, crop production, prices, presence of a conflict and, if available, nutritional and socio-economic characteristics of the population. A food aid intervention may be justified when these indicators point to a certain high degree of food insecurity in a region. In WFP, the identification of food insecure populations relies primarily on sound vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM), early warning systems and emergency needs assessments (ENAs).

11.   VAM uses a standard analytical framework that consists of three elements: comprehensive food security and vulnerability analyses (CFSVA), food-security monitoring systems (FSMS) and geographic information systems (GIS) and mapping. WFP's VAM methodology incorporates a gender perspective that includes exploring how gender roles and relationships between genders are causally related to food insecurity and vulnerability. The objective of CFSVA is to develop a comprehensive baseline analysis of national policies and priorities on food security and an understanding of household and community vulnerability in order to identify and monitor priority geographical areas and population groups. The VAM function of identifying those geographical areas and population groups that are facing or will face in the immediate future acute food insecurity threatening lives and livelihoods is a central step in the targeting process.

12.   FSMS represents the continuous monitoring element of VAM, which (i) identifies and monitors trends in food-security variables identified as critical to the availability, access and utilization of food, (ii) identifies potential threats to household food security and (iii) provides timely data to inform decisions to initiate a needs assessment, influence policy, or adjust an ongoing food-security intervention. GIS and mapping, which WFP undertakes in partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), integrates various satellite datasets into VAM analysis to target geographical areas more effectively, including supporting remote food-security assessments in areas where access is limited.

13.   Over the past few years, VAM has strengthened its capacity and focused its work to develop comprehensive baselines in 21 crisis-prone countries, with 20 more country baselines planned. VAM national and international staff are now present in over 50 country offices and regional bureaux to support programmes in making initial targeting decisions and identifying country-specific indicators to monitor those decisions. Similarly, WFP has in recent years been bolstering its needs assessment methodology and capacity.

14.   VAM analysis and FSMS are complemented by, and feed into, early warning systems that monitor information related to food security and potential crises such as weather patterns, pests, crop yields and political tensions. With the quick onset of an emergency or signs of an emerging crisis, an ENA, building on pre-crisis information, determines the impact of the crisis on peoples' food insecurity, establishes if food aid is needed, when and for how long it is needed, how much is needed and for how many people. The role of food aid and the objectives of a food intervention are usually derived directly from the ENA, which is fundamental to identifying categories of women, men and children who will receive food aid and, subsequently, to selecting the type of intervention that will best reach those targeted. In crisis-prone countries, CFSVAs include information on emergency scenarios that facilitate and strengthen the ENAs when a shock occurs.

15.   Depending on the nature of the emergency, the geographic concentration of need can vary widely from several small camps or hamlets to large areas of a country or countries. Geographic targeting is necessary in order to define the broad dimensions and scope of a food crisis that would justify an international humanitarian response. Because the VAM targeting process is designed to identify areas of concentrated need, there is a built-in risk

of targeting error that must be considered: some vulnerable households are likely to be found in areas where most of the population is not in need of assistance and therefore might not have been identified by VAM or ENA analysis.

16.   In the case of complex emergencies, targeting of entire groups based on geographic location is sometimes the only sensible or feasible course of action, especially if (i) access is limited, (ii) affected people are relatively homogenous in terms of their livelihoods and (iii) populations are displaced or living under siege. Except in rare situations, however, not all households in a crisis-affected area require assistance; geographic targeting therefore is rarely sufficient.

B. Household/Individual Targeting

17.   Household or individual targeting is necessary to distinguish between those in a defined geographic area who need food aid and those who do not. Household or individual targeting involves the selection of groups, households or individuals in a community who are most in need of food assistance.

18.   Household targeting criteria are developed on a case-by-case basis; they should normally be based on direct or proxy indicators of economic, physiological, social and political vulnerability. Examples include household income, size of landholdings or asset ownership, anthropometric data or health status, demographic characteristics such as age, gender, or dependency ratio, and ethnic or minority status. WFP also includes diet diversity, food sources and market indicators in its standard analysis. The relative value of different types of criteria, such as social versus economic indicators, will depend what is most appropriate in a given situation.

19.   Eligibility thresholds, depending on the context and the objectives of the intervention, vary from being very restrictive, for example at the level of abject poverty and severe malnutrition, to more open – median poverty and moderate malnutrition. For WFP, objectives derived from Strategic Objective 1: saving lives, and those derived from Strategic Objective 2: saving livelihoods, imply different eligibility thresholds. Criteria should be well defined, as objectively verifiable as possible and transparently communicated and applied. The more precise and restrictive the screening criteria – and the more objectively verifiable they are – the more straightforward the identification of beneficiaries.[3]

20.   The method used to select the households or individuals that need food aid is crucial to the success of targeting. Not surprisingly, more costly, time-consuming and labour-intensive methods, which are generally not feasible with a quick-onset emergency, result in fewer targeting errors. Often, more blunt household targeting methods are employed at the outset of a crisis and subsequently refined as the crisis stabilizes. With slow-onset emergencies or in areas that suffer from repeated emergencies such as annual floods or cyclical drought, more sophisticated household targeting can often be employed from the outset.

