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COUNTRY STRATEGY OUTLINES

Agenda item 7

For consideration



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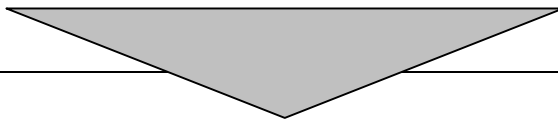
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COUNTRY STRATEGY OUTLINE— NIGER (2004–2007)

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Note to the Executive Board



This document is submitted for consideration to the Executive Board.

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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Executive Summary

A landlocked Sahelo-Saharan nation, Niger is among the world's least developed countries (LDCs) and is also a low-income, food-deficit country (LIFDC). Its average annual per capita income was US\$150 in 2000, when it was estimated that 63 percent of the population lived below the poverty line and that 34 percent were extremely poor.

Niger's Human Development indicator is one of the lowest in the world (0.293) according to the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Human Development Index for 2000, Niger ranked 173rd out of 174 countries. Infant and infant-child mortality rates were particularly high, at 126 per 1,000 and 274 per 1,000, respectively (Demographic and National Health Survey [DNHS], 1998). That year, one third of Niger's inhabitants suffered from food insecurity, and 41.1 of children under 5 suffered from chronic malnutrition.

Food insecurity is chronic and structural; it stems mainly from widespread rural poverty and from the lack of alternative sources of revenue to farm production, which is heavily dependent on climatic vagaries. A preliminary vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM) survey conducted by WFP in early 2002 found the greatest vulnerability in the agro-pastoral ecological region.

In accordance with decision 1999/EB.A/2 of the Executive Board, WFP is focusing its development activities on five objectives, four of which are covered in the present Country Strategy Outline (CSO):

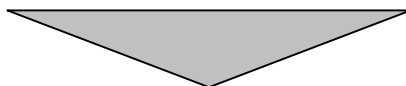
- to enable young children and expectant and nursing mothers to meet their special nutritional and nutrition-related health needs;
- to enable poor households to invest in human capital through education and training;
- to make it possible for poor families to gain and preserve assets; and
- to mitigate the effects of natural disasters, in areas vulnerable to recurring crises of this kind.

The activities of the coming CP (Health and Nutrition, Education, Rural Development) will centre on the most vulnerable areas identified by the VAM survey. Within the activities, greater importance will be given to the education sector, which will focus on girls. Given the recurring nature of droughts, a crisis-mitigation component will also be implemented.

The present CSO was created on the basis of the Common Country Assessment (CCA) completed in March 2002 by the United Nations System organizations in Niger, and fully complies with the poverty-reduction strategy adopted by the Government in 2001. Early in 2003 a four-year (2004–2007) Country Programme (CP) will be drawn up on the basis of the present CSO. That CP will coincide with the programming cycle of other organizations and will address the objectives of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework—to be completed in December 2002—including greater collaboration and joint programming within the United Nations system. The CSO was prepared in consultation with government institutions, United Nations organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and donors. Ways of creating and improving partnerships and programming activities are suggested.



Draft Decision



The Board endorses the Country Strategy Outline for Niger (WFP/EB.3/2002/7/1) and authorizes the Secretariat to proceed with the formulation of a CP, which should take into account the comments of the Board.



FOOD SECURITY AND THE POOR AND HUNGRY

Economic and Social Context¹

1. A landlocked Sahelo-Saharan country, Niger has an area of 1,267,000 km², of which two thirds is desert. Some 75 percent of the population, estimated in 2000 at 10.8 million, 60 percent of them under 18, is concentrated in the agricultural area in the south of the country (25 percent of total land area). Projections based on the current annual demographic growth rate of 3.3 percent see the population doubling over the next 20 years (to 23 million by 2020).
2. Niger is both a least developed country (LDC) and a low-income, food-deficit country (LIFDC). Its gross domestic product (GDP) has been growing at a mere 0.3 percent a year over the past 30 years. Allowing for the population increase, this translates into an effective 2 percent decrease in per capita GDP over that period. Average annual income per inhabitant, which was estimated at US\$230² in 1996, was some US\$150 in 2000.
3. The poor economic showing of the last decade was compounded by a series of major socio-political and institutional crises (coups took place in 1996 and 1999), which made it difficult to introduce measures to reform and stimulate the economy. This picture was further complicated by a continuing decrease in external aid, from 313 billion CFA francs in 1990 to 162.7 billion in 1993,³ the lowest figure for the decade. External aid per capita dropped significantly too, from US\$41 in 1992 to US\$25 in 1997.
4. In 2000, Official Development Aid amounted to US\$197.3 million, including US\$6 million—equivalent to 9,000 tons of food—from WFP as part of its CP. Following a poor harvest in 2000, total food aid to Niger the following year amounted to 67,887 tons, of which 26 percent, or 17,832 tons—including 5,129 tons of emergency aid—were supplied by WFP. Other principal donors include the European Community, France, the United States of America, Libya, Nigeria, Germany, Qatar, Pakistan and other bilateral and private donors.
5. It is estimated that 63 percent of the population lives below the poverty line and that 34 percent of those live in extreme poverty. Women account for 75 percent of the poor.
6. Eighty-five percent of the population lives in rural areas, where farmers make their living from traditional agro-pastoral activities characterized by low productivity. Crops are vulnerable to climatic vagaries and to deteriorating environmental and production conditions.
7. In 2000 the UNDP's Human Development Index for Niger was one of the lowest in the world (0.293), placing the country 173rd out of 174. Eighty percent of adults and 90 percent of women are illiterate. In rural areas, fewer than one woman in 20 is literate. The enrolment rate in primary schools was 30.3 percent in 2000, also among the world's lowest, with a significant gap between boys and girls (35.4 and 25.2 percent, respectively).

