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## COUNTRY PROGRAMMES

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## COUNTRY PROGRAMME— NIGER (1999–2002)

### ABSTRACT

Classified as both a least developed country (LDC) by the United Nations, and as a low-income, food-deficit country (LIFDC) by FAO, in 1997 Niger ranked 173<sup>rd</sup> on the UNDP Human Development Index, with an infant mortality rate (children 0 to 5) of 320 per 1,000. The per capita gross domestic product (GDP) is 220 dollars and the Aggregate Household Food Security Index (FAO) is 76.2 (1993–95).

The Country Strategy Outline (CSO) for Niger was submitted to the WFP Executive Board at its Third Regular Session in October 1997. The Board recommended that a Country Programme be prepared on the basis of the CSO, but emphasized the need to strengthen the management of WFP's activities in conjunction with the government counterparts and other partners. It laid particular emphasis on the need to find technical partners with competence in the areas of health care and education, as is already the case in the rural development sector. The Board also proposed broadening the activities connected with combating desertification, drawing on the positive experience with the project for the "Integrated rural development of Keita, Bouza and Abalak".

The Country Programme has been drafted in compliance with the Country Strategy Note (CSN) drawn up by the Government in conjunction with the United Nations system. The duration of the Country Programme has been set at four years in order to fit in with the UNDP, UNICEF and the UNFPA cycles.

In accordance with the CSN, the WFP programme for the next four years will hinge around three areas of activity: rural development, education and health care. The programme will be designed to promote agricultural production while preserving the environment, extending the mother and child health care coverage and generally promoting school attendance among the nomads and transhumant herdsmen, particularly for girls. The WFP programme activities will focus on the regions most prone to food insecurity, particularly the most vulnerable groups living there.

The Country Programme covers the period 1999–2002, during which WFP food aid for basic activities will amount to 28.9 million dollars, subject to availability. Of this total, 23 million dollars accounts for all the direct operational costs. In addition to this, a supplementary amount of 5.9 million dollars will be needed to cover the direct and indirect support costs, as determined by the Board; 5.5 million dollars of this has already been approved for project Niger 2445.04 which is being implemented during the period covered by the programme. A further 23.4 million dollars remains to be approved. The resources for the basic activities of the programme are spread as follows: 50 percent for rural development, 33 percent for education and 17 percent for health care; 70 percent of the whole programme will be for women, girls and children.

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## NOTE TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

**This document contains recommendations for review and approval by the Executive Board.**

Pursuant to the decisions taken on the methods of work by the Executive Board at its First Regular Session of 1996, the documentation prepared by the Secretariat for the Board has been kept brief and decision-oriented. The meetings of the Executive Board are to be conducted in a business-like manner, with increased dialogue and exchanges between delegations and the Secretariat. Efforts to promote these guiding principles will continue to be pursued by the Secretariat.

The Secretariat therefore invites members of the Board who may have questions of a technical nature with regard to this document, to contact the WFP staff member(s) listed below, preferably well in advance of the Board's meeting. This procedure is designed to facilitate the Board's consideration of the document in the plenary.

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## STRATEGIC APPROACH: FOOD INSECURITY AND POVERTY

1. The Country Programme is designed to underpin the economic and social policy of the Government of Niger as defined in the Economic Recovery Programme (PRE) adopted in July 1997. It complies with WFP's mandate, and bases the interventions on the criteria of poverty and food insecurity while stressing the participation of women. Its preparation was preceded by a Country Strategy Outline (CSO) submitted to the Executive Board in October 1997 (document WFP/EB.3/97/6/Add.1). It takes account of the points that emerged in the Board's deliberations and the comments raised in relation to the CSO.
2. The WFP Country Programme covers a period of four years, from 1999 to 2002, and is incorporated into the Government's Country Strategy Note (CSN) for 1997–2002. In Niger, all the partners were involved in drawing up the CSN: bilateral and multilateral donors within the United Nations system, representatives of civil society and NGOs. This approach made it possible to seek solutions to development issues jointly and rally the efforts of all the partners around the Government's priorities. Since the WFP Country Programme will cover four years, it will be possible to harmonize its cycle with those of UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA.

## THE HUNGRY POOR: PRIORITIES IN MEETING THEIR NEEDS

### Food insecurity, poverty and vulnerability

3. The 1994 poverty profile drawn up by the Ministry of Planning determined that over 63 percent of the population lived below the poverty threshold (an annual income below 124 dollars<sup>1</sup> in urban and 83 dollars in rural areas); of these, 34 percent lived below the extreme poverty threshold (83 dollars for urban and 58 dollars for rural areas). The CSN for Niger emphasizes the fact that when the head of the household is a "woman member of the household", or "inactive" or "unemployed", 73 percent of the people concerned are poor, and 50 percent are extremely poor. Moreover, 86 percent of these poor people live in rural areas.
4. Food insecurity in Niger has been growing constantly for several years. Past cereals balances show that the country has been suffering from a chronic cereals deficit for 15 years. Yet 60 percent of the population have no medical coverage, nor access to education or any other social services and amenities. Medical coverage is available to only 34 percent of the population, and only 18 percent in the case of those living in rural areas. Niger has very high maternal mortality (700 per 100,000) and infant mortality (320 per 1,000) rates. School attendance is one of the lowest in the world (29 percent in 1994), and only 20 percent of the girls attended primary school in 1996, with marked differences between Niamey and rural areas.

<sup>1</sup> All monetary values are expressed in United States dollars.