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[3] Sharp, K. 2001. *An overview of targeting approaches for food assisted programming*, Atlanta, GA, USA, CARE USA. It should be noted that the cost of verification can be prohibitive in some cases (e.g., nutrition screening, or household means testing).

$\Rightarrow$ *Targeting Approaches for Household/Individual Targeting*

21.   The approaches used, separately or in combination, for household/individual targeting can be divided along the following lines:[4]

> *Administrative Targeting*. Households or individuals are selected by agencies or people external to the community using standard observable criteria or indicators such as nutrition status or objective socio-economic characteristics. WFP often targets indicator groups through institutions such as feeding centres, mother and child health clinics and schools.

> *Community-Based Targeting (CBT)*. Households or beneficiaries are selected with the participation of community members such as traditional or religious leaders, specially constituted food committees equally composed of women and men, or local authorities, on the basis of criteria developed with the participation of the communities.

> *Self-Targeting*. Self-targeting/self-selection programmes are designed to attract some members of a community such as the hungry and the food-insecure and to discourage the participation of others with alternative food sources and/or more remunerative livelihood opportunities. This might be achieved by offering commodities of lower value, by allowing individuals and households to decide for themselves whether to participate in schemes such as food for work or by imposing other costs that might come with receiving assistance. Self-targeting is more applicable to situations of recurring emergencies or in longer term recovery interventions (see Annex).

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[4] Taylor and Seaman 2004; Barrett, C.B. and Maxwell, D.G. 2005. *Food Aid after Fifty Years: Recasting its Role.* Oxford, UK, Routhledge. Sharp 1997; Conning, J. and Kevane, M. 2000. Community-Based Targeting Mechanisms for Social Safety Nets. Williamstown, MA, USA, Williams College Department of Economics.

Box 2: Administrative and Community-Based Targeting Examples

Administrative Targeting

Extreme poverty combined with political, social and economic instability and recurrent natural disasters have exacerbated vulnerability to food insecurity for large sectors of the population in Haiti. The health and nutrition situation in Haiti is precarious: there are high rates of chronic malnutrition, high prevalence of anaemia and vitamin-A deficiency, and high rates of maternal mortality. All of these indicators suggest that young children, in particular those aged 6–24 months, and pregnant and lactating women, should continue to be WFP's priority groups.

In a move towards a preventive approach, WFP ensures the distribution of a food supplement through established nutritional and health structures in targeted departments and communities. The community nutrition activity uses the following protocols for admission and discharge: all children aged 6–24 months, pregnant mothers in the second and third trimester, and nursing mothers (for six months) are covered. Children aged 25-59 months are enrolled in the programme for a maximum of six months if their weight for age is below 80 percent.

Community-Based Targeting

For a number of years, under emergency operation (EMOP) and protracted relief and recovery operation (PRRO) relief activities in Myanmar, highly food-insecure communities identified through vulnerability assessment and ENAs have received WFP emergency rations through a vulnerable group feeding approach. Until 2004, WFP defined the targeting criteria. The decision-making behind this method was poorly understood in the communities and led to the unintended exclusion of some vulnerable households. It also resulted in increased pressure on WFP to relax selection criteria in order to ensure that no poor households would be missed. WFP has since altered the targeting system by making community members themselves more responsible for decisions on the distribution of scarce resources. At least half of all men and women residents now attend community meetings where targeting criteria and selection are finalized. Vulnerable groups have been defined as households headed by women and widows without support, accounting for 80 percent of beneficiaries, refugee returnees, orphans, elderly, chronically sick or disabled people and tuberculosis patients. Once the food-security criteria are agreed upon, participants are divided into three groups and asked to categorize each eligible household in the village into one of four classifications: rich, middle, ordinary poor and extremely poor. The full meeting then triangulates the findings of the three groups and only those households that appear consistently as food-insecure and in the extremely poor category are targeted.

⇒ *Delivery Mechanisms to Achieve Targeting Objectives*

22.   Targeting does not end with the identification of beneficiaries and needs: it must be followed by delivery mechanisms that ensure that food reaches those who need it. The appropriate delivery mechanism will depend on many factors, including the context of the crisis, specific beneficiary needs and project objectives (see Box 3). Other typical factors that affect decisions on delivery mechanisms are: secure access, partner or government capacity and available resources, which are factors that evolve as an emergency response matures, sometimes allowing for shifts to more sophisticated and precise delivery

mechanisms over time. WFP recognizes that targeting women and delivering resources directly to them will benefit entire households, especially children.

23.   The presence of other external sources of aid will impact on the types of distribution WFP will choose and the level of aid distributed. Coordination with other agencies, particularly in needs assessments and in follow-up programming missions, should result in activities that address both food and non-food needs in a complementary way.

24.   General food distributions to a community, whether to whole communities or to targeted people in them, may be the correct choice at the outset of an emergency and sometimes for much longer, as in the case of isolated internally displaced people (IDPs) or refugees. As WFP moves past the initial emergency response, however, its exit and transition policies require it to seek opportunities to reduce caseloads, reduce rations and move towards productive activities and programmes with specific nutritional outcomes.[5]

25.   Both the approaches used to target households or individuals and the food delivery mechanisms selected to reach them have important consequences for the success of targeting and the degree of inclusion/exclusion errors of a food aid operation.