¹Unless otherwise specified, all figures are drawn from the Common Country Assessment (CCA), completed in 2002.

² All monetary values are expressed in United States dollars.

³ In May, US\$1 was equivalent to 619 CFA Francs.



As noted in the Government's Ten-Year Educational Development Programme (TEDP), there are major differences between regions, and the primary school enrolment rate was 51 percent in towns as compared with 28 percent in rural areas. Disparities are compounded by widespread discrimination against girls, especially in rural areas. The drop-out rate is also high, with only 58 percent of pupils continuing into the sixth year of the primary education cycle.

8. The very low school enrolment rate in rural areas is due more to a failure on the part of parents to appreciate the benefits of education than to a lack of education infrastructure or teachers. Parents seldom consider their children's education a priority because they have problems meeting the financial costs involved. Children are viewed as an essential source of labour in families, with girls helping their mothers with household tasks, for example, and boys doing agro-pastoral work.
9. In 1996 the rate of health care coverage was 32 percent, while populations' access to drinking water was 52 percent in rural areas and 60 percent in urban centres. Infant and infant-child mortality rates are particularly high, at 126 per 1,000 and 274 per 1,000, respectively. Only 18.4 percent of children under 5 are vaccinated. One third of the population suffers from food insecurity and a very many are afflicted by malnutrition. Life expectancy is 48 years.

Characteristics of Food Insecurity

10. According to preliminary results of the VAM survey, food insecurity is a structural problem in the agro-pastoral transition zone as well as in the pastoral area. Natural agricultural resources are very scarce there, while poverty is widespread and there is hardly any basic infrastructure.
11. Rainfall in these areas is erratic, and disastrous droughts are always a danger. Cereal yields are low due to impoverished soils and lack of fertilizers, while low productivity of livestock basically stems from their not getting enough fodder. Productive potential is constantly diminishing owing on the one hand, to generally unfavourable climatic conditions over the past 20 years and, on the other, to increased pressure on the land because of rapid population growth.
12. Cultivated areas have doubled in 25 years and have gradually spread onto "marginal" lands, thus reducing available pastures in transition zones. In addition, diminishing yields and the spread of cultivation into the southern agricultural areas have reduced the amount of uncultivated land and exacerbated conflicts between farmers and transhumant pastoralists.
13. The problems posed by structural food insecurity are complicated by the fact that the agro-pastoral system is severely constrained and because the wealth produced by the other non-dynamic sectors is unevenly distributed.
14. The two types of food insecurity—structural and short-term (mainly due to major droughts every four or five years on average)—are closely interconnected. Low incomes make populations more vulnerable to food crises, while a series of bad harvests is making it hard for them to introduce the technical and management changes they need to improve those incomes.

Availability

15. Agricultural production—which is largely based on rainfed crops—provides 80 to 90 percent of total available food resources. The main crop is millet, which together with sorghum represents up to 60 percent of the food produced. Given the predominance of



cereals, there is often a confusion of the food situation in Niger with the level of available cereal stocks.

16. Three trends may be noted: (i) a widening gap between available supplies and needs, both in terms of quantity and in terms of the kinds of products consumed; (ii) failure of agricultural production to keep pace with population growth; and (iii) rising urban populations whose consumption patterns create a demand for products (wheat, rice) that are not grown locally in sufficient quantities.
17. Of the past 16 farm seasons, 12 showed a deficit. Of the country's 36 departments, only 11 produce enough to be 100 percent self-sufficient in cereals. Of the remainder, 15 manage to cover four to six months' consumption on average, while 10 cover from 6 to 12 months. The country's central and northern areas are the most affected.
18. The difference between national production and demand is filled by officially-declared commercial imports, by cross-border trade, only a small part of which is official, and by food aid. On average, these various flows represent 10 to 20 percent of total available food resources, while imports from neighbouring countries account for more than 50 percent of that share.

Access

19. The population's main sources of income include agriculture, livestock-raising, income-generating activities, migration and to a lesser extent financial remittances from abroad, loans, gifts, etc. Generally speaking, agriculture and animal husbandry are the main source of income formation even in agro-pastoral areas where not enough food is produced to meet needs and where people are forced to buy food to satisfy their basic requirements.
20. Households whose farms are on moderately fertile land are very vulnerable, especially during the lean season (between May and August), unless they own large herds. During this period, their already weak purchasing power is confronted with the seasonal rise in the price of cereals. In addition, they just face the speculations of tradesmen to whom they owe exorbitant debts. Difficulties in accessing food are compounded by the poor state of secondary roads (involving additional transport costs) and by the low level of competition in markets, where mark-ups are generally too high.

Nutritional Situation and Malnutrition

21. Variations in food availability and difficulty in accessing food supplies are at the root of the malnutrition found in Niger's population. According to data collected by the National Action Plan on Nutrition (1996), only 76 percent of households are able to satisfy their caloric needs.
22. The situation is especially critical as regards women and children. Available surveys and studies (EDSN 1992 and 1998; UNICEF Multiple Indicators Survey [MICS] 2000) indicate that: (i) protein-energy malnutrition rates are very high among children under 5 (20.7 percent acute malnutrition, 41.1 chronic malnutrition and 49.6 weight insufficiency); (ii) 16 percent of newborns weigh less than 2.5 kg at birth and 2.6 percent of children of 24–59 months suffer from night blindness (lack of vitamin A); (iii) 35.8 percent of the 10–15 age group suffers from goitre, of which 5.7 percent suffer from visible goitre; (iv) anaemia is very widespread, affecting 57 percent of children between 6 and 59 months and 61 percent of expectant mothers; and (v) 21 percent of women of childbearing age suffer from acute malnutrition (body mass index <18.5).