5. Niger has three types of food insecurity, due to the following causes:
  - a) a chronic food deficit affecting a substantial proportion of the population, which stunts the growth of children and leaves them seriously underweight;
  - b) a seasonal food deficit during the lean season, when many of the small farmers no longer have any cereals and food prices are high; and
  - c) a food deficit due to widespread and acute shortages caused by natural disasters (drought, locusts, etc.).
6. The areas where environmental degradation is most serious and where there is a chronic food shortage are in the departments of Agadès, Diffa (the districts of N'Guigmi, Maïné-Soroa and Diffa), Tahoua (the districts of Tchintabaraden, Illéla and Tahoua), Tillabéry (the districts of Filingué, Ouallam, Téra nad Tillabéry), Zinder (the districts of Tanout and Couré) and Maradi (the districts of Dakoro and Maradi).
7. The groups most prone to food insecurity are: a) small farmers and herdsmen; b) the agro-pastoralists now being settled, but without being the owners of the lands they farm; c) many families with a large number of children under the age of five living in the towns and the agricultural areas with a high demographic growth rate; and d) herdsmen who have lost everything and cannot afford to replenish their herds.
8. The women and the children are particularly vulnerable groups in Niger: one child in three dies before the age of five. Women are entirely responsible for fetching water and feeding their households, and when the men emigrate they take on total responsibility for the survival of the family.

### **Government strategies to combat food insecurity and poverty, and mitigate disasters**

9. The Government's Economic Recovery Programme (PRE), adopted in July 1997, gives prominence to the reorganization of the agriculture sector which is the country's main source of wealth. Concerned at the rapid expansion of poverty, particularly among rural populations and women, the Government of Niger has relaunched the discussion process with its development partners. An initial meeting on combating poverty was held in March 1998 in Geneva. It will be followed by other sectoral and thematic meetings, addressing in particular health care, desertification, and food security.
10. In 1994, with FAO support, the Government launched a "Comprehensive Food Security Programme" divided into sub-programmes around which all the measures designed to foster national food security revolve. There are six specific programmes: institutions and services, food production, infrastructure, income-generating activities, the advancement of women, and the environment. To encourage new sources of employment and income, the Government is also seeking to strengthen the development of small rural enterprises and to offer jobs through highly labour-intensive public works programmes implemented by the Agence nigérienne des travaux d'intérêt public (Niger Agency for Public Works—NIGETIP).
11. Furthermore, in order to pre-empt drought-related crises, the Government has created the Market Information System (SIM) and the Early Warning System (EWS) to collect and analyse information on the food situation and forecast the cereals balances. The SIM is managed by the Office des produits vivriers du Niger (Niger Office for Food Products—OPVN) and financed by Germany and the European Union, through the Agence de diagnostic permanent (DIAPER). It was set up in 1989 and monitors cereals availability on



the markets and price trends at the local, regional and national levels. The EWS was also put in place in 1989. With a permanent secretariat belonging to the Office of the Prime Minister, it is supported by the European Union and is responsible for updating and disseminating all the information available on food security.

### **Government food aid policy**

12. Only a small portion of the national territory is arable: a mere 12 percent in the south over a strip of land 200 kilometres wide running from east to west. The staple crops are millet (two million tons a year) and sorghum (300,000 tons a year). The southern part of the department of Maradi, a food-surplus region, contributes over 30 percent to the national cereals output.
13. Since 1980, the average increase in cereals production has not been able to rise above 1.6 percent, while the population has been growing at over three percent. This means that chronic food crises are unavoidable in the most poverty-prone areas of Diffa, Agadès, Tahoua and Tillabéry, and the country requires food aid for the people living in these areas. For the 1997/98 season, the FAO/CILSS (Inter-State Permanent Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel) mission estimated the net cereal deficit at 152,000 tons. The country regularly suffers from particularly serious droughts. With the aid of a number of donors the Government intends to set up food security stocks of 80,000 tons of food of which one half will be in kind and the other in financial reserves. For 10 years Niger has been in receipt of a yearly average of 50,000 tons of food aid, 30 percent of which is provided by WFP. The Government's policy is to use this food aid as far as possible for food-for-work activities, and to reduce free food distribution to the minimum.

### **Relationship to the Country Strategy Note (CSN)**

14. The Country Strategy Note (CSN) for Niger (1997–2002) reflects the Government's development priorities, endorsed by the United Nations system, referring mainly to taking up the combined challenges of economic recession, steep population growth and continuing environmental degradation.
15. The main areas covered by the CSN are:
  - a) combating poverty, namely: fostering productive employment, environmental protection, natural resource management, establishing food security;
  - b) developing the social sectors: education, health and population growth control, water policy, sanitation, habitat, "women and development" priority, and establishing a safety net for marginalized and deprived groups; and
  - c) restoring public finances and reviving the economy.
16. The activities of the WFP Country Programme fit in fully with the CSN, particularly with regard to poverty reduction and the advancement of the social sectors.

### **Cooperation with the United Nations system, other donors and NGOs**

17. In Niger most of the donors have incorporated combating poverty as a component of their programmes. This has been done by UNICEF, FAO, WHO, UNFPA and WFP. Bilateral donors and NGOs are involved in every specific area of poverty reduction. There exists a very real desire to strengthen cooperation between donors and the Government, as clearly evidenced from the recommendations of the National Workshop on "Diagnosing and establishing a food strategy for Niger" organized by the European Union in September



1997. The Economic Recovery Programme adopted in July 1997 laid down strategies to be implemented in order to enhance food security: a consistent food security policy, decentralized activities, priority use of existing structures and projects and improved coordination of aid. Formerly, there was a lack of supervision of food aid operations. However, the situation has improved since the end of 1997. Government/donor coordination meetings on the food situation now take place on a regular basis.

## ASSESSMENT OF WFP PERFORMANCE TO DATE

18. The total amount of aid provided between 1971, when WFP assistance began, and December 1996 totalled 140 million dollars, mainly for development operations. Emergency operations consisted of food aid