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SUMMARY OF THE WORK OF THE THIRD REGULAR SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD, 2004

In accordance with the methods of work of the Executive Board, the present document reflects the main points of its deliberations to be taken into account by the Secretariat in the implementation of the Board's decisions and recommendations, contained in document WFP/EB.3/2004/15.

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CURRENT AND FUTURE STRATEGIC ISSUES

Current and Future Strategic Issues (2004/EB.3/1)

1. The Executive Director began his presentation by noting that although the world's awareness of hunger and humanitarian concerns was increasing, much remained to be done: there were still 25,000 deaths per day from hunger, 18,000 of them children. Food was fundamental to solving major issues concerning hunger, malnutrition, poverty, disease, gender and education. The question remained: How could the global community meet the needs of the hungry poor and enable them to develop on their own? There was a clear need to address the question of funding for humanitarian work.
2. The Executive Director underlined the need to reduce the burdens on beneficiaries. WFP should aim to be part of the strongest humanitarian partnerships in the world with governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and United Nations agencies. A deeply engaged Board would be vital.
3. Mr Morris paid tribute to the efforts of President Lula of Brazil and President Chirac of France in convening a meeting at Head of State level to address hunger and poverty issues and mechanisms to address them, and emphasized that words must lead to deeds, and deeds to results.
4. Several countries were increasing their support for humanitarian work. The Executive Director hoped for greater support from Middle Eastern countries – many countries served by WFP were in the Organization of Islamic States. Support for WFP from the United States had moved from 60 percent of resources in 2002 to 43 percent in 2004 – perhaps a healthy development in that there was less dependence on a single major donor. The Executive Director expressed WFP's gratitude to all donors.
5. Economic factors such as increasing oil, freight and commodity prices had a major effect on WFP's work. There was a need to use surplus commodities for humanitarian purposes and to find ways to fund the humanitarian agenda; new private and developing-country donors would be increasingly important. The Executive Director expressed his thanks for the contributions and support given during the year, especially to countries and organizations whose levels of support had increased. Several private companies had also made important contributions. Commitments from some Eastern European, Asian and Latin American countries were growing. The Walk the World event had increased awareness of hunger in the world as well as raising funds: it could potentially be the biggest humanitarian fundraising event in the world.
6. Current relief work in Darfur faced the challenges of increasing numbers of needy people, lost crops and no planting, but aid corridors had been established and there were standby plans supported by various countries. Resource requirements would probably be much larger next year. An evaluation of the United Nations response coordinated by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) was planned: there was a need to learn from experience.
7. The number and scale of recent natural disasters were a huge challenge, for which major resources were needed. The situations in Haiti and Bangladesh were highlighted. The desert locust problem in the Sahel was particularly serious; WFP was working with other agencies, particularly the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in responding to it. In southern Africa, the triple threat was eroding human capacities to the extent that the available funds could not be effectively used; soon one in five children in



the region would be orphans. There was a need for bold, innovative and consolidated United Nations approaches to address these critical issues. WFP was also working to address issues of corruption and misuse of its resources in Cambodia.

8. WFP was working in partnership with other United Nations agencies and 1,500 NGO partners. To optimize spending and returns, harmonization was needed in terms of stronger regional focus and establishing operational partnerships with other United Nations agencies. It would be important to keep the focus on benefits to recipients, not on processes; the Board's leadership in this would be fundamental.
9. On financial matters, the Executive Director pointed out that the original needs-based budget for the biennium of US\$4.2 billion had been increased to US\$6.2 billion, of which 80 percent would be raised. The Internal Audit Committee had been restructured to have a majority of external members; the Investment Committee would follow the same pattern.
10. The Executive Director outlined recent developments related to staff training in results-based management and the business process review, and progress in establishing a gender balance in staffing. He noted the excellent global staff meeting in Dublin and plans to hold such meetings every two years. He also described the actions taken to improve security, urging countries to participate in funding initiatives outlined in the Secretary-General's security approach. The overriding need was to stay focused on beneficiaries, and strive to do more, do it better and do it together.
11. After a film about the Walk the World event, the floor was given to the Foreign Minister of Peru, who stressed that the objectives of social cohesion, peace and stability could not be achieved while one person in seven went hungry. There was an urgent need to solve the contradiction of a world with food available but 840 million hungry people. Even in middle-income countries, millions lived on less than US\$2 per day. Current trends would have to be reversed if the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were to be achieved. Countries in the Latin America and Caribbean region needed to develop rights-based policies promoting social inclusion to reduce their problems of unequal distribution of income and lack of access to food; work was under way to reduce chronic hunger and address problems related to internal displaced people (IDPs) and the effects of extreme climate. The Government of Peru had included "social diplomacy" as a component of its foreign policy.
12. Peru remained very supportive of the work of WFP in the region, especially in its efforts to save lives in emergencies, improve the situation of women, address poverty and hunger, and improve local capacities to deal with these issues. Globally, WFP's work to increase its donor base and the visibility of hunger-related problems was much appreciated. Efforts to mobilize Heads of State and Government in the struggle against hunger and to increase their contributions were deeply appreciated – but political will had to be translated into policies and resources. Transparency and accountability were essential to make the work visible and credible. Social science techniques would need to be deployed to enhance assessments, but it would also be necessary to pay attention to actual human success stories. Debt relief by donor countries would be an important mechanism in the battle against hunger and the move towards a more just and peaceful world.
13. The Foreign Minister concluded by repeating that words had to be translated into action if the MDGs were to be reached.
14. The President of the Executive Board of UNICEF then took the floor, and expressed his appreciation of the opportunity to address the Board, which was the most effective way to share experiences and promote partnership. He then outlined changes in UNICEF executive board processes to promote and enrich discussion, increase the participation of



aid recipient countries, reduce paperwork and make meetings and processes more efficient. Mechanisms included publishing papers on the web at an early stage, circulating draft decisions in advance of meetings, developing flexible agendas and holding informal briefings before board meetings. The number of interventions at meetings was limited so as to use time more efficiently. Decision-making by consensus was the norm. Meetings of the bureau were held during board sessions to review activities. Field visits by the bureau had become annual. Micromanagement was avoided. Simplification and harmonization with other United Nations agencies was a priority; joint programming and collaboration in the field would improve as a result.

15. The Bangladeshi Minister for Development and Disaster Management then took the floor. He outlined the major problems of food insecurity and undernourishment in Bangladesh, which had a large population but a low resource base and frequent problems of flooding. There was a need to increase purchasing power and access to food programmes and resources among poor farmers in order to address underlying problems. Bangladesh was pursuing five approaches: (i) pro-poor economic growth; (ii) human development for increased capacities; (iii) support for women; (iv) provision of safety nets; and (v) participatory governance. To achieve the MDG of halving poverty by 2015, Bangladesh would need to sustain a GDP growth rate of about 7 percent per year over the next 15 years. The country needed support to maintain current major improvements in production. The work of WFP was warmly appreciated, especially its work in response to recent displacement and food insecurity resulting from floods.
16. The Board expressed full support for WFP's work as outlined by the Executive Director. The Board emphasized the importance of being proactive in identifying and addressing problems and continuing to develop the building of regional and country capacities. The importance of debt-swap arrangements and similar mechanisms was highlighted. The Board was warmly appreciative of WFP's policy of increasing and optimizing its partnerships and donor base, especially in view of contributing to the resolution of major problems such as the HIV/AIDS pandemic and the Darfur situation; several members emphasized the seriousness of the locust threat. The importance of fundraising was stressed; the need to prioritize effectively to make the most of resources was also highlighted. The need to address problems of corruption was emphasized, especially in relation to the case in Cambodia; WFP should develop new anti-corruption methods to support its role as a supervising agency.
17. Several members stated that their national governments would be increasing their financial and commodity contributions in coming years. The Russian Federation announced that it would now be a permanent donor of WFP. The presentations by the distinguished guests were much appreciated.
18. Questions were raised regarding the discrepancy between needs and expected resources, the shortfalls in rations distributed in Darfur, and WFP's plans for responding to the locust problem in the Sahel. The Board and WFP would need to be creative and flexible in their approaches if they were to make an impact on hunger. The need to respect personal dignity and cultural expectations during food distributions was emphasized. It was particularly important to be sensitive to the needs of women and to create self-sufficiency.
19. Tribute was paid to WFP staff who had suffered or lost their lives in the cause of serving humanity. The contributions of Italy as host nation were warmly appreciated.
20. The Executive Director thanked the Board for its comments. He expressed WFP's deep gratitude for the increased contributions, particularly in view of the stated fact that 2005 would be a bad year for hungry people, given the expected 40 percent increase in costs related to food aid. The announcement by the Russian Federation was particularly



welcomed. The proposals for debt swaps and for linking education to farming were appreciated. WFP was taking full responsibility in addressing the problems of corruption that had been identified. A crop assessment team had been fielded to assess the locust situation. A full food basket would be available in the coming weeks in Darfur and Chad. Prioritization of needs in the context of finite resources was acknowledged as a critical question. The Executive Director reiterated the need for WFP and the United Nations to re-examine their working methods to address emerging needs and problems. He appreciated the need for sensitive approaches. WFP was grateful for the support it received, and would continue to focus on serving beneficiaries.