23. Although cereal deficits are a major cause of malnutrition, the causes of malnutrition among vulnerable groups are also to be found in poor mother and child care, in women's excessive workloads, in lack of information and in a repetitive, poor-quality diet. The nutritional status of populations has considerably worsened over the past few years as evidenced by the comparative data contained in the 1992 and 1998 EDSNs.

Vulnerable Groups and Areas

24. With the population growing at an annual rate of 3.3 percent, food needs are expected to rise from 2.6 million tons in 1998 to 3.1 million tons in 2008. This will put further pressure on the land, given current agriculture and animal husbandry practices. Increased cultivation of marginal northern lands, reduced fallow periods and the low productivity of agriculture as it is now practised are the main factors in worsening structural food insecurity.
25. The first phase of the VAM survey undertaken by WFP at the beginning of 2002 identified a number of vulnerable groups on the basis of the following criteria: (i) not enough food available; (ii) not enough access to food due to geographical isolation and the weakness of markets and incomes; (iii) health and nutritional problems and difficulties in access to drinking water; and (iv) few agricultural, educational and health resources, especially in the northern and central areas, which are the most isolated.
26. Preliminary results of the VAM survey show, as do other available data, that the geographical area with the highest vulnerability is the agro-pastoral strip (i.e. 15 departments), where problems arising from the sedentarization of herders hit by earlier droughts are compounded by pressure from farmers arriving from the south.

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES AND POLICIES ADDRESSING POVERTY AND FOOD INSECURITY

Overall Policies

27. The main thrusts of the poverty reduction strategy implemented by the Government as part of a first programming cycle (2002–2004) are: (i) the achievement of durable economic growth; (ii) development of the productive sector; (iii) guaranteed access to basic social services for the poor; and (iv) the reinforcement of human and institutional capacities and the promotion of good governance.
28. The principal objectives are to: reduce poverty by 50 percent, reduce extreme poverty significantly by 2015, especially in rural areas, and achieve a number of social development objectives, including healthcare coverage, school enrolment, literacy, access to drinking water, and action on gender issues. Specific objectives to 2005 include reducing the percentage of the poor from 63 to 59 percent, increasing school enrolment from 37 to 50 percent and increasing the rate of healthcare coverage from 48 to 60 percent.
29. The promotion of food security and rural development is considered the main priority in the development of productive sectors whose objectives are to: (i) provide food security; (ii) restore and protect available resources in an integrated manner; and (iii) reduce fluctuations in supplies and increase people's incomes. Given the low rainfall, rural development will rely increasingly on the management of underground and surface waters, irrigated crops, intensive livestock breeding, rural credit and the promotion of agro-pastoral exports.



Food Security Policies

30. In August 2001 the Government adopted a Food Security Operational Strategy whose general objectives aimed at: (i) achieving a lasting improvement in food security through the development of the agro-pastoral and food sectors; and (ii) preventing and mitigating food crises by setting up an information system to monitor the situation, and by improved dialogue between the Government and donors, and closer coordination in the field. Consequently, the Government is finalizing a National Global Food Security Programme, which is aimed at integrating the various programmes involved and identifying the most urgent forms of intervention required.
31. The National Agency for Food Crisis Prevention and Management was set up in 1998 under an agreement signed between the Government and donors (the European Commission, France, Germany, the United States of America, Switzerland, WFP and, recently, Italy). A mixed commission provides coordination at the strategic level, while technical aspects are handled by a Restricted Coordination Committee (RCC). The agency intervenes through a National Reserve Stock (NRS), which is made up of a National Security Stock (NSS), progressively being increased to 40,000 tons of cereals, and of a Food Security Fund (FSF), also being gradually increased to the monetary equivalent of 40,000 tons of cereals. The stocks are to be used solely in the event of a serious food crisis. The NSS is maintained by Niger's National Food Crops Office.
32. The agency's second mechanism, the Intervention Fund, is composed of a Donors' Joint Fund (DJF) and of bilateral food aid counterpart funds. These are used to respond to more limited food crises by financing crisis-mitigation measures such as micro-projects, labour-intensive works, cereal banks and low-price cereal sales. The agency also includes an early-warning system, runs a Crop Forecast and Estimate survey and collects data on the cereal and livestock markets.

Food Aid Policies

33. Food aid policy comes under the general heading of Niger's Specific Charter for the Sahel, that is, it is implemented in the case of shortages or famines caused by national catastrophes or social upheavals. Food aid shipments vary from one year to the next, but the overall trend is a marked decrease. Food aid comes in five different forms: (i) food for work (FFW); (ii) subsidized sales of commodities (principally by the Government); (iii) free distribution in vulnerable areas; (iv) school canteens; and (v) food supplements for children and nursing or expectant mothers.
34. The practice of distributing food aid free of charge to prevent or mitigate food crises is being discouraged as far as possible and replaced with a set of activities aimed at helping vulnerable populations gain improved structural access to food. These activities include off-season irrigated crops programmes, cut-price cereal sales, the creation of cereal banks and labour-intensive works.

ASSESSMENT OF WFP'S PERFORMANCE TO DATE

The Current CP and Its Components

35. WFP's first CP in Niger, initially set to last four years, from 1999 to 2002, to be synchronized with UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA programming cycles, was approved in October 1998 at a total cost of US\$28.9 million. The current CP will be extended for a



year, to December 2003, in order to harmonize the next CP with the new programming cycle agreed upon by all the United Nations organizations in Niger (2004–2007).