Box 3: Food Aid Delivery: Flexible and Varied Responses to Reach Targeted Populations

There is a need for variety and flexibility in the modalities of WFP assistance used within a single operation. In the Colombia context, which is a situation that is regionally varied and includes transitory and chronic vulnerability, and in which numerous population groups potentially fit WFP criteria for assistance, there is no one-size-fits-all modality of assistance that would be appropriate. Types of interventions are selected according to community needs and capacity and the availability and strengths of partners. Interventions might consist of one or a combination of the following: general distribution, school feeding, food for work, participation in community kitchens and non-food responses. For instance, in highly food-insecure communities where residents as well as IDPs require assistance, community kitchens run by respected women are used to help meet food needs. A short-term free-food modality called "food for crisis", introduced primarily to assist communities at risk of displacement, is another example of flexibility in a single operation; it is widely considered to be one of the most important WFP interventions.

C. Inclusion and Exclusion Errors

26.   Targeting errors occur and optimal targeting effectiveness is compromised when people who do not meet the criteria for assistance receive it, or when those who meet the criteria fail to receive food assistance, which sometimes threatens their survival. These errors are commonly referred to as inclusion (also referred to as leakage) and exclusion errors. Targeting errors also arise when people receive more or less food than required, at the wrong time or for a greater or shorter length of time than warranted.[6] Food aid targeting errors can also occur when anticipated partner aid, food or non-food, is not delivered, which can lead to pressure to increase food aid coverage or result in undesirable food ration sharing.

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[5] WFP/EB.A/1998/4-A; WFP/EB.1/2005/4-B; WFP/EB.A/2004/5-B.

[6] Barrett and Maxwell 2005.

27.   Targeted families will sometimes share their food ration with others who have not been targeted. Technically, this might be considered an inclusion error, but it is often the result of communities adapting their own coping strategies in the face of externally-driven models. Food is sometimes shared when beneficiaries have enough food, sometimes because their needs have been overestimated, and when others who also need food have been excluded. This is often the case when interventions target people who are transitorily food-insecure because of a sudden crisis or disaster in an area with substantial numbers of chronically food-insecure people. Families may also share food to repay debts incurred in anticipation of the arrival of food rations or to honour traditional social-support obligations. In many food-emergency interventions, food sharing is unavoidable and can be factored into programme objectives and planning.

28.   Food sharing is more problematic when an emergency intervention has specific nutritional objectives for a particular target group such as pregnant women or children aged 0–5. To avoid inclusion errors and protect against undesired sharing, WFP employs a variety of delivery approaches. Rations for these groups are often distributed through institutions such as schools or health clinics that cater to the targeted population. Alternatively, for take-home rations aimed at the nutritionally vulnerable members of a household, there might be a need for a ration that is larger than required, a complementary family ration or a food ration that is considered culturally appropriate for children aged 6-24 months to ensure that intra-household sharing does not dilute nutritional impact.

29.   There is no way to avoid all targeting errors, and there are no agreed thresholds for acceptable levels of exclusion/inclusion errors in targeting food assistance.[7] The challenge is to strike the right balance between inclusion and exclusion errors without endangering the lives of crisis-affected people (See Box 4). At the beginning of an emergency, higher inclusion errors are generally tolerated because not receiving food can lead to devastating consequences for populations in need. In an environment of limited resources and high need, inclusion errors can dilute food assistance and lead directly to the exclusion of others who do need assistance. Providing food to a significant number of people who do not require food assistance wastes resources and can disrupt markets and discourage traditional livelihood strategies.

30.   At the outset of a crisis and in follow-up stages, ENA, VAM and regular monitoring can contribute directly to identifying and reducing targeting inclusion and exclusion errors. In Darfur, for example, surveys that were part of the annual emergency food-security and nutrition assessments helped to estimate the degree of inclusion/exclusion errors during 2005.[8] Management responses to the ENA findings included new camp registrations and reconsideration of targeting criteria for resident populations (see Box 4). Follow-up ENA in Sri Lanka after the tsunami employed objective and external analysis and so helped WFP Colombo and the Government to agree on targeting adjustments that led to a substantial reduction of inclusion errors during the second half of 2005.

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[7] WFP. 1998. *From Crisis to Recovery*. Rome; Coady, D., Grosh, M. and Hodinott, J. 2002. *Targeting of Transfers in Developing Countries: Review of Experience and Lessons*. Washington DC, World Bank.

[8] WFP. 2005. *Emergency Food Security and Nutrition Assessment in Darfur, Sudan: December 2005 Provisional Report*. Rome. Inclusion errors were higher among resident populations (16.5 percent) than inclusion errors of IDPs in communities (15.2 percent) and IDPs in camps (12.9 percent). Exclusion errors were highest among IDPs in communities (6 percent) and lower among IDPs in camps (4.9 percent) and residents (3.6 percent). The inclusion/exclusion errors are estimates derived from survey results and should not be considered definitive; they do, however, point to certain trends and can be used by the country office along with other monitoring information.