POLICY ISSUES

WFP and Food-Based Safety Nets: Concepts, Experiences and Future Programming Opportunities (2004/EB.3/2)

21. The Secretariat noted that WFP's involvement in safety net activities was consistent with national priorities. Three activity models were discussed with regard to WFP's engagement with food-based safety nets: (i) assisting in laying the groundwork for safety nets; (ii) participating in safety-net design and implementation; and (iii) helping to improve existing safety-net systems. It was noted that not all WFP activities constitute a safety net, but non-safety net activities can be improved by applying safety-net design principles. The Secretariat stressed that food-based safety nets were government programmes with which WFP would engage for a certain period but which had clear exit strategies. The importance of partnerships with national governments and other agencies in safety-net programmes was also emphasized. The Secretariat cited a collaborative effort with UNICEF and other agencies in the eastern and southern Africa regions.
22. The Board noted the importance of safety nets in poverty eradication, economic growth strategies, human-capital development and livelihood protection and promotion in the event of shocks. Members emphasized the need for WFP to have clear exit strategies in order to avoid creating dependency. Several members emphasized that partnerships, coordination, flexibility, transparency, sound principles and an appropriate balance of cash and food would be fundamental elements of successful safety nets. Some stressed the need for new and appropriate funding mechanisms. Others noted that there was an important link between safety-net activities and capacity-building. Interest was expressed in the processes for implementing the recommendations for enhancing in-house expertise, developing guidelines, and identifying best practices.
23. In response, the Secretariat expressed its appreciation to Board members for sharing their concerns and recommendations. Their comments would be taken into account in the development of programme guidelines, which would be made freely available to all. The Secretariat agreed that in food-based safety-net programmes, attention should be paid to partnerships and exit strategies should be considered from the start.



Building Country and Regional Capacities (2004/EB.3/3)

24. The President recalled that the document was the result of an involved consultation process on the policy framework for building country and regional capacities. Once it was approved, the Secretariat could develop the relevant financial and implementation modalities, which would involve further consultations with the Board leading to a second document to be submitted for approval at the earliest opportunity.
25. The Director, Division of Strategy, Policy and Programme Support (PSP), welcomed the feedback received from the Board through the informal consultations, noting that the document had benefited from inputs from all WFP divisions and regional bureaux. The policy framework would enable WFP to move to a more systematic approach to capacity-building, which was particularly important in helping countries to progress towards the MDGs. WFP needed to respond to countries' needs and priorities, working in partnership with others and focusing on areas where it has a clear comparative advantage. The document recognized that WFP must mainstream capacity-building, which would require a change of mindset and strengthening of WFP's capacity to provide this type of assistance.
26. The Board welcomed the mainstreaming of capacity-building in WFP, praising the Secretariat for incorporating their comments into a new text. Several members looked forward to seeing the results of the new policy; the Board needed to be kept regularly informed of the future development of Strategic Priority (SP)5. Building country and regional capacities had a longer-term impact on hunger, because countries were able to respond to needs and prepare more effectively for disasters, allowing WFP to phase out its assistance. The Board underlined the importance of supporting national strategies and of local ownership for the sustainability of capacity-building interventions. However, WFP needed a flexible approach, given the different needs of countries, and should select the most suitable interventions for each situation. WFP should pay close attention to its comparative advantage; it had clear corporate strengths in logistics and disaster preparedness. In many areas of capacity-building WFP should work with partners, and in particular facilitate South-South cooperation.
27. The Board also appreciated that capacity-building should consider central government and local capacity requirements. Working with provincial governments and NGOs helped to strengthen local capacities. WFP should ensure coherence between local interventions and national strategies and promote coordinated action between different levels of government and between government and civil society.
28. The Board expressed concern over the implementation and financial mechanisms needed to move to a systematic approach to capacity-building. The finance issue was critical and needed full discussion. Members looked forward to an informal consultation on funding mechanisms to be held before the end of the year. The African countries thought that the implementation aspects of this policy were not adequately covered in the document; in particular, WFP should assess the human resources required to implement the policy. Human resources should also be included in the document that discussed financial requirements so that both resources are covered at the next consultation. More detail was needed on the implementation tools WFP would use in different situations. Some Members asked WFP to present an implementation plan or an annual work plan setting out its priorities in capacity-building activities in order to ensure an appropriate balance between SP5 and WFP's other strategic priorities.
29. Clarification was requested on an apparent discrepancy in the text regarding technical assistance as a stand-alone activity. The Secretariat explained that technical advice and handing over a technical service could be part of a capacity-building intervention.



However, technical services provided to national governments where WFP undertakes a function on behalf of the government would not be considered part of SP5. WFP might undertake this type of service provision in some circumstances, but it could not be considered a contribution to capacity-building.

30. The Secretariat agreed that flexibility of response to different situations should guide implementation of the policy and that the ultimate aim of WFP policy, and of SP5 in particular, was that WFP would no longer be needed, but it was important to bear in mind that the absence of WFP did not necessarily signify that its presence was not required. The Secretariat acknowledged the importance of guidance and programme support to implement this policy. WFP has a Programme Quality Assurance mechanism that would monitor implementation of the policy, including human resource requirements. The Secretariat agreed that potential financing mechanisms would be presented to the Board at the next consultation and assured the Board that the policy would be implemented as transparently and effectively as possible.
31. The draft decision was approved; the point of view expressed by the African group was noted.

New Partnerships to Meet Rising Needs—Expanding the WFP Donor Base (2004/EB.3/4)

32. In presenting the document, the Secretariat explained that the aim was to expand and diversify WFP's donor base to ensure that resources were available from public and private donors to meet beneficiary needs. WFP would like to see all Member States become donors, albeit some may remain recipients. It was accordingly proposed that the current definitions of "traditional" and "non-traditional" donors be replaced with the single term "donor." Expansion of the donor base had been the subject of two informal consultations, which resulted in constructive suggestions from the membership. No related budgetary increases were required to implement the strategy beyond those laid out in the Management Plan. The Board was requested to approve the new definition of a donor as well as the selection criteria and code of conduct for cooperation with the private sector, as laid out in the draft decision.
33. The Board welcomed the document, particularly the new definition of a donor and the aim that all WFP Member States should ultimately be donors. Emphasis was placed on maintenance of the principle of full-cost recovery (FCR). Several members supported the use of gross national income (GNI) per capita as a criterion for determining eligibility for support in meeting FCR. One member asked whether other criteria were also considered. Support was voiced for debt-swap agreements, but one member stated that WFP should not pre-empt bilateral agreements between states. Appeals were made for more donations under the twinning arrangement. Further clarification was sought on the role and composition of the Economics Analysis Unit in WFP. The Board noted that WFP was already expanding its partnerships with new European Union member states in the context of their commitment to development cooperation.
34. Issues raised with regard to the private sector focused on transparency and reporting. The WFP code of conduct for private donors was welcomed, but it was pointed out that irregularities concerning donations from the private sector could have serious repercussions on donations by Member States. The Board emphasized the centrality of transparency and accountability. Several members stated that arrangements with private donors should be made known to the Board; some members asked for agreements to be publicized on the WFP website. A number of members asked WFP to analyse the cost-effectiveness of fundraising under this strategy, and to report on this to the Board.



Lessons learned from agreements with private donors should also be communicated to the Board. A suggestion was made that information about the Business Advisory Council be included in the Executive Director's annual report to the Board.