36. The first CP, which marked a transitional phase between the project and programme approaches, covered three intervention sectors: rural development (50 percent of food commodities); education (33 percent); and health (27 percent). Objectives of the activities were to: (i) stimulate agricultural production while preserving existing ecological resources; (ii) promote school enrolment in vulnerable rural areas, especially for girls; and (iii) increase healthcare coverage and help provide nutritional recovery programmes for mothers and children.
37. During the 1999–2002 cycle, 48,000 tons of food products were made available. Against a background of diminishing cereal production (2 million tons in 2000 as compared with 2.8 million tons in 1999) and of deficits (163,000 tons in 2000), WFP commodities helped to implement a well-focused and effective programme on behalf of the poorest populations in vulnerable areas, without any significant repercussions on the national cereal market.

Strengths and Weaknesses in Implementation

38. According to a mid-term evaluation carried out in January 2002, the objectives of the three activities fully addressed the objectives of food aid as defined in WFP's Enabling Development policy. Under the healthcare component, food is made available only to the 15,000 women and 10,000 children suffering from malnutrition and attending Integrated Health Centres (IHCs). Assistance to 26,000 schoolchildren under the school feeding programme is provided both to boys and girls without distinction, while dry rations are distributed to 3,500 women who have enrolled their daughters in school. In the rural development activities, women on average make up 58 percent of annual recipients of food aid, i.e. 38,800 out of a total of 67,000.
39. The present monitoring system is unsatisfactory because it fails either to evaluate how far objectives have been met, or to measure the impact of food aid with any precision. Overall, the creation of productive assets focused more on environmental protection aspects than on the creation of works aimed at improving productive practices through surface water management, a trend that should be reversed during the next CP. Moreover, women failed to benefit sufficiently from expected results: they acquired less than 10 percent of productive assets despite the fact that more women than men were involved in creating those assets. Taking the activities as a whole, women made up less than 10 percent of the management committees, underlining their limited participation in decision-making machinery.
40. In the social field (health care/nutrition and education), food aid was a major incentive, increasing girls' attendance both at IHCs and at schools. However, there was not enough information available at the IHCs concerning the two objectives selected, i.e. "encouraging women to attend IHCs" and "targeting food aid to women and children meeting certain malnutrition criteria", which was often a source of confusion and frustration. In most cases in fact, patients arrive at the IHCs hoping to receive food that is, however, reserved for women and children whose nutritional status requires food aid.
41. Interviewees and beneficiaries as a whole appreciated WFP's support of the school canteens, which was seen as a major incentive for parents to send their children to school and keep them there. In the geographical and social context of Niger, dry rations play a crucial role in persuading parents, especially mothers, to send more of their daughters to school.



42. Beneficiaries still all too often see food aid as something whose main purpose is to satisfy immediate hunger. This is especially so in the social sector, where the methodological approach to current activities is not really directed at ensuring that the activities are durable and can be taken over by beneficiaries after aid is phased out. Furthermore, no complementary activity has been provided to phase in the gradual takeover of activities by beneficiaries.
43. Activities in the social sector are implemented by national counterpart structures whose management deals only with logistics and administration. In the case of both healthcare and education, resorting to using male and female nurses and teachers to manage those activities creates extra work. It would have been better if organizational aspects had been entrusted to female management committees. As for the rural development activity, the sudden withdrawal of two major partners in 2001 and 2002 following delays and the interruption of their programmes' financing, had serious repercussions on distribution. Part of the unused food aid was diverted to deficit areas to mitigate the 2001 food crisis and to the extended cereal banks component.
44. WFP's new requirements regarding coordination in executing the CP approach are not clearly defined, and the present structures leave much to be desired. Following measures introduced in the past few years, the present system centres mainly around food logistics and management, whereas effective monitoring of progress made and evaluation of the results and impact achieved are essential and need to be reinforced rapidly. More generally, the structure of the National Coordination Unit set up in 1989 is no longer appropriate in light of present needs.
45. A major lesson learned is that food aid must be part of an intervention strategy shared by WFP's partners in future interventions. Joint programming with partners would be improved if it stemmed from a previously agreed upon logical framework. Working out a strategy also implies designing and implementing a monitoring and evaluation system to measure the impact and results of activities.
46. Transferring old sectorial projects supported by WFP to the CP does not automatically make their operational design reflect the programme approach. In general, in order for national and international partners to understand what is being done, they should be provided with clear and practical information defining that approach. Interventions show little complementarity or synergy, as regards coordination between the CP's various activities or between the various organizations or donors.
47. Given the deficit in the 2000–2001 farm season, which caused extreme food insecurity at the national level, in 2001 WFP launched an emergency operation (EMOP 10068.0) to increase distributions through ordinary CP activities. Overall, some 450,000 people benefited from 5,129 tons of food. The operation helped children to stay on at school, assisted women and children diagnosed by the IHCs as suffering from malnutrition and established security stocks at the village level through the creation of cereal banks, which were managed largely by women.

FUTURE ORIENTATION OF WFP ASSISTANCE

48. In accordance with the policies adopted by the Government in its poverty-reduction strategy, WFP's Enabling Development policy, and the Programme's Commitments to Women, the future CP will seek to reinforce interventions in the social sector. It will improve access to health care and to nutritional recovery and education centres for children and expectant and nursing mothers, and will also significantly strengthen support to efforts



aimed at getting more children, especially girls, to go to school. The rural development activity will be continued and will feature the creation of productive assets and of durable cereal banks, thus providing a rapid and flexible crisis-mitigation system. Future WFP orientation will consist in progressively reinforcing and integrating the activities implemented in the preceding CP.