> **Box 4: Targeting IDPs and Host Communities in Darfur –**
> **Balancing Inclusion/Exclusion Errors**
>
> Displacement in response to armed conflict is a major cause of hunger in Darfur. In the initial stages of the conflict, targeting criteria were based mainly on whether or not a person was displaced. However, following a food security and nutrition survey, it was determined that rural residents were similarly susceptible to food insecurity, putting them in a more precarious position than some IDPs. These non-displaced people were vulnerable on several fronts: their harvest was threatened by poor climate conditions in 2004, they were experiencing the negative consequences of the conflict, including limited market access and a virtual cessation of trade, and their communities were increasingly burdened by hosting large numbers of IDPs. Assisting a large number of IDPs in a village raised tensions in the communities, as did targeting all IDPs and only some of the residents. Therefore, WFP and partners needed to find a fair and transparent way to ensure that the most food-insecure people were assisted. After discussions with partners and communities, WFP arrived at a pragmatic formula: in rural villages already identified as vulnerable to food insecurity and in which hosted IDPs exceeded 50 percent of the total population, WFP would provide rations for the entire village population. It is possible that some residents did not require immediate food assistance, but they constituted a small minority, and identifying and excluding these individuals would have taken vital human resources away from distribution and monitoring tasks and could have led to further tensions.

III. GOOD TARGETING PRACTICE

31.   Recognizing that targeting stages and their methods will vary according to each situation, the principles outlined below are general enough to be applied to most emergency situations.

A. General Principles for Targeting

32.   Targeting for any kind of intervention is rarely 100 percent accurate. In emergencies, it is even more difficult because of destroyed or disrupted capacities and rapidly changing events. In particular, the constraints inherent in complex emergencies such as lack of access because of armed conflict will inevitably lead to targeting errors. The targeting objective of WFP in emergencies must be to minimize these errors without jeopardizing rapid lifesaving food deliveries, to provide a safe environment for food deliveries and to maintain flexibility to adapt to rapidly changing situations.

33.   Minimizing inclusion and exclusion errors incurs costs that generally increase as targeting errors diminish. Managers need to create a targeting system that is feasible, timely and cost-efficient and that provides reasonable assurance that project resources are reaching only the intended people. A balance between targeting exclusion errors and targeting inclusion errors must be found.

34.   Creating a targeting system that considers costs and inclusion and exclusion errors is a complex exercise that differs with every emergency situation, but generally includes at least some of the following factors: (i) security and access to the target population; (ii) acuteness of the hunger or livelihood situation; (iii) the capacity of the WFP office,

local partners and community structures, including monitoring and reporting capacity; (iv) the nature and duration of the crisis; (v) the availability of pre-crisis population and beneficiary data; and (vi) the degree to which the EMOP is funded. Credible information will vary from crisis to crisis, but it is essential for a dynamic targeting approach; obtaining and improving information in these areas for decision-making are an integral part of programme implementation.

35.   Successful targeting requires continuous analysis of numerous factors including logistics, costs, staff and counterpart capacities, political and socio-economic conditions, the causes of conflict, cultural norms and tribal dynamics and gender roles, and management decision-making processes that are responsive to ongoing analyses. Setting clear project objectives from the start that take these factors into account will later allow for targeting flexibility without compromising the goals of a project.

36.   The Figure below illustrates some of the main tools and information required to ensure the best possible targeting decisions are taken and adjustments made throughout the life of a project.

Targeting Decisions and Adjustments

VAM	Early Warning & Contingency Planning	ENA	Design & Planning	Implement	Monitoring & Analysis
Situational Analysis & baseline studies to identify those vulnerable	Identification of potential crisis – who may be affected, how and where?	Establish if food aid is needed, when, how much, for how long, for how many	Establish project objectives & food aid modalities to meet needs	Set up registration, distribution and commodity management	Monitor data to manage projects, adjust targeting choices, monitoring, distribution, PDM, impact
		TARGETING ADJUSTMENTS			
Are the geographic areas still appropriate? Are the targeting criteria valid?	Have contingency scenarios been updated?	Is food aid still appropriate? Should adjustments be made to the ration?	Are food aid delivery systems most appropriate to meet objectives? Are objectives appropriate?	Are there problems in the registration or distribution – wrong people registered, poor selection of sites, etc.?	Are targeted people receiving food? Are project objectives being met? Is there evidence of inclusion/ or exclusion errors?

37.   Donations for an intervention sometimes lag behind needs or begin to decrease as an emergency fades from the headlines, but the probability of irregular or insufficient resources and the impact on targeting need to be considered. Through the Business Process Review, WFP is currently improving its ability to predict funding for emergencies and ensure timely resourcing. Nevertheless, pipeline breaks, unexpected delivery problems, unanticipated funding changes and other delivery constraints are often unavoidable, and WFP must plan for such occurrences. This includes answering the following questions: Which programmes or beneficiaries are priorities and are all stakeholders aware of this? What steps can be taken to minimize the impact on beneficiaries of incomplete or late deliveries? What are the project contingency plans for lower-than-expected donor support?