35. The Board welcomed WFP's intention to approach NGOs and individuals on a case-by-case basis. One member, however, expressed concern that some national NGOs were wary of competition from other potential donors. It was emphasized that the new approach should be complementary, not competitive.
36. Responding to a question about the goal of reaching 10 percent of its resources from the private sector by 2007, the Secretariat drew attention to the word "aspires" in paragraph 29 of the document. The target was ambitious, but by way of comparison, it was noted that UNICEF received 30 percent of its contributions from private donations.
37. Responding to a comment that parts of the document gave the impression that the interests of private donors were above those of WFP, the Secretariat explained that the intention was to show that benefits could be reciprocal; donors would in no way dictate policy to WFP. With regard to paragraph 33, the Secretariat assured the Board that private donations would not be a substitute for Member State contributions. Three main aspects of private donations were emphasized: a needs-based approach, the possible introduction of cause-related marketing and the desirable application of renewable funding streams.
38. The importance of visibility, public awareness and advocacy of WFP worldwide was noted if private donations were to be encouraged. Related training would be provided for all country offices and all regional bureaux. The Business Advisory Council had not yet been created, but the Board would be informed of its inception, membership and deliberations. Private donations would be approved according to the established criteria. It was agreed that corporate donors' names would be listed on the WFP website.
39. The Secretariat emphasized that a balance was needed between the Board's confidence in donors and their confidence in WFP. United Nations agreements with the private sector were confidential, so agreements could only be published on the website with the donor's consent. Agreement templates and criteria could be made available to the Board.
40. The Economic Analysis Unit mentioned in paragraph 28 had been set up to ensure that all practices were trade-neutral; the Head of the Unit had come to WFP from the World Bank. The Secretariat noted that paragraph 11 failed to mention other regions, including Asia and Latin America, where efforts were being made to decentralize fundraising.
41. GNI had been selected as a reference for FCR because it was external to WFP, transparent and annually updated; no criteria were perfect and they had to be applied fairly and flexibly.
42. The Board requested that comments made during the session be taken into account in implementing the strategy. The Board also asked to receive additional information on the implementation of the strategy at regular intervals.

Update on School Feeding (2004/EB.3/5)

43. HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn of Thailand, a WFP special ambassador for school feeding, was welcomed to address the Board about her experiences with school feeding in Thailand. HRH discussed her extensive background with school feeding in emergency situations and in chronically impoverished areas, including her work on improved logistics for food transport and delivery. She also emphasised the importance of integrated projects that combine agricultural extension with income generation, marketing



techniques, deworming treatments, latrines and health education, using a problem-based approach rather than applying standard solutions. HRH described the pilot Agriculture for School Lunch programme in Thailand, which had subsequently been expanded from primary schools to kindergartens, day-care centres and secondary schools.

44. HRH described how this programme provided in-school meals to increase food consumption combined with nutritional education. New agricultural technology had also been introduced with the aim of making agricultural products available for the entire academic year, including vegetables and small-animal husbandry; the programme emphasized the nutritive preparation of foods. She reported that an evaluation had found that the amount of meat and fish children consumed had risen and the percentage of low-weight children had decreased since 1997. The programme targeting kindergarten and day-care children included immunization, mother-and-child health, nutritional education, micronutrient supplementation, health care, deworming and dental care. The approach was multidisciplinary: children were introduced to commercial and environmental skills in a school cooperative; the children also learned about accounting and voting, a lesson in democracy.
45. HRH urged the Board to support school feeding programmes, and pledged to use her experience to share lessons learned and raise donor awareness.
46. The Secretariat expressed its thanks and congratulations to HRH on her appointment.
47. In introducing two information notes on school feeding (WFP/EB.3/2004/4-D and WFP/EB.3/2004/4-D/Add.1), the Executive Director welcomed the President of the Steering Committee of NEPAD to speak about NEPAD's partnership with the Ugandan Government and WFP in Uganda's expanded school feeding programme. The NEPAD representative acknowledged WFP's partnership and support, stating that the partnership had resulted in a continent-wide review and development of the Home Grown School Feeding programme, which was designed to stimulate local food production through local purchase. The representative commended WFP's partnership with NEPAD, adding that 200 million African people remain undernourished. He described the initiative's focus on holistic, sustainable development in which food was to be produced and processed in beneficiary countries where it would provide nourishment, strengthen agriculture, address demand constraints and benefit local economies. NEPAD had forged new international partnerships and increased the ownership and commitment of participant countries; Uganda and Ghana had submitted plans for Home-Grown School Feeding. The Uganda plan to expand the reach of its school feeding programme to 2.5 million students in five years was presented in the Information Note; Mali had submitted a concept paper. NEPAD hoped that other countries would also wish to participate. NEPAD also expressed its commitment to advocating and mobilizing financial support for other countries. Increased cash and in-kind contributions, more private-sector support and more innovative solutions for immediate relief and long-term development were needed. The NEPAD representative added that the support of the Board and other bodies was crucial to continue fighting poverty and hunger.
48. The Board thanked the NEPAD representative for his insights. A representative of the Ugandan Permanent Secretary for Education and Sports provided additional information about Uganda's expanded school feeding programme. WFP's ongoing support to school feeding in Uganda was appreciated; good results had been obtained. The Government of Uganda had undertaken to expand the effort to reach 2.5 million needy children by 2009, using the Home-Grown School Feeding approach. Uganda was counting on NEPAD and WFP to help to extend the programme to reduce hunger and improve the health, sanitation, environmental knowledge, water quality and education and reduce poverty in the most



food-insecure areas of Uganda. Programme implementation would require additional consultations with all partners and (i) an economic impact analysis on the educational and other sectors and (ii) cost-effective and sustainable implementation modalities that draw on local participation.

49. The Board recognized the benefits of well designed school feeding programmes, but questioned the costs and financing of the programme and the need for WFP involvement, especially without a clear exit strategy. Board members asked for greater clarity regarding this initiative's departure from the sector-wide approach and considered whether a contingency plan might be needed. Some members expressed the need to monitor and clarify the transparency of private-sector involvement. Members suggested that WFP would be welcome to join the sector dialogue in Uganda.
50. With regard to the Information Note on School Feeding, members noted that school feeding was limited by resource shortfalls, and that donors had to be encouraged to support school feeding. The Board requested that school feeding be formally addressed at each Third Session of the Executive Board.
51. The Secretariat commended Uganda's school feeding programme as a model initiative and acknowledged the contributions of the country office in Uganda and the School Feeding Service in Rome to the two information notes in discussion. A World Bank impact study of WFP school feeding in the Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR), Mali and Uganda would be completed in three years. The Board took note of the information contained in the two documents and the comments made.

Strengthening Emergency Needs Assessments: Progress to Date and Implementation Plan (2004/EB.3/6)

52. The Secretariat presented the paper by emphasizing the importance of strengthening emergency needs assessments (ENAs) for ensuring quality, comparability, transparency and standardization. The paper aimed to report on progress to date in strengthening ENAs and activities to be implemented over a 30-month timeframe, focusing on increasing accountability and transparency, strengthening methodologies and guidance, improving crisis information and building assessment capacities.
53. The Board appreciated WFP's commitment and measures to improve ENAs as a solid and essential foundation for WFP's programmes and for those implemented by humanitarian partners. Board members requested clarification about the indicators for measuring the progress in strengthening ENAs, the dependence on external funding sources, the scope for inclusion of conflict analysis in ENAs and the possibility of WFP producing information concerning global emergency food aid needs. Board members also asked the Secretariat to explain (i) how WFP would select countries for ENA training and national capacity-building, (ii) how WFP involved its partners in the ENA strengthening process and (iii) how WFP ensured government participation in ENAs.
54. In response, the Secretariat agreed to monitor the number of quality ENA reports as an indicator for measuring progress. The role of external funding was to assist meeting one-time investment costs in a critical phase of strengthening ENA capacities, which would also be of benefit to the wider humanitarian community. WFP aimed to conduct ENAs under a more interdisciplinary approach, for example by integrating nutrition and health components into food-security assessments, resulting in alternative response options. In this context, conflict analysis would be considered an important component in the second phase of the ENA strengthening programme. WFP would select countries for improvement of crisis baselines and ENA capacity-building starting with analysis of gaps



in food-security information, the likelihood of occurrence of crises and capacity-building needs. The Secretariat emphasized the importance of involving humanitarian partners and beneficiary governments in the ENA strengthening process in terms of standardization of methodologies, effectiveness of ENA capacity-building and ownership of the improvements.