49. The long-term objective of WFP assistance is to decrease vulnerability and improve access to food for the most vulnerable targeted groups, as well as to create a favourable socio-productive environment, allowing those groups to make the transition to more sustainable means of subsistence.
50. The next CP (2004–2007) thus proposes intervening along the following specific lines:
 - the increasing of school enrolment rates, especially for girls, in vulnerable areas through support to school canteens;
 - health and nutritional prevention together with nutritional recovery for expectant and nursing mothers and malnourished children;
 - desertification control, support to productive practices through activities aimed at mobilizing surface waters, protecting and improving catchment areas and providing secure, locally available access to food through the creation of cereal banks, to be managed by women; and
 - the setting-up of food crisis mitigation activities in order to respond rapidly and flexibly to any emergency needs.
51. During preparation of the next CP, recommendations contained in the January 2002 mid-term evaluation will be taken into account. Care will be taken to further improve synergy and complementary with activities undertaken by other organizations in the United Nations system.
52. The CCA served as the basis for the preparation of the present CSO. Formulation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) in 2002 will help define a strategic framework for the reduction of absolute poverty in Niger. The next CP will aim to respond directly to the objectives of the UNDAF, for example by strengthening collaboration and joint programming between United Nations system organizations and the World Bank.

Key Changes Resulting from the Recommendations of the Mid-Term Evaluation Mission of the 1999-2002 CP

⇒ Geographical and Social Re-Targeting (Annex I)

53. Results of the preliminary VAM survey show that most of the departments in the agro-pastoral zone are badly affected by chronic and structural food insecurity. WFP's future activities will focus in particular on marginalized rural areas where access to and availability and utilization of food commodities are a problem. The areas concerned are where poverty and a mass exodus from the land have made access to food difficult, where the rate of malnutrition is high and where school enrolment is low, especially for girls. The VAM survey reports that the departments of Tera, Tillabéri, Ouallam, Filingué (Tillabéri region), Tahoua, Keita, Abalak, Tchintabaraden (Tahoua region), Arlit, Tchirozérine (Agadez region), Dakoro, Mayahi (Maradi region), Gouré, Tanout (Zinder region), and N'guigmi, Maïné (Diffa region) have a high degree of vulnerability.
54. WFP will re-target its interventions in the area as a matter of priority while retaining, however, a measure of flexibility so as to respond to specific needs in the pastoral zone as



a whole. Geographical and vulnerability targeting will be refined during 2002, when the second phase of the VAM survey takes place. This will make it possible to target to the most vulnerable communities and beneficiaries.

55. The survey identified six target groups as at high risk of vulnerability: smallholders in marginal areas; transhumant herders with few animals; agro-pastoralists and pastoralists in the process of become sedentarized; women running farms; large families, and expectant and nursing mothers and children under 5 suffering from malnutrition. Criteria for selecting beneficiaries will be defined more precisely when the CP is formulated.

⇒ *Reallocation of Resources (Annex II)*

56. The future CP is expected to require a commitment of some 14,000 tons a year. In view of the National Strategy's objective of doubling the school enrolment rate during the 2002–2012 Ten-Year Education Development Plan, readjustment of assistance will aim to benefit the social sector, namely by increasing the enrolment rate in the primary sector, especially for girls. The share of resources to the health sector will remain unchanged pending a consolidation of current results and the definition of mechanisms designed to combine preventive nutritional education more effectively with nutritional recovery.
57. Food distributions in the rural development sector will remain at much the same level as in the current CP. WFP is aware of how much assistance the sector needs but must make sure that the criteria for effective collaboration are met. A new crisis-mitigation component will be added to this activity, and will involve the introduction of a number of measures reflecting current policy aimed at making populations less dependent on emergency aid.

⇒ *Integration of Activities*

58. Targeting of intervention areas common to all the CP activities will take place when justified by the circumstances and when partners have been found. Integration of WFP activities will focus principally on establishing the direct food security of beneficiaries through: satisfaction of immediate food needs at the local level; medium-term investment in productive assets to increase the volume and reliability of production; and long-term investment in education and health to promote the development of the areas concerned.
59. One of the strategies will consist in ensuring that, wherever possible, the new schools selected are close to Community Nutritional Centres and IHCs. Members of Community Nutritional Centres and parent-teacher associations will also be able to benefit from the rural development activity's cereal banks.
60. Benefits and income transfers generated by the rural development activity, together with a successful awareness-raising campaign by WFP and its partners, should encourage local populations to attach greater importance to sending their children to school and to monitoring the health of mothers and children.

⇒ *Possible Partnerships*

61. It is essential to find new executive partnerships, both in order to broaden the spread of activities and to establish synergies with partners with different but complementary resources. WFP accordingly organized a first round of consultations in March 2002 to identify organizations and potential partners in relevant fields at the national level. Preparation of the CSO also provided an opportunity to meet representatives of national and international NGOs for an exchange of views on possible partnerships, WFP is currently involved in a process of consultations, both at the national and regional level, that



should lead to the definition of future forms of collaboration during the formulation of the next CP.

⇒ *Indicators, and Reporting and Monitoring-and-Evaluation System*

62. The collection and processing of data for reports, which is the responsibility of the national counterpart, is a priority and requires a reinforcement of institutional capacities. In this regard, a first set of consultations aimed at improving the reporting system for the education activity was held in March 2002. This work will continue, and similar initiatives will be taken for the other activities.
63. The logical framework approach will be adopted in designing activities and the monitoring-evaluation system, and in selecting the indicators to measure the next CP's outcome and expected impact. Two workshops are planned, in September 2002 and February 2003, with the national counterpart and all operational partners.

⇒ *Institutional Considerations*

64. At the central level, the Inter-Ministerial CP Steering Committee will meet regularly. WFP, hitherto an observer, will play a decision-making role in the committee, as agreed upon with the Government.
65. A new national body responsible for implementation and coordination will be set up to make sure that activities fully reflect the CP approach. It will operate autonomously and report to whatever institutional body is best suited to help concentrate its activities. At the regional level, the national counterpart and WFP will participate actively in consultations and exchanges with operational partners in the field (associations, professional organizations, representatives of various community groups, etc.).

Identification of Future Areas of Intervention

66. In light of the above and of the corrective measures to be introduced during the 2002–2003 period, the following activities have been selected for the future CP.

⇒ *Health: Assistance to Mothers and Children Suffering from Malnutrition*

67. Care of the malnourished will be better structured thanks to a complementary preventive health and awareness-raising campaign, to be launched in advance with the communities involved. Operational partners stress the importance of providing a preventive, nutritional education activity to village communities. The intervention will be targeted principally to IHCs in the agro-pastoral zone.
68. Besides identifying children suffering from moderate malnutrition, the objective is to organize training sessions for all village mothers to introduce them to proper nutritional practices using locally available produce. The women will be organized into mutual-aid groups and will hold regular meetings on health issues (breastfeeding, progressive weaning, nutritional education based on local produce) and preventive hygiene such as family planning, discussion of sexually-transmitted diseases and Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS).
69. No food distribution is planned during the training and awareness-raising stage of the health/nutrition activity. However, the initiative which is to be managed by WFP's partners, could receive indirect support from the rural development activity's cereal banks component (cereal banks managed exclusively by and for women attending Nutritional Education Centres). WFP food would thus help initiate a concerted process aimed at



nutritional prevention at the village level, while a method of making the activity permanent is being sought. People affected by moderate malnutrition will receive individual rations including enriched foods such as corn-soya blend at the IHCs.

70. The activities comply with the national objective of “promoting nutritional surveillance teams at the village level”, and with the concern expressed by partners and set out in the WFP March 2002 report “Survey of Partners in the Social Sector: Education and Health”. The fight against malnutrition will require concerted action and successful synergy with partners involved in nutritional surveillance and micronutrient provision.

⇒ *Education: Support to School Enrolment*

71. Intervention in this field will be continued and enlarged as it involves a vital investment in the country’s human capital, especially as regards children in the poorest areas. WFP is at present the leading aid organization involved in supporting school canteens, which it does through a relatively modest programme targeting 6 percent (i.e. 242 out of 4,113) of primary schools. Priority in the activity will continue to be given to vulnerable rural areas. Schools will be selected on the basis of consultations between the Ministry of Basic Education, departmental-level technical agencies and WFP. Increased support to the sector will include not only raising the number of schools participating but also introducing more rational methods of distributing the rations. Pupils at boarding schools will continue to get three meals a day while pupils at day school will receive one meal a day. The commodities will be received and managed by school canteen management committees, whose members should include an equal number of men and women in order for the committees to qualify for food aid.
72. WFP will continue to encourage girls to attend primary schools by providing dry rations to their mothers. It would also be desirable to support girls’ education in secondary schools in the areas targeted by supplying food to girls’ boarding schools.
73. Following a regional initiative by WFP and WHO begun in December 2001, a de-worming component should also be implemented in schools assisted by WFP in Niger. The feasibility of this component and the possibilities for partnerships will be given further study following the WHO mission of May 2002.

⇒ *Rural Development Including Prevention and Mitigation of Food Crises*

74. Given the low productivity of the primary sector, particularly in the agro-pastoral region, and the scarce adaptive capabilities of local populations due to climatic conditions that hinder farm production, the food security strategy will be influenced by: (i) availability of locally accessible community stocks (cereal banks); (ii) the creation of works, to be carried out on a FFW basis, affording an improvement in productive practices and environmental protection; and (iii) food aid to be delivered in the framework of food-for-training (FFT) activities aimed at encouraging women to take literacy courses.
75. FFW activities will include management of surface waters (spreading sills, filtration dykes, dams, etc.), catchment area protection installations, reforestation aimed at rehabilitating degraded lands and desertification control.
76. During implementation of the above productive infrastructures, food will not necessarily be delivered as individual payment to participants in the activities. Rather, it will represent a form of support for collective initiatives by participants. For example, a start-up stock of food might be provided by WFP to a women’s cereal bank as remuneration for the women’s work in creating an asset for their community.



77. As regards the cereal banks, food aid will be allocated mainly to groups of women villagers on the basis of an agreed-upon programme aimed at improving food security (guaranteeing supplies during the lean season) and reflecting women's expectations in the field of productive assets acquisition and cash resources.
78. The crisis-mitigation component will make it possible to respond flexibly to recurring food crises with a view to lessening their impact on the most vulnerable families. Such impact is often socio-economic as well as nutritional, with villagers selling off their goods, fleeing the land and increasingly neglecting their basic social needs. This component may be included in the National Agency for Crisis Prevention and Management, given WFP's participation in the Restricted Consultative Committee, and considered as a gift in-kind to the DJF to carry out crisis-mitigation activities.

⇒ **Emergency Situations**

79. The possibility of a major crisis, such as an exceptionally bad drought, would require WFP to intervene rapidly through an emergency operation able to draw on additional resources.
80. WFP is taking a very active part in RCC in managing the monitoring of the National Agency for Crisis Prevention and Management, even though the Programme does not contribute directly to the NSS or the FSF. Improving this consultative framework represents a priority both as regards the National Emergency Plan now being prepared, and improved harmonization of future WFP operations with the overall emergency-management mechanism. In light of WFP's ability to mobilize resources and logistics machinery, the Programme will prepare a detailed plan of intervention (of which the logistics part already exists) to complement the national plan.

Future CP's Commitments to Women (Annex III)

81. The next CP should plan for a gradual annual increase of resources for women (from 8,500 tons in 2004 to 9,800 tons in 2007, out of a total 14,000 tons a year), from 61 percent to 70 percent of overall resources, and an increase in the number of female recipients from 90,000 to 101,000 out of a total 146,000:
- Recipients of the healthcare activity receiving individual rations will be exclusively malnourished women and children (15 percent of the CP, or 2,000 tons a year).
 - School canteens will distribute food equally between all boys and girls. Dry rations will be distributed solely to mothers of girls attending school. Some 53 percent (3,500 tons) of the education activity's resources will thus benefit girls and women.
 - A significant majority of recipients of the rural development activities will be women. The percentage of women involved will increase from 60 at the programme's start-up to 78 percent (i.e. from 33,000 to 43,000 women), who will receive an annual equivalent of 3,300 tons, increasing to 4,300 tons.
82. In order to remedy weaknesses that have arisen, WFP will consider the male-female parity clause in all management committees as a *sine qua non* for qualifying for aid. As regards specifically female activities (nutritional centres, cereal banks), the proportion of women on the committees will have to be 100 percent. All these provisions will be specified in the agreements to be signed with executive partners.
83. The objectives set for the next CP are compatible with the regional strategy on gender issues approved in February 2002 by all WFP's offices in West Africa. The objectives aim



to help achieve gender equality through three priority avenues: programmes, appeals and partnerships.

Modalities of WFP Assistance

84. WFP will continue to implement its activities by resorting as far as possible to cereal purchases, preferably on the local market. The food basket selected should contribute to satisfying the nutritional needs of targeted beneficiaries. WFP will take care not to disrupt the food habits of beneficiaries or the organization of markets.

Operational Implications

85. WFP and the Government will agree on the strategy to be followed to improve logistics management. WFP will seek to reinforce its own programming capacities in order to monitor activities closely in the field, for instance by deploying additional personnel in sub-offices, as recommended by the evaluation mission.
86. Partnerships with NGOs and community organizations will be reinforced as far as possible through the implementation of tripartite agreements between WFP, the Government and the organizations. Under these agreements, the latter will be given responsibility for carrying out the activities, managing the food aid and setting up a simple system of monitoring and evaluation. Definition of a logical framework and the adoption of a timetable for activities will henceforth be considered a condition for receiving assistance.

PARTNERSHIPS

87. During the preparation of the CCA, collaboration was envisaged with UNICEF (in the Nomadic Areas Education Programme) in encouraging more children and girls to go to school. Similarly, possible forms of cooperation were discussed with FAO's Special Food Security Programme in the areas of surface-water management (water-retention micro realizations) and cereal banks management. Talks with WHO and UNFPA helped define avenues for future collaboration, including: combating malnutrition and providing healthcare for women and children; providing assistance to preventive activities (personal hygiene, prevention of sexually-transmitted diseases, especially HIV/AIDS, nutritional education, deworming for children); and therapeutic activities to combat malnutrition and genetic diseases. The UNDAF being prepared represents an ideal framework for exchanges and coordination among WFP, United Nations system organizations, Breton Woods Institutions (especially the World Bank), the Government of Niger and other development partners.
88. WFP is going through a process of diversifying its traditional partners in the field and is seeking to involve decentralized regional structures in the form of NGOs, community organizations and emerging social bodies. In the framework of its support to the Poverty Alleviation Framework Programme, which also benefits from WFP food assistance, UNDP is encouraging the deployment machinery aimed at decentralizing planning and management. The initiative offers the possibility of letting local communes manage certain investment or nutritional prevention activities on an experimental basis, in cases where suitable local management and good governance exist.
89. WFP has excellent relations with the leading donors present in Niger. The machinery mentioned above, which was set up in 1998, includes a number of intervention instruments (NRS, Donors' Joint Fund (DJF), CCA, etc.) in the field of food security. Current

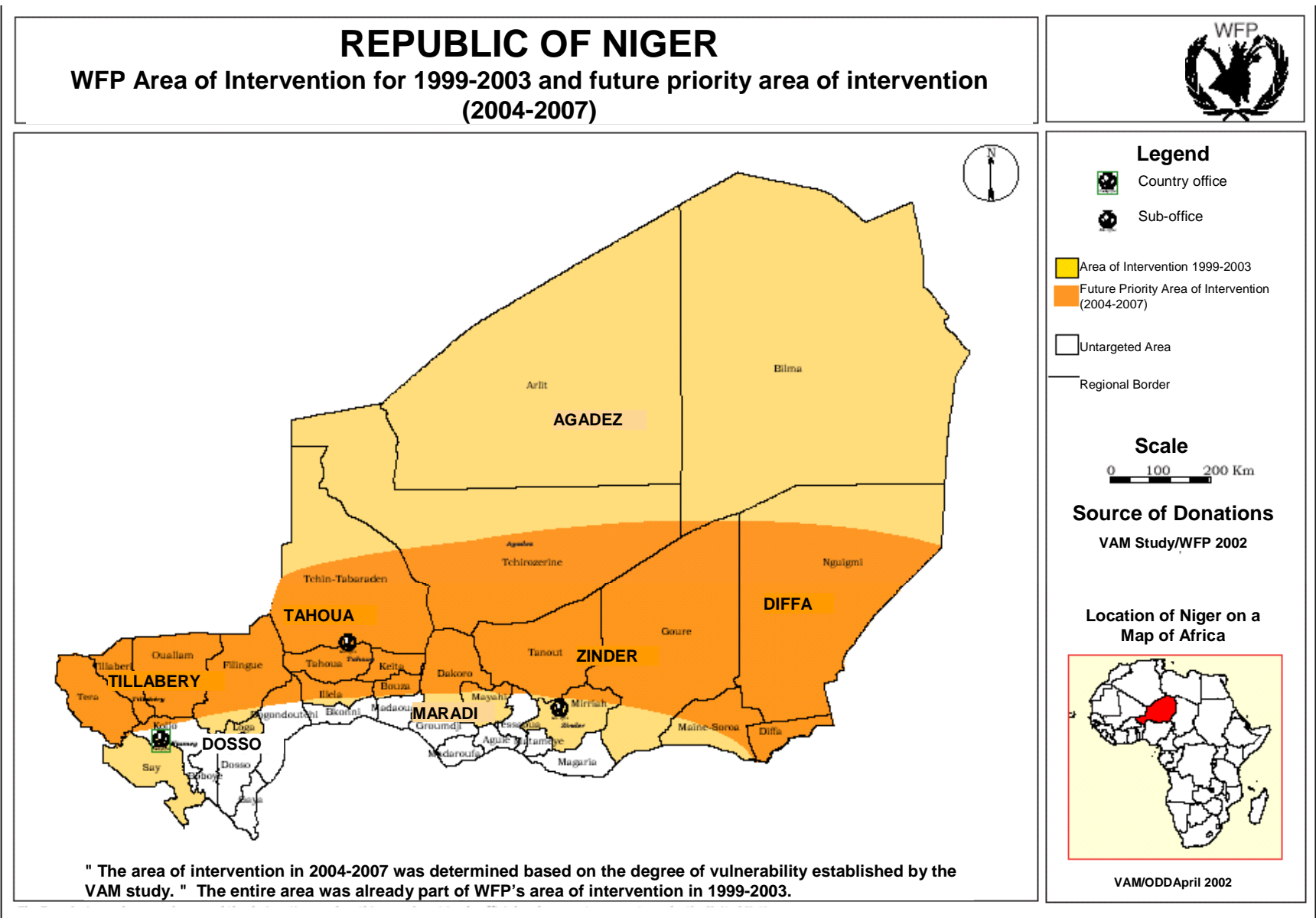


preparation of an emergency intervention plan is helping reinforce dialogue between partners and donors as a whole. Implementation of the crisis mitigation component in the next CP will also help strengthen this apparatus.

KEY ISSUES AND RISKS

90. A major food crisis stemming from a large-scale drought or other natural disaster would risk destabilizing the CP as a result of the sudden need for emergency operations if the current national emergency plan is not finalized and response from donors is insufficient.
91. Any reconsideration by the Government of its commitment to collaborate with donors, or any lessening of dialogue between the donors, would be liable to compromise the excellent level of collaboration in the field of crisis management.
92. The Government's financial ability to meet its counterpart commitments regarding project financing represents a key element in the successful execution of activities by a number of WFP's partners, especially in the field of rural development. Any problem on this score is liable to cause delays and a suspension of external financing, with serious repercussions for WFP's CP.
93. Finally the financial resources made available for the next programme by WFP and the Government should be sufficient not only to ensure the CP implementation and monitoring and evaluation, but also to cover communication and awareness-raising on the role of food products in achieving the selected objectives.





The designations employed and the presentation of material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the World Food Programme (WFP) concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its frontiers or boundaries.

ANNEX II

**PROPOSED REPARTITION OF FOOD AID BETWEEN ACTIVITIES IN THE
NEXT COUNTRY PROGRAMME (2004–2007)
(in percentage and volume terms)**

Sector of intervention	Relative share (%)	Proposed annual theoretical volume (tons)
Health/nutrition	15	2 000
Education	46	6 500
Rural development (including crisis mitigation component)	39	5 500



ANNEX III

**EXPECTED RECIPIENTS AND BENEFICIARIES IN THE NEXT COUNTRY PROGRAMME
(2004–2007)
ANNUAL AVERAGE BY ACTIVITY, BROKEN DOWN BY GENDER**

Sector of intervention	Recipients			Beneficiaries		
	Total	Number of women*	Percentage of women	Total	Number of women*	Percentage of women
Health/nutrition	26 000	26 000	100	26 000	26 000	100
Education						
Canteens	58 000	25 000	43	58 000	25 000	43
Dry rations	7 000	7 000	100	49 000	31 500	64
Rural development (including crisis mitigation component)	55 000	43 000	78	385 000	207 900	54

* In the health/nutrition activity, mothers are also considered as recipients of the food consumed by their malnourished children. Furthermore, in the school canteen component of the education activity, girls, rather than women, will be recipients and beneficiaries of the food.



ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

CCA	Common Country Assessment
CP	Country Programme
CSO	Country Strategy Outline
DJF	Donors' Joint Fund
DNHS	Demographic and National Health Survey
EMOP	Emergency operation
FAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization
FFT	Food for training
FFW	Food for work
FSF	Food Security Fund
GDP	Gross domestic product
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
IHC	Integrated Health Centre
LDC	Least developed country
LIFDC	Low-income, food-deficit country
MICS	UNICEF Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
NDHS	National Demographic and Health Survey
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NRS	National Reserve Stock
NSS	National Security Stock
RCC	Restricted Consultations Committee
TEDP	Ten-Year Education Development Programme
UNDAF	United Nations Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VAM	Vulnerability analysis and mapping
WHO	World Health Organization