B. Managing Information for Targeting

⇒ *Secondary Data Sources and "Ground Truthing"*

38.   In some acute emergency situations, identifying affected locations such as towns under siege or concentrations of IDPs may be the only option. Usually, and especially in non-conflict emergencies, WFP can employ a number of information-management tools of varying sophistication to develop specific criteria for determining the eligibility of specific households or individuals. In non-conflict emergencies, there are usually better information sources and more opportunities to improve targeting. Traditional community structures/power relations usually remain intact, except in cases of large-scale migration, and more up-to-date secondary information is often available from governments or partner organizations.

39.   Ideally a VAM baseline serves WFP as the information source from which to measure changing food-security patterns and trigger early warning of an impending crisis. Other early-warning systems such as the Famine Early-Warning System Network (FEWS-NET) or FAO's Global Information Early Warning System (GIEWS) also contribute to anticipating an emergency. A crisis or strong signals of an impending crisis should trigger an ENA to identify food-security needs and prompt food aid interventions if appropriate.

40.   Criteria for household and individual targeting are often identified in the first instance through secondary data sources, usually collected through VAM and ENAs. Relying solely on secondary data rarely identifies the root causes of hunger, and therefore a process of gathering and analysing new information and triangulating findings must be employed. Cross-checking and "ground-truthing" secondary data and conclusions, which may require WFP and partners to collect new primary data, is essential to a holistic view of the crisis and the most accurate targeting. Participation of communities in establishing criteria and monitoring food aid programmes, a ground-truthing exercise on its own, provides invaluable information to get targeting right and adjust targeting approaches as required.

41.   Potential partners and other organizations may be more established in the communities and better able to provide essential information and participate in developing targeting criteria and distribution systems that are acceptable to the community and potential beneficiaries. The formation of multi-stakeholder coordination bodies can help define targeting criteria that better represent the needs of communities.

**Box 5: Assessing Needs in Colombia –
Building an Information Base to Improve Targeting**

In Colombia, an emphasis on assessment in 2004 and 2005 improved WFP's knowledge of who needed assistance and successfully supported a targeting shift in favour of the most affected communities. Previously, WFP had assisted officially registered IDPs only. Official lists proved to be an incomplete basis for a WFP operation aiming to target the most vulnerable people. First, many IDPs did not register through the formal government structure because of fear of reprisals and lack of information or access, which effectively excluded them from assistance to which they were entitled. Second, in some highly food-insecure areas such as Chocó in western Colombia, the resident populations were often in a condition as bad or worse than that of the IDPs, or in a condition that deteriorated rapidly when they took in IDPs. On the basis of joint WFP/International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) assessment findings, systems were developed to include IDPs reluctant to register officially and community-based interventions were designed to benefit all those who required support in communities with high percentages of IDPs. WFP relies on a strong church network to identify people who are affected by conflict and food-insecure and to help to ensure that food assistance is not wasted or directed to people who should be excluded. WFP post-distribution monitoring ensures that food-insecure families are being reached and that church decisions are perceived as fair by the community.

⇒ *Monitoring for Better Targeting*

42.   Monitoring systems such as programme monitoring, food-security monitoring, nutritional assessments, re-assessments and project reviews or evaluations help in cross-checking the validity of the original targeting criteria and in measuring progress against food-security indicators identified in earlier VAM and ENA exercises.

43.   Monitoring systems must answer the basic question: Is food reaching the intended beneficiaries in time and in the right quantity and type? In the shifting dynamics of an emergency, however, the people in need of assistance may change or move to another location, and other developments may necessitate changes in the distribution modality. Monitoring must include examining changes in negative and positive coping strategies, determining whether other food options are available and measuring changes in dietary intake or diversity. With regard to targeting, monitoring indicators should determine (i) the appropriateness of geographic targeting, (ii) whether the groups in greatest need were correctly identified by the ENA and (iii) whether the objectives are being achieved.[9]

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[9] WFP. 2005. Full Technical Report of the Thematic Evaluation of Targeting in WFP Relief Operations, September draft.

> **Box 6: Southern Africa Drought: Monitoring to Improve**
> **Vulnerability Indicators for Targeting**
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> During the southern Africa drought emergency of 2002–2005, food-insecure households in communities affected by the drought were initially targeted based on social criteria – families hosting orphans, elderly people, chronically ill people – then as a secondary criterion on the basis of asset ownership. Following an extensive review and systematic monitoring through the Community Household Surveillance Analysis, WFP and C-SAFE, a consortium of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), found that asset ownership "…may provide the best overall vulnerability indicator for food-aid related targeting." Households were subsequently targeted first on the basis of asset ownership; social criteria were then used as a validation method and to further target the most vulnerable households.