55. During the implementation of the ENA strengthening plan, the Secretariat would take into account the observations made by Board members during this session. The Secretariat also agreed to report on progress made in implementing the measures outlined in the document on strengthening ENAs at the Third Regular Session of the Board in 2005.

RESOURCE, FINANCIAL AND BUDGETARY MATTERS

Report of the External Auditor on Management Matters (2004/EB.3/8)

Follow-up on the Recommendations of the External Auditor (2004/EB.3/9)

56. The Board took note of the information contained in the document “Report of the External Auditor on Management Matters” (WFP/EB.3/2004/5-A/1) and “Follow-up on the Recommendations of the External Auditor” (WFP/EB.3/2004/5-B/1) and also took note of the comments of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) (WFP/EB.3/2004/5(A,B,C)/2) and the FAO Finance Committee (WFP/EB.3/2004/5(A,B,C)/3).
57. The President’s proposal that the two documents be considered together was approved.
58. The representative of the External Auditor introduced the three management reports on air operation, vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM) and corporate governance. These activities were fundamental to WFP’s mission and the management reviews were accordingly aimed at determining operational effectiveness and value for money.
59. The Secretariat presented the follow-up report on the recommendations of the previous External Auditor for the 2000–2001 biennium, which was the Secretariat’s final report on this matter. The follow-up report also contained the status of the recommendations of the External Auditor on the 2002–2003 financial audit and on the management reports, including the review on HR strategy, which had been submitted to the Board in October 2003. The Secretariat accepted all 33 recommendations by the External Auditor; eight had been implemented and the document WFP/EB.3/2004/5-B showed how the remainder were to be addressed.
60. With regard to air operations, the Secretariat reported that all the recommendations of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) had been implemented except for two countries where work was in progress. Four elements of a new approach were being put in place: a new management structure, a special account for air operations, common United Nations aviation standards with the Department of Peace Keeping Operations (DPKO), and an independent aviation safety unit. In effect, WFP was running its own air service; the aim was to standardize all air operations. Improved budget control, development of a sound safety culture and professionalized control by qualified staff were priorities; TPG had conducted training that enabled staff to qualify for the flight-despatcher’s licence. A reporting system to record all incidents for independent investigation had been instituted. ICAO had been invited to undertake an audit of WFP aviation (safety and air transport) to evaluate progress of the implementation and make further recommendations.



61. The Secretariat noted that VAM was a good tool for assessment mapping, but that utilization of it could be improved. There was a need to allocate resources to support start-up assessments to get appeals moving.
62. On corporate governance, the Secretariat emphasized that the Audit Committee was now composed of three external and two internal members; their first meeting had been held in August 2004.
63. The Board expressed its satisfaction with the rapid action on air operations and the forthcoming review by ICAO and on the governance roles and responsibilities in the decentralized structure, but felt that opportunities to enhance VAM had not been fully seized. Feedback and an examination of the practicability of the recommendations would be important. Decentralization should be promoted, but clear definition of roles and responsibilities was even more important. The Board asked the Secretariat to report regularly on progress in implementing the recommendations of the External Auditor.
64. The Board also noted the roles of VAM in supporting credible emergency needs assessments to reduce food insecurity, contributing to WFP operational needs, helping to target non-food interventions and contributing to capacity-building leading to better targeting. In emergencies, VAM was a catalyst for consensus among technical groups and essential in prioritizing assistance. There was a need to retain information so that future targeting could be enhanced. Cooperation with partners was important in this area.
65. Responding to a question from the Board, the representative of the External Auditor stated that the External Auditor's relationship with the Secretariat was productive and that management in WFP was carried out very responsibly. Dialogue with the Board on management issues and audit matters would continue as part of a constructive audit process that would give confidence to donors and good value to WFP. Visits to the field were seen as an important way of achieving accurate assessments. Reporting would be phased rather than confined to a single document placed before the Board at the end of a biennium.
66. In response to a query on the status of the 2000–2001 audit recommendation, the Secretariat explained that of the 36 recommendations, 29 had been implemented; the remaining seven were in the documentation stages, for example the new finance manual and policy directives, which would all be completed before the end of 2004. With respect to the 2002–2003 audit recommendations, the Secretariat intended to issue an information paper in matrix format at all Board sessions to maintain the visibility of responses. The aim was to implement all the recommendations during the current biennium. The Board's comments would also be taken into consideration in implementing the responses to the audit recommendations on VAM and air operations.
67. The External Auditor presented an outline of their programme of work for 2004–2005, which was issued to the Board as an information note document (WFP/EB.3/2004/INF/8).



WEST AFRICA REGIONAL PORTFOLIO – EVALUATION REPORTS

Summary Report of the Evaluation of the Sahel Regional Emergency Operation (EMOP 10249.0) (2004/EB.3/11)

Summary Report of the Evaluation of the West Africa Coastal Regional Protracted Relief and Recovery Operations in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone (PRROs 10064.0, 10064.1 and 10064.2) (2004/EB.3/13)

68. The Secretariat presented the summary reports of the evaluation of the Sahel regional emergency operation (EMOP 10249.0) and of the evaluation of the West Africa Coastal regional protracted relief and recovery operations in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone (PRROs 10064.0, 10064.1 and 10064.2), explaining their origins and background. Issues and problems common to both operations and specific to each were briefly outlined; they would be further developed in a later session when other evaluation reports would be presented for consideration.
69. Issues related to the Sahel EMOP evaluation included: (i) insufficient food resources at the end of the lean season when distribution was due to be completed; (ii) insufficient attention to redistribution mechanisms, which reduced the effectiveness of targeting; (iii) incomplete monitoring of outcomes; and (iv) a needs-assessment focus on food production that did not take account of the food security of other sectors such as livestock, remittances and migration.
70. In the West Africa Coastal PRRO, a certain level of effectiveness had been achieved in logistics and saving lives. Issues concerning the large number of recovery activities and lack of sufficient technical expertise and budgetary support had been identified.
71. The Director of the West Africa Regional Bureau described the locust invasion in the region as a major threat to crop production. Measures taken, including mobilization of pesticides, had proved inadequate because of insufficient capacity. Most worrying was that a second generation of locusts was breeding in certain areas and would mature to coincide with the harvest season, with grave repercussions on food security. Contingency plans had been worked out with country offices and needs assessments would shortly be presented. FAO was establishing a locust coordination unit in Dakar.
72. The Regional Director described the situation of Sudanese refugees in Chad, whose camps he had visited. Food distribution was under control and malnutrition rates were falling; the programme was on course and generally proving successful, thanks to fruitful cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Government of Chad, which had been very supportive. The results of a joint assessment mission would be made known in November. He was grateful for the generous support of donors. The refugees from the Central African Republic, prevented from returning home, were in a difficult situation. Food distribution at the camps had had to be rationed because UNHCR had inadequate resources; more support was needed to help them.
73. WFP had been working in cooperation with nine Sahelian countries that had formed an alliance for school feeding to improve enrolment and retention rates. The relationship with NEPAD was based on unwavering mutual support. The Regional Director listed the common elements in project preparation as: (i) consultations with donor representatives; (ii) links with strategic development frameworks; (iii) strong partnerships with NGOs, especially international NGOs; (iv) using evaluation recommendations as tools for project



design; (v) high rates of participation by women; and (vi) emphasis on supporting regional peace plans.

74. The Board expressed its support for the findings of the evaluation reports. Some members noted the need to synthesize evaluation findings and recommendations at the regional level and to share knowledge globally. Some Board members emphasized the need to take into account the strengths and weaknesses of the regional approach. Others expressed concern regarding the recommendation to eliminate some recovery activities. However, the recommendations to support national capacity-building, greater harmonization between VAM and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems and the need to measure performance were well received. Problem analyses would benefit from a stronger link with intervention strategies. One member expressed concern regarding various targeting methodologies and the use of cereal banks in Mali.
75. The Secretariat clarified the need to pay additional attention to the sustainability and effectiveness of targeting issues and technical capability in project implementation. Cereal banks in Mali were an alternative to free food distributions. Consolidation of evaluation findings had been attempted in 2003; the Office of Evaluation (OEDE) definitely intended to repeat the exercise in the near future.

WEST AFRICA REGIONAL PORTFOLIO – OPERATIONAL MATTERS

Country Programme – Sierra Leone 10333.0 (2005–2007) (2004/EB.3/17)

Development Project for Executive Board Approval – Central African Republic 10361.0 (2004/EB.3/18)

Protracted Relief and Recovery Operations for Executive Board Approval:

- **West Africa Coastal Region 10064.3 (2004/EB.3/19)**
- **Côte d’Ivoire 10372.0 (2004/EB.3/20)**
- **Mauritania 10359.0 (2004/EB.3/21)**
- **Senegal 10188.1 (2004/EB.3/22)**

76. The Secretariat presented the development project and the proposed PRROs for the region to the Board, noting that the Central African Republic was now at the epicentre of acute food security and health crises. In Liberia, security was improving, creating a positive environment for the return of refugees, IDPs and ex-combatants; the peace process had to be supported. The new PRRO for Liberia was attempting to consolidate gains and lessons learned in the previous PRRO, and included a phase-down from relief to recovery in its phase-out strategy.
77. In Côte d’Ivoire, the security situation remained unstable; several important bills had not been ratified and the population had borne the brunt of this stalemate. In the West Africa Coastal region, refugees had received reduced rations because of resource shortfalls, and the food-for-work (FFW) programme had been stopped in Sierra Leone. The PRRO for Mauritania enjoyed consensus among stakeholders, providing relief and recovery in the aftermath of three successive years of drought. The Senegal PRRO sought to provide post-conflict relief and rehabilitation in Casamance, where the indigenous population was returning and the Government had prepared a social-recovery programme.



78. The representative from Mauritania reported that international food assistance was certainly needed there, because a severe drought had been aggravated by desert locusts; all regions had been infested and thousands of farmers were facing acute crisis. Although the proposed PRRO would go a long way towards averting famine in drought-affected areas of Mauritania, it had been proposed prior to the locust infestation. An EMOP should therefore be envisaged as well.
79. The Board endorsed all of these programmes, congratulating country directors on their efforts in the region. Board members emphasized the important role of health, education and economic recovery activities for long-term sustainability, and noted the need for greater harmonization. WFP's strategy to promote crisis preparedness was commended, particularly in the light of the desert locust invasion. The Board expressed concern regarding high landside transport, storage and handling (LTSH) costs for PRRO 10064.3 and questioned the reasons for this. The Secretariat suggested that local procurement of food distributed to targeted populations could reduce these costs and promote long-term food security while being better suited to local dietary habits.
80. The Secretariat thanked the Board for its interest in the important programmes and pledged to convey the Board's useful suggestions to country office staff. In response to a query from the Board regarding targeting in Mauritania, the Secretariat explained that some areas had instituted village food-security stocks, local food-security strategies that reduce the need for other forms of food aid.
81. With regard to the issue of high LTSH costs in the West Africa Coastal region, the Secretariat stated that transport costs had been increased by lack of infrastructure, rising fuel costs and port fees, and the lack of private transport. The Regional Director explained that these costs could be reduced by better economies of scale. Funds are being sought for a food-procurement officer who would be posted in Burkina Faso to expand procurement in the region. The Secretariat pledged its support to local procurement, but added that it was not currently possible in countries such as Mauritania, which was better suited to regional procurement. WFP had also set up a disaster-management team to harmonize interventions, from the locust invasion to general food-security issues.
82. The representative of Senegal thanked the Secretariat for its crucial assistance in Casamance and stated that his country would make a symbolic in-kind contribution to WFP as a measure of its gratitude.

ASIA REGIONAL PORTFOLIO—OPERATIONAL MATTERS

Development Project for Executive Board Approval—Lao PDR 10078.1 (2004/EB.3/23)

Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation for Executive Board Approval—Sri Lanka 10067.1 (2004/EB.3/24)

83. The Regional Director outlined the work of WFP in the Asia region, highlighting the need for further support. The support of HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, who had agreed to serve as special Ambassador for School Feeding, and who saw development activities as an integrated whole, was a great honour for WFP. The EMOP for floods in Bangladesh targeted the ultra-poor, but was so far only 24 percent resourced. In Bangladesh, schoolchildren were heavily dependent on WFP for their micronutrient intake, and the Government was strongly committed to the school feeding programme.



84. The EMOP in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) was trying to reach a large proportion of the population; given the Government decision not to have a Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) in 2005, there was concern that monitoring would be problematic and that some small programmes would have to be suspended. A United Nations mission to DPRK would try to find a way to continue funding. In a context of sharp rises in food prices a new class of vulnerable poor was emerging — people who no longer received state salaries; household food security was deteriorating as a result. The EMOP would include this group in its targeting; consultations with the government were ongoing and a nutrition survey was imminent.
85. The recent ministerial consultation in Delhi on mother-and-child nutrition and other issues was an example of a successful partnership in which best practices were shared, particularly in the context of SP5. The security situation in Nepal was deteriorating from a matter of concern to a crisis involving threats to staff safety; operations were at risk. A decision had been made to balance humanitarian and security issues and to continue to try to reach conflict-affected people. Consultations with the Maoists were taking place to enable safe access to their areas; security was the primary concern. Work was ongoing in New York to stimulate political action.
86. No progress had been made with regard to the Bhutanese refugees, even though a solution was possible; the governments concerned were asked to support efforts to resolve the situation, which had serious humanitarian implications. There were nutrition problems evident in Timor Leste, to which WFP would respond with a two-year PRRO.
87. The seriousness of the problems of corruption and misuse of WFP resources in Cambodia was emphasized: WFP was determined to investigate the situation, establish mechanisms to prevent a repetition and bring to justice those responsible. The Government's support in this would be essential. Until the situation was resolved, FFW activities would be suspended. The Regional Director concluded by thanking donors for their support and considering some funding options for the future.
88. The Lao PDR country director emphasized two features of the Lao PDR: (i) in its largely subsistence economy a third of the population had to forage to supplement food needs because they could not obtain all the rice they needed; and (ii) half of the population had no schooling, so illiteracy was widespread, especially among girls and ethnic minorities. The Government encouraged primary education, but to households food was more important. The current school feeding programme was integrated with the Government's strategies to reduce poverty. Major needs were to provide training at the village level as a platform for reaching remote areas. The project was based on a coalition approach to achieve results that no single agency could manage alone by using the skills and experience of various partners.
89. The Sri Lanka country director emphasized the scale of the effects of civil conflict over two decades. Half of the IDPs had returned to their homes, and the aim was to rebuild social cohesion and improve food security through recovery and rehabilitation strategies. School feeding was expanding and catch-up classes had started in 2003. There was a strong basis for development.
90. The Board commended WFP's work in the Asia region at a challenging time, and noted the importance of school feeding in the future lives of children and of capacity-building in achieving sustainable solutions. The need for resources was recognized. The coalition approach and the emphasis on partnerships were particularly praised. The Board recognized the sensitivity of operations in DPRK, and the need to make staff safety a priority in Nepal.



91. Several members commended WFP on its transparency with regard to the corruption problems in Cambodia, particularly their systemic implications, and praised its robust approach to investigating the problem, establishing oversight mechanisms that would prevent a repetition and eliminate programme design and management flaws and bring to account those responsible; the need for government support in this process was recognized. Some members emphasized the need to try to promote educational quality through school feeding programmes and to empower communities to sustain them; ways needed to be found to achieve this.
92. The needs to invest in teacher recruitment and training in Lao PDR and for a management framework and clear exit strategies were noted, particularly in Sri Lanka and Lao PDR. One member questioned whether WFP should negotiate with what was effectively an alternative government in Nepal. The situation in DPRK seemed to one observer to be less serious than in 2003, but pockets of poverty remained; a development approach was required to address the problems. A question was asked as to the accuracy of risk assessment in the Lao PDR programme.
93. The Secretariat thanked the Board for its support and assured the members of its commitment to resolving the problems of misuse of resources in Cambodia. It recognized that its fundamental responsibility was to use resources to support the needy. Discussions with insurgents in Nepal were unofficial and practical in character, not political. Government counterpart funding in Sri Lanka was increasing, and the transparency of WFP's operations was highly valued by local people. The need for coherent and workable exit strategies that would allow phase-out without ending programme benefits was noted; ways of turning operations over to communities were being sought. The need to develop local capacities was recognized.
94. The value of the coalition approach in Lao PDR was reiterated, especially in building national capacities; the remoteness of some operational areas was itself a problem, but efforts were being made to reach remote communities. The need for educational quality was appreciated, but WFP was not involved in education itself. Efforts were in hand to improve targeting. The logframe analysis of risk was a broad one; emerging risks would be dealt with under the coalition approach to maximize use of partners' capacities.
95. The Regional Director stated that the food situation in DPRK was in fact worse than before, with more people vulnerable because of low wages and rising prices. The problem was one of access to food, not quantities available. The transparency and accountability in the government that is necessary for successful development was not present, and hence an emergency operation remained the appropriate response to the humanitarian crisis in the DPRK.

SOUTHERN AFRICA REGIONAL PORTFOLIO — OPERATIONAL MATTERS

Country Programme — Madagascar 10340.0 (2005–2009) (2004/EB.3/25)

Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation for Executive Board Approval — Southern Africa Regional 10310.0 (2004/EB.3/26)

96. Following the screening of a WFP film on HIV/AIDS, the Secretariat gave a regional presentation of Southern Africa and presented PRRO Southern Africa 10310.0. HIV/AIDS was a devastating everyday reality in the region and had directly affected WFP staff. The 2004 harvest had been variable and many people suffered from extreme food insecurity. A



state of emergency had been declared by the governments of Lesotho and Swaziland following severe drought, and the President of Malawi had made a special appeal to donors in September 2004. WFP used both imported and, where appropriate, locally purchased food to address the situation.

97. Operations had been scaled down in Angola because the number of vulnerable people had declined and because of a sharp reduction in donor contributions; additional resources were urgently needed. Fewer refugees had returned to Angola than projected, the resettlement process had been adversely affected and school enrolment and attendance rates were lower than expected; the Angola Government had been urged to make good its commitments to provide US\$7.5 million as a direct contribution to the PRRO. Cyclones had been and were likely to continue to be a problem in Madagascar in 2004; a new country programme, due for approval by this Board, was to be started in early 2005. Access to food posed a serious problem for 4 million people in rural and urban communities in Zimbabwe; maize stocks were now depleted in some areas and prices had risen sharply in many rural and urban areas. While the national food situation was favourable in Zambia, and WFP was purchasing large amounts of food there, many households lacked access to their minimum food needs, so WFP assistance was still required. Support was needed to address the serious food problem for refugees in Zambia, where rations of certain foodstuffs had already been reduced. Increased food aid contributions were urgently needed before the end of 2004 to address the situation in the whole subregion.
98. With reference to the PRRO, there were problems facing the subregion, including the triple threat of food insecurity, weakened capacity for governance and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The countries in question included several of the 17 countries in the world where the human development index was declining: “business as usual” was ruled out by the meagre prospects of achieving the MDGs. The food requirements in the region and the planned numbers of beneficiaries by country and year for 2005–2007 were outlined. A new approach would be taken to estimating transport costs for the PRRO, as a pilot initiative; the experience gained would be taken into account in formulating WFP’s future corporate approach to transport costing.
99. A representative of UNICEF Johannesburg informed the Board about nutrition, HIV/AIDS and other vulnerability issues in southern Africa. Erratic weather in recent years had reduced purchasing power and increased food insecurity. HIV/AIDS prevalence was the world’s highest. Progress towards achievement of the MDGs had been reversed. HIV/AIDS had become a significant factor in nutritional deterioration regardless of weather. Details of an analysis of food assistance in the region were provided, and details of some projects and programmes in the subregion were given in response to requests made by the Board members.
100. The Board welcomed the film and the presentation; it was suggested that audiovisual presentations might be repeated at future sessions to illustrate themes of similar importance. The importance of the linkage between food insecurity and HIV/AIDS was repeatedly stressed, as was the importance of inter-agency partnerships and of the involvement of women. Some members asked whether enough was being done to address the disastrous regional situation. It was suggested that a study of the impact of HIV/AIDS on food security be conducted. The Board expressed support for the PRRO, but pointed out some shortcomings and omissions in the document. Calls were made for flexibility in implementation of the PRRO. The partnership with governments and other actors was applauded, though more information was sought, especially with regard to the Zambian Government. Requests were made for the governments concerned to honour their commitments. Board members representing countries in the region shared information and



gave assurances of work done by governments to address the problems and cooperate with WFP. It was pointed out that the document lacked context information and made no reference to the project's medium-term sustainability. The importance of avoiding long-term dependency on WFP aid was emphasized, as was that of school feeding, safety nets and FFW.

101. The Secretariat explained that document size constraints had made it impossible to include country-specific analysis and programme details, but referred members to the country implementation plans, available at the session in CD-ROM format for detailed descriptions of country situations and WFP responses.
102. Further information was given on the issues of: (i) capacity-building, highlighting that human resources, especially in the health and education sectors, had been severely affected by HIV/AIDS and emigration; (ii) monitoring and evaluation, which had been strengthened on the basis of experience gained under the regional EMOPs in terms of monitoring outputs, beneficiaries and outcomes; (iii) linkages between the PRRO and national implementation strategies; (iv) assessments of needs in Zambia, which had been strengthened through useful relations with the health, education and agriculture ministries; (v) calculation of case loads in terms of WFP capacity, which had improved; it was pointed out that beneficiary numbers were adjusted according to ongoing assessments; (vi) lessons learned from previous EMOPs in the subregion had been incorporated into the PRRO, particularly concerning local and regional food purchase, monitoring of outputs and outcomes, and the complementarity between food aid and other NGO/United Nations inputs; (vii) the contributions on lessons learned had been possible, in part, because of good staff continuity at WFP offices in the subregion; (viii) the strengthening of needs assessment processes and the attention paid to risk mitigation had evolved in close collaboration with the Southern African Development Community (SADC); (ix) the comparative cost advantage of cash and food donations, bearing in mind the well developed market infrastructure in the subregion and the need to ensure that donations were translated into balanced food baskets, that food got into the hands of mothers and that aid reached peri-urban populations.
103. The Secretariat gave assurances that while the linkage between food insecurity and HIV/AIDS was undeniably strong, WFP's main concern was to address food security directly. With regard to the exit strategy, the PRRO was not seen as open-ended, although a three-year duration, the maximum possible for PRROs, had been requested because the acute problems facing populations in the subregion resulting from the HIV/AIDS pandemic and food insecurity were unlikely to diminish in the short term.



EAST AND CENTRAL AFRICA REGIONAL PORTFOLIO

Summary Report of the Evaluation of the Eritrea Relief Portfolio (2004/EB.3/12)

Summary Evaluation Report on WFP's Portfolio of Activities in Rwanda (2004/EB.3/14)

Summary Report of the Evaluation of the Sudan Emergency Operation (2004/EB.3/15)

Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation for Executive Board Approval – Ethiopia 10362.0 (2004/EB.3/28)

Budget increase for Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation for Executive Board Approval – Uganda 10121.0 (2004/EB.3/29)

104. The Director of the Office of Evaluation (OEDE) presented three evaluation reports to the Board, noting that two of the three were portfolio evaluations, which was a new initiative for WFP and needed more reflection on their feasibility, utility and design — an important problem in that reporting mechanisms were based on projects, not on portfolios. The evaluation of the Rwanda portfolio was presented and its strengths were noted by the Board. Evaluations of the Eritrea relief portfolio and the Sudan EMOP both highlighted systemic difficulties in measuring nutritional impact, underfunding and redistributions, and in transitioning from relief to recovery. Both operations reflected the challenges in strengthening results-based management (RBM), in the case of Sudan largely because of diminished security and problems in maintaining regular access.
105. The Regional Director addressed many of the issues highlighted in the evaluation reports, aiming to clarify the contexts of the operations that had been evaluated and to highlight lessons learned. He affirmed that the infrastructure in southern Sudan was almost non-existent; difficulties with security clearance, coupled with extensive staff evacuation, had necessitated operating many activities on an ad hoc basis. RBM had not yet been fully applied because saving lives was the highest priority of the East and Central Africa Regional Bureau (ODK). In Eritrea, difficulties were caused by a scarcity of resources for assisting a large number of IDPs and refugees. In Rwanda, evidence of physical achievements on the ground was seen as very positive.
106. The situation in Uganda was much improved; 300,000 IDPs had returned to their villages, but there was difficulty meeting nutrition requirements for those who remained. Burundi was described as being on the verge of a crisis because of political instability. In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the political situation was only slowly improving and there were few resources to transport and distribute food. Somalia was recovering from political unrest, and the situation there remained unstable. Contingency plans were being developed for Burundi, DRC, Rwanda and Tanzania to address possible population movements if the political situation deteriorated.
107. Drought continued to impact countries across eastern and central Africa. In Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti and Kenya many of those affected by the drought still required assistance, but resource shortfalls were limiting drought-relief operations.



108. The Board requested more precise quantitative information regarding baseline data to support the findings of the evaluation reports. The Secretariat acknowledged the difficulties of programme implementation in the two countries, which had led to management gaps and the loss of partner staff. Because of limited access, WFP had not been able to gather the data necessary to measure performance on a routine basis, but the necessary structures were being put in place. The Regional Director pledged to follow-up the evaluation recommendations and the Board's concerns.
109. PRRO 10362.0 for Ethiopia was presented as a safety-net project promoting relief and recovery to replace emergency food distribution. The budget increase to PRRO 10121.0 in Uganda was proposed to provide continued assistance to IDPs who could not safely return to their homes. The Board expressed its support for both programmes, commending the productive safety-net programme in Ethiopia, a cash-based initiative that addressed food-security needs. It was suggested that WFP should expand the use of cash-based interventions and focus more on nutrition and health. The Board also requested a more detailed description of the Ethiopia PRRO, addressing questions and concerns raised and including an exit strategy aimed at future activities to reduce dependence on food aid.
110. The Secretariat noted that cash-based interventions and local purchases were becoming increasingly important in the Ethiopia PRRO, but were dependent on resourcing. It was hoped that additional resources would be received soon so that Ethiopia's vulnerable population could be further assisted. An exit strategy would be planned using data from the next national market assessment. It was suggested by the Secretariat that an annex should be added to PRRO 10362.0 to reflect progress made and respond to questions raised by the Board. The Board recommended that in future the approval process for complex PRROs should include informal consultation at Headquarters preceding formal presentation to the Board for approval.
111. Continued support for the revised PRRO budget in Uganda was also requested; the Secretariat noted that despite the continued support needed for IDPs and refugees, the situation there was likely to improve in 2005.

MIDDLE EAST, CENTRAL ASIA AND EASTERN EUROPE REGIONAL PORTFOLIO

112. The Secretariat introduced the new Director of the Middle East, Central Asia and Eastern Europe Regional Bureau (ODC), who gave an overview of operations in this region. In Iraq, a bilateral operation had supplied 1.6 million mt of food, and a new EMOP was targeting mothers and children in impoverished areas using reprogrammed cash balances from the previous operation; the project was severely underfunded, however. WFP was involved with the United Nations Iraq country team based in Jordan. Despite recent insecurity in Afghanistan, WFP had continued to deliver assistance thanks to partnerships with the Government and NGOs. Following a recent drought, Afghanistan faced crop failure. Resources from the ongoing PRRO were being used to provide assistance to 1.4 million drought-affected people. Afghan refugees in Pakistan and Iran were being repatriated or integrated and food assistance was being phased out.
113. The conflict in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, in its fourth year, had impacted vulnerable populations, necessitating EMOP expansion; contributions that had been pledged needed to be confirmed. In Tajikistan, the pipeline had been very poor and many beneficiaries would not receive their winter ration if additional contributions were not received.



114. A school feeding programme in Egypt funded by a debt-swap agreement with Italy had been very positive. A similar programme had been started in Syria, which had now become a WFP donor. The updating of contingency planning was continuing in volatile areas in the region and in areas prone to natural disasters.

LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN REGIONAL PORTFOLIO

115. The Regional Director summarized WFP's operations in the region. The main priorities of the Latin America and Caribbean Regional Bureau (ODPC) were: (i) placing hunger on the political agenda; (ii) preparing and strengthening WFP and countries to deal with emergencies; and (iii) mobilizing resources through private-sector and government partnerships.
116. Donors had responded generously in support of WFP's operation in Haiti; further generosity was hoped for in the new appeal to Gonaives. The pipeline in Colombia had nearly run dry, however, and the situation for IDPs there had become critical. In the Caribbean, a series of hurricanes in 2004 had necessitated emergency assistance, even in countries where WFP had no presence. The Regional Director noted that critical conditions in Latin America and the Caribbean were partly caused by the sizable income gap between the richest and the poorest people, which was extreme in most countries, except Uruguay.
117. The Board expressed its appreciation of this important presentation, wishing success to the new Regional Director and thanking WFP staff and donors for their dedication. The Board emphasized the need for a more active WFP presence in the region, including early warning for emergencies and increased partnership with national governments.
118. The President noted that during the last session the Board had requested that copies of all regional presentations be made available to members and reminded the Secretariat to distribute them in future sessions. A Board member suggested that the Bureau should review the approval process for programmes that were unlikely to attract the needed funding and propose a revised approval process to the Board; the President took note of this suggestion.

ORGANIZATIONAL AND PROCEDURAL MATTERS

Provisional Biennial Programme of Work of the Executive Board (2005–2006) (2004/EB.3/30)

119. Before the discussion opened, the Secretariat made two observations: (i) a decision was needed on whether to retain the limitations on the length of Board documents implemented from EB.2/2003 to harmonize with other funds and programmes, and (ii) decisions were needed regarding mechanisms for updating the Biennial Programme of Work and which policy documents should be presented at which Board sessions.



120. In the discussion, several members requested the Secretariat to ensure that the corruption case in Cambodia be dealt with firmly and quickly and to analyse the background and actions taken regarding food lost in relation to conflict and injustice so that future losses could be minimized. One member suggested that the Programme of Work should include updates on the joint evaluation of the Enabling Development policy so that the Board could consider it at EB.A/2005; one member pointed out, however, that the evaluation was sponsored by a single government and that discussion by the Board could therefore set an undesirable precedent. An informal consultation was proposed to deal with the issue; the importance of the policy in implementing WFP's mission was highlighted by several members. The needs for transparency, flexibility and full consultation and involvement were noted. A request was also made to include an update on WINGS implementation. The Board acknowledged that the Programme of Work was a living document, in view of which several members suggested that it should appear on the agenda of all sessions, once for consideration and at other times for information. The need for in-depth discussion of the EMOP programme category was recognized, but not in the same session as discussion of the PRRO category.
121. The President undertook to consider the issues raised with the Bureau and report back to the Board.

ADMINISTRATIVE AND MANAGERIAL MATTERS

Review of the Immediate Response Account (IRA) (2004/EB.3/31)

122. The Secretariat presented the document, explaining that the main intention of the review was to improve flexibility in response to emergency situations. It was critical for WFP to be able to respond proactively to rapid changes in humanitarian situations. Above all, it was important (i) to increase the relevance of the target level established in 1995, to reflect the changes on the ground, (ii) to make the allocation criteria more flexible and (iii) to increase the efficiency and relevance of the existing regulatory framework. The target level of US\$70 million had been selected because it was realistic and provided more flexibility for making IRA allocations. The regulatory framework had proved problematic at best, which explained the need for a revised regulatory framework as set out in the document. The Secretariat also appealed for increased contributions and greater flexibility on the part of donors.
123. The Board generally supported the proposal, but two members questioned its timeliness with respect to new corporate procedures. Concern voiced by one member about the acceptability of part (vi) of the draft decision on legal grounds was allayed by attention being drawn to the fact that donors were merely encouraged, not obliged, to agree to its premises. Clarification about repayment criteria was requested. It was suggested that IRA be restricted to food items. The Secretariat was asked to report periodically to the Board on approved IRA allocations. Further clarification of the distinction between IRA and similar mechanisms was sought. The importance of ensuring that financial operations were sound was emphasized.
124. In response, the Secretariat informed the Board that in life-threatening situations the country offices concerned were consulted to determine when to revolve IRA funds; in view of the fact that projects were seldom 100 percent funded, it would not be possible to wait for the pipeline to be complete. It would be difficult to exclude non-food items from IRA allocations because they were often inextricably linked to food items, which was why the IRA was used for special operations (SOs) as well. It was agreed that the Board should



receive official periodic reports on the state of IRA allocations; at present such information was transmitted through the unofficial Yellow Pages. The Board was reassured that there was a clear distinction between IRA and similar mechanisms.

Business Process Review: Second Progress Report on the Pilot Projects (2004/EB.3/32)

125. The Secretariat reported that the pilot projects relating to BPR had been successful and paid tribute to all involved. The aim had been to spend all available money on time and to reach 20 percent more beneficiaries.
126. The pilots in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the Occupied Palestinian Territories were fully live; pilots had also been launched in Indonesia and the West Africa Coastal region; the pilot planned for Cambodia had been put on hold because of the reported diversion problem. In DRC, a 44 percent improvement in on-time availability of food aid had been achieved; there had also been a US\$5.2 million reduction in unused balances thanks to the “single pot” approach. In the Occupied Palestinian Territories, there had been a 90 percent improvement in on-time availability in the third quarter of 2004; nearly 500,000 beneficiaries had been fed. Initial results were encouraging, although risks had been identified: forecast risks, constraints risks, process risks and price risks.
127. In February 2005, the Board would be called upon to consider the size of the working-capital fund, ways of creating that fund, an estimation of risk, the implementation of risk management and definition of the relationship with other advance mechanisms such as the IRA. Help from donors was required in the form of an acceleration of confirmation and delivery of expected in-kind donations, limitation of donation specifications and support for WFP’s donation forecasting efforts. The aim should be on-time delivery of food using 100 percent of donations received for each programme. The Secretariat anticipated a number of policy changes in February 2005, including creation of a working-capital facility to ensure that WFP could start spending when required in anticipation of project approval.
128. The DRC country director outlined the benefits of BPR, which he described in this pilot phase as a sometimes elaborate but worthwhile process. Planning of needs had been strengthened, all programme funds had been accounted for and full control had been taken of the programme chain. Challenges remained, but the learning process would show ways to resolve them; for example, planning tools had to be brought into line with WFP mechanisms. Start-up had taken time, but the benefits were clearly visible. Increased donations were still needed, even though inefficiencies had been eliminated. The Secretariat thanked all donors and appealed for further donations and new donors for DRC.
129. The Occupied Palestinian Territories country director said that BPR could be seen as a response to earlier complaints by NGOs that WFP was often slow to react to emergency situations. BPR had made advance planning of food distribution possible. It was a comprehensive, multi-step process, part of a progress showing that WFP was headed in the right direction. The country office had been equipped with better tools for controlling its operations. It was still at a pilot phase, and challenges remained. The issue of unspent balances at the time of operation closure had improved but remained imperfect. Donors and WFP needed to show greater flexibility to pave the way to a genuine decentralization process.
130. The Secretariat noted with satisfaction the country directors’ enthusiasm, because they were the best judges of the process. If BPR worked in DRC and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, it should be successful elsewhere. There was confidence that BPR would make



a considerable difference at WFP. The reports of the pilot projects in Indonesia and West Africa would be presented at the February 2005 session.

131. The Board welcomed the document, giving strong support to the aims of BPR and expressing pleasure at the findings of the pilot project. The BPR team was urged to improve business processes; the pledge to examine project preparation and programme planning methods was welcomed. Donors were urged to ease restraints. Opinions were divided as to the feasibility of forecasting donation expectations for future years to assist WFP projections. WFP needed to be more proactive and find ways in which constraints on donations could be lifted. Some members suggested that BPR should be adopted as early as February 2005; others were more cautious, requesting a gradual approach. In any case, more consultations would be needed in time for the next session. Some members said that they had no objection to food bags being unmarked. It was suggested that some proposals, such as the appearance of a working-capital fund, were premature or ambitious; other measures were more likely to achieve the necessary consensus. It was suggested that the document was too positive about the pilot projects and a request was made to identify improvements that could be made.
132. The Secretariat noted that a 20 percent increase in efficiency was challenging, and admitted that it was unlikely to be met, although the results of the pilot projects were encouraging. In response to a question, the Secretariat explained that IRA was a mechanism intended to address unforeseen problems, while BPR was intended to address normal business. There was no easy answer to questions and comments about the comparative merits of in-kind and cash donations; WFP was working on the question and hoped to offer answers in the future. The Secretariat welcomed the suggestion that the Board might visit at least one of the pilot projects. The offers of greater flexibility by donors were welcomed, as was the solution proposed to the issue of retroactivity. The findings of the pilot projects were a cause for optimism. BPR was an ongoing process and each future step would be considered by the Board.
133. In response to a comment by a Board member, the President recalled that all WFP projects had to comply with the agreed policy on quality, particularly on the issue of GMOs.

Increased Delegation of Authority to the Executive Director for Approval of Operations and Budget Revisions (2004/EB.3/33)

134. The Secretariat gave a brief presentation of the document followed by a summary of the informal consultations held earlier in the session. Although the revised draft decision was approved, several members of the Board voiced serious concern that the proposal for a substantial operational change had been made with little time for thorough preparation and without prior informal consultations with the Board. The informal discussion during the session had, however, enabled points of concern to be discussed and resolved, as was reflected in the revised draft decision. It was emphasized that: (i) the new procedure should be used sparingly and cautiously; (ii) it was important that any single member of the Board should be able to request an in-depth examination of any point of concern that arose; (iii) there should be a two-year trial period after which the Board would reconsider the procedure in 2006; and (iv) it was important to try to establish other monitoring mechanisms.



135. Some members were concerned that less discussion by the Board and a reduced advocacy role in the process might lead to less commitment or interest and, in turn, less funding for projects. It was stressed that all PRROs were of equal importance and that they did not address situations of extreme urgency or emergency. It was asked whether lessons could be drawn from practices at other organizations, such as the model of early-warning systems used by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).
136. The President stressed the important role to be played in the process by the Bureau, whose valuable work had already resulted in the consensus-enabling revised draft decision. The advantage of the Bureau's role was that it could be convened swiftly at any time. He assured the Board that all the requisites of transparency, efficiency, procedural smoothness and governance safeguards had been taken into account. It was important to ensure that the Board's powers of supervision and control were protected.
137. The Secretariat reassured the Board that the new provisions, especially correspondence between sessions, would be used sparingly. The Board would continue to discuss 90 percent of all PRROs; the regional presentations would continue. Note was taken of the concern expressed by the Board that the present document, along with complex PRRO projects, would benefit from timely informal consultations with the Board. It was hoped that the process would work to the Board's satisfaction and would, therefore, be adopted permanently in two years' time.
138. In response to requests by the Board, the President added that the new process should provide for (i) the Secretariat's Annual Report to contain an overview of the PRROs adopted over the previous year, with emphasis on new trends and any lessons learned, and (ii) an evaluation of details of the new process to be made at future Board sessions.

OTHER BUSINESS

139. The President announced that an informal meeting would be held in Rome in late November 2004 so that views could be exchanged on the issues to be discussed at the Joint Meeting of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), UNICEF and WFP in New York in January 2005; the documents for the meeting had not been completed. The issues included HIV/AIDS, simplification and harmonization, and the situation in Guatemala, where a WFP Executive Board field visit had taken place. The next field visit would take place in Azerbaijan, an announcement welcomed by the Board.
140. The representative of France reported on the Executive Board members' field visit to Bangladesh in March and April 2004, the subject of document WFP/EB.3/2004/14-C. She noted that Bangladesh seemed to be constantly in a situation of both emergency and development, suggesting that it was often difficult to distinguish between the two when it came to the humanitarian response in general and WFP operations in particular. The representative of Bangladesh thanked those who had visited her country, adding that she spoke at the Board on behalf not only of her own country but also of all the world's poor.



ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

ACABQ	Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions
BPR	business process review
CAP	Consolidated Appeals Process
DPKO	Department of Peace Keeping Operations
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
EMOP	emergency operation
ENA	emergency needs assessments
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FCR	full-cost recovery
FFW	food for work
GNI	gross national income
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
IDP	internally displaced person
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IRA	Immediate Response Account
LTSH	landside transport, storage and handling
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	non-governmental organization
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODC	Middle East, Central Asia and Eastern Europe Regional Bureau
ODK	East and Central Africa Regional Bureau
ODPC	Latin America and Caribbean Regional Bureau
OEDE	Office of Evaluation
PDR	People's Democratic Republic (Lao)
PRRO	protracted relief and recovery operation
PSP	Division of Strategy, Policy and Programme Support
RBM	results-based management
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SO	special operation
SP	Strategic Priority



UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNJLC	United Nations Joint Logistics Centre
VAM	vulnerability analysis and mapping