44. When possible, regular monitoring should include information about community members and at-risk geographical areas not receiving food aid. These groups may also be vulnerable and may require food aid in the near future. "Forgotten" beneficiaries may be the chronically food-insecure, resident populations hosting displaced people and "pocket communities" that are excluded because of resource constraints.[10]

C. Weighing the Costs of Targeting

45. Identifying which regions, communities or people are most in need of food assistance can be a costly process. It requires collection and analysis of accurate up-to-date information on macro-level and micro-level food-security indicators. Sometimes, available vulnerability data and a low-cost rapid assessment provide adequate targeting results, but generally the costs increase in proportion to the detail of targeting: the costs increase as targeting moves from the regional level to the village, household and individual levels. Costs also increase as reliance shifts from secondary to primary data collection. Investing adequate resources in targeting for emergencies is essential to accountability. At minimum, VAM baseline surveys and follow-ups and comprehensive ENAs must be recognized as standard costs in countries with frequent large emergency operations.

46. It is difficult to separate targeting expenditures in emergencies from the general costs of food aid programming. Targeting is an integral part of preparedness: it is one of the main elements of initial emergency and follow-up assessments and it is a central component of programme monitoring and evaluation. There are, however, some distinct cost elements of targeting that should be considered and planned for. These can be divided into several components: initial, recurring, implicit and beneficiary opportunity costs.

⇒ *Initial and Recurring Targeting Costs*

47. Initial costs include those associated with assessments, field work with communities to develop criteria, training of staff, partners and community food committees, information campaigns, and establishment of registration and distribution systems. Recurring costs comprise updating of registration systems, distribution and post distribution monitoring, evaluations/reassessments, and the costs of maintaining targeting capacity between emergencies in countries that suffer recurrent crises. Developing monitoring systems for an emergency, carrying out the monitoring, and fielding evaluations similarly need to be costed for every emergency.

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[10] WFP. 2005. Thematic Review of Targeting in Relief Operations, synthesis report draft 9.

48.   Typically, WFP needs between US$50,000 and US$100,000 to carry out a VAM baseline survey, though the costs can be far higher in a large complex emergency. ENAs also vary in cost: a 2005 ENA survey in Niger for 400,000 beneficiaries cost more than US$58,000; in Pakistan, a rapid ENA for 1 million beneficiaries cost only US$22,000.[11] The emergency food security and nutrition assessment for Darfur in 2005 cost US$250,000 excluding WFP staff costs, which amounts to less than one twentieth of 1 percent of the US$679 million annual direct costs of the Darfur EMOP.[12] Absolute expenditure for an annual assessment such as that in Darfur may appear high, but it must be measured against the savings in targeting efficiency that can be achieved in such a large operation.

⇒ *Implicit Targeting Costs*

49.   Implicit costs include the risks inherent to access, access negotiations and staff security. In emergencies, and particularly complex emergencies, staff are more likely to be exposed to security risks. These implicit costs must be weighed against the needs of the crisis-affected population and the degree of targeting accuracy that can be realistically and safely achieved. Close working relations with a community can improve targeting efficiency and reduce security risks to staff. When the security situation does not allow United Nations staff to be present in a crisis-affected area, WFP may consider negotiations or options to transfer implicit targeting costs or risks to other organizations (see Box 7). In some instances, WFP may need to forego its own ENAs and rely on and reimburse local NGOs or community-based organizations for targeting decisions and for managing and monitoring emergency food interventions. Ideally, access by WFP would be established as quickly as possible in order to confirm the food-security situation and monitor results.

Box 7: Targeting Demobilized Combatants in Angola without WFP Presence

In 2002, following the end of the war between the *União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola* (UNITA, National Union for the Total Independence of Angola) and the Government of Angola, the Government began to place soldiers in demobilization centres throughout the country. Protocols for United Nations and NGO staff security had not yet been established between the Government and the United Nations for some of the centres. Centres in insecure areas such as Huila province were therefore not considered safe for staff. Despite these problems, soldiers and their families continued to arrive in poor condition, malnourished and in desperate need of food. *Médecins sans frontières* (MSF) was one of the few organizations ready to work in the quartering areas without United Nations security guarantees. Based on food security and nutrition information from MSF, a trusted partner, WFP agreed to channel food assistance through these centres for up to three months for all children under 5 and for pregnant and lactating women. When the United Nations and the Government of Angola came to an agreement on staff security and assistance protocols in June 2002, WFP established a presence in the demobilization centres within 24 hours to assess the need for and monitor subsequent food assistance.

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[11] Data interpreted from Niger ENA of September 2005 and Pakistan ENA of October 2005.

[12] WFP covered 77 percent of assessment costs; the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), FAO, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and World Vision covered the balance.

⇒ *Targeting Opportunity or Transaction Costs*

50. Targeting opportunity costs and transaction costs refer to the costs borne by people receiving food assistance. For example, communities must meet the targeting requirements of aid agencies, participate in targeting meetings, assist in distributing and monitoring rations, safely transport their rations home and maintain community power structures as an external resource is injected into their economy, an injection of resources that is often significant enough to threaten equilibrium.

51. When aid agencies strive for lower-cost targeting strategies or seek to reduce targeting and delivery costs as an emergency evolves, costs for the community and for the people receiving food aid often increase. Limiting the number of distribution points, reducing the frequency of distributions or relying less on primary data are all "cost-efficient" moves that are likely to result in these "savings" being borne by the intended target population. For instance, distant distribution points might subject people, especially women, who are generally the main recipients and collectors of food aid, to an insecure environment and to greater transport costs. The more time required to receive rations because of insufficient staffing or inefficient systems, the more people must find ways to compensate, often through trading or selling relief food, for lost income opportunities or time away from household obligations such as childcare. WFP and its partners must invest in CBT and understanding of community dynamics to reduce the likelihood that the imposition of external decision-making and injection of external resources will disturb a community's social equilibrium.

D. Participation and Communication to Improve Targeting

52. Non-conflict and non-displacement situations are generally more conducive to household or individual beneficiary targeting, though needs can be equally widespread after a drought or flood. It is crucial to use an approach that is as participatory as possible in such situations, and to be aware that women and men in the community may have very different concepts of vulnerability and ideas about the selection criteria to be employed. Clear communication from WFP staff and cooperating partners on the reasoning behind general WFP approaches such as ensuring gender equality is essential. Flexibility in adjusting standard WFP practices according to the situation and the input of communities is also required. Once selection criteria are agreed with the community, WFP must continue cross-checking the targeting decisions through field visits and house-to-house surveys to ensure that the targeted population is being reached and the objectives of the project are being met.

53. Targeting criteria should be developed with maximum feasible participation by the potential beneficiary group. When communities, whether represented by formal leaders or informal committees, are involved in determining the criteria and identifying who should receive scarce resources, the risks of misappropriation are mitigated. Strict criteria will facilitate project implementation and clear accountability and communication, but may jeopardize project flexibility and diminish the value placed on beneficiary participation – a risk that may not be justified.

54. The more participatory the beneficiary selection and the more the information is cross-checked and monitored, however, the higher the project costs will be in terms of financial and human resources. A study undertaken by Save the Children UK estimated that the preparatory work alone for CBT can take up to 14 weeks before distributions

start.[13] In Myanmar, an additional 20 field staff were recruited for two months to cross-check beneficiary targeting information in 400 hamlets.[14] In a slow-onset situation, this time lapse can sometimes be planned for without sacrificing response time. In rapid-onset emergencies, plans for gradually intensifying beneficiary participation in targeting decisions should be part of the recommendations of ENAs.

IV. SUMMARY TARGETING RECOMMENDATIONS

General Targeting Principles

➤ Strive for a balance between targeting exclusion errors, which can be life threatening, and potentially disruptive or wasteful inclusion errors. In acute emergencies, inclusion errors may be more acceptable than exclusion.

➤ Make targeting decisions for an intervention based on a full resource scenario, but be prepared to adjust to reduced and/or delayed resources. Establish priority objectives and clearly communicate to all stakeholders any adjustments that are eventually necessary.

➤ Ensure targeting is a conscious and integral management activity at all stages of the programme cycle and that targeting is informed by critical situation analysis. As an emergency develops and population needs change, target groups and targeting processes must also evolve. Be flexible in adjusting standard WFP practices according to the situation and in conjunction with project objectives.

Managing Information for Targeting

➤ Use VAM, early warning and ENA results to set initial targeting parameters. Partner organizations and local community structures should serve as information and data sources to further develop targeting criteria.

➤ Use monitoring systems to assess targeting criteria regularly, from the very beginning of an intervention and throughout the programme cycle.

➤ Monitor the status of non-targeted and potentially vulnerable people and geographical areas within or near to food-targeted areas.

Weighing the Costs of Targeting

➤ Analyse costs and benefits associated with different targeting approaches, including initial, recurring, implicit and beneficiary opportunity costs borne by the target population.

➤ Estimate and budget for costs of targeting, including food-security monitoring, assessment and targeting design such as registration, partner training and community sensitization from the outset of an emergency response.

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[13] Seaman and Taylor, p. 28.

[14] WFP. 2005. Full Technical Report of the Thematic Evaluation of Targeting in WFP Relief Operations, September Draft.

Participation and Communication to Improve Targeting

➢ Encourage beneficiary participation to the extent feasible in defining targeting criteria that are as precise as possible. This is more difficult at the beginning of sudden-onset crises, but should become increasingly the practice as an emergency stabilizes. Substantial participation in defining criteria should be standard practice in responses to slow-onset and recurrent emergencies.

➢ Communicate WFP and cooperating partner targeting criteria clearly to stakeholders. Continue cross-checking the targeting criteria through monitoring and beneficiary participation by men and women.

ANNEX — TARGETING PROCESS

Targeting Approaches for Household/Individual Targeting				
Targeting Steps	**Description**	**Recommended Use**	**Strengths**	**Weaknesses**
Geographic targeting	Geographic targeting in an emergency refers to the identification of administrative units, economic areas or livelihood zones that have a high concentration of food-insecure people.	➢ All targeting by WFP is initially based on geographic areas. These areas are then refined to encompass large areas or smaller districts, villages or camps. ➢ Use exclusively when: – the majority in the defined area are food-insecure; – social, political and/or security conditions do not allow for more refined targeting and it is clear that there is a serious food security problem affecting a large portion of the population; – costs of more refined targeting outweigh the benefits.	➢ Identifies the most vulnerable areas to prioritize targeting decisions. ➢ Can be used alone as a quick-and-easy targeting method when more in-depth approaches are not feasible – usually highly food-insecure conflict envionments that are difficult to reach. ➢ Utilizes existing vulnerability data and other secondary data that can be cost effective.	➢ Existing population estimates are often unreliable and may distort results. ➢ For best results, secondary data should be cross-checked with primary data and "ground truthing". ➢ When used exclusively, this can lead to large inclusion errors. ➢ Can exclude pockets of food-insecure people.
Household/individual	Household or individual targeting involves selection of groups, households or individuals who are considered to be the most food-insecure in a community.	➢ A clear difference exists between households or individuals who require assistance and those who do not in a geographic zone, for example a village or a displaced community. ➢ Use when partners or WFP staff have knowledge of and/or long-term presence in the area. ➢ Use when the situation is stable enough to allow for regular monitoring of targeting decisions.	➢ Reduces likelihood of large inclusion errors. ➢ Can help to improve the effectiveness of WFP food aid to meet specific objectives, for example nutrition or recovery.	➢ It may be difficult to distinguish between needy households in the midst of an emergency. ➢ There is a risk of redistribution of food aid, especially following distribution of a dry ration. ➢ There is a risk of resentment and possible undermining of the food aid programmes by excluded groups. ➢ In an instable situation, identifying individuals for food assistance can foment conflict.

ANNEX — TARGETING PROCESS

Targeting Approaches for Household/Individual Targeting

Targeting Steps	Description	Recommended Use	Strengths	Weaknesses
				➢ Similarly, targeting certain groups such as IDPs or HIV/AIDS-affected people can also foment conflict or stigmatize the recipient.
Administrative Targeting	Households or individuals are selected by agencies or people external to the community using standard observable criteria or indicators such as nutrition status or objective socio-economic characteristics.	➢ When nutrition interventions such as therapeutic or supplementary programmes are required. ➢ In other institutional programmes such as MCH or school feeding. ➢ In conflict situations when it is preferred that outsiders are seen to deciding and implementing criteria. ➢ When the imperative to delivery food quickly and the anticipated project duration is too short to establish CBT systems.	➢ Can be unbiased and transparent. ➢ Can be effective in excluding non-target groups, especially when used at the household and individual level.	➢ High administrative costs. ➢ Difficult to standardize or verify when information is poor. ➢ Risk that the indicators do not reflect true vulnerability, leading to exclusion errors. ➢ Risk of stigmatizing people (HIV/AIDS, IDPs).
Community-based targeting	Households or individuals are selected with the participation of men and women in the community such as traditional or religious leaders, especially constituted food committees or local authorities, on the basis of criteria developed with the participation of the communities.	➢ In stable situations or when social structures have not been disrupted. ➢ When an emergency or crisis is expected to last longer than a few months.	➢ In the long term, CBT can reduce costs to the organization. ➢ Communities usually have and can further develop a better understanding of vulnerability and need. ➢ Helps to empower and build community capacity through participation.	➢ Initial start-up of CBT systems needs training and advocacy at the local level; this requires staff time, which at the initial stages can be costly. ➢ Careful monitoring is required to ensure fairness and cross-checking of targeting decisions. ➢ It is difficult to standardize or compare targeting criteria between different communities.

ANNEX — TARGETING PROCESS

Targeting Approaches for Household/Individual Targeting

Targeting Steps	Description	Recommended Use	Strengths	Weaknesses
Self-targeting	When individuals and households are given the choice of whether to become beneficiaries in schemes such as FFW or distributions involving low-value/low-status food commodities.	➤ When CBT may fail to identify the most vulnerable or food-insecure people. ➤ When CBT may foster conflict in a community. ➤ When full rations for an entire community are not longer necessary. ➤ When recovery or protecting livelihoods is the primary objective.	➤ When projects are able to absorb all who want to participate, there is little risk of corruption or bias in selection. ➤ Low administrative costs related to targeting. ➤ Selection is transparent.	➤ Good information analysis is necessary to know what projects, food rations size and commodity type will help to self-select the intended people. ➤ The project must be able to take every one who wants to be involved.

ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

AIDS	acquired immune deficiency syndrome
APR	Annual Performance Report
CBT	community-based targeting
CDC	Center for Disease Control and Prevention
CFSVA	comprehensive food security and vulnerability assessment
EMOP	emergency operation
ENA	emergency needs assessment
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FEWS-NET	Famine Early-Warning System Network
FSMS	Food Security Monitoring System
GFD	general food distribution
GIEWS	Global Information Early-Warning System
GIS	geographic information system
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	internally displaced person
MSF	*Médecins sans frontières*
NGO	non-governmental organization
PDP	Policy, Strategy and Programme Support Division
PDPT	Emergencies and Transition Unit
PRRO	protracted relief and recovery operation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNITA	*União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola* (Nacional Union for the Total Independence of Angola)
VAM	vulnerability analysis and mapping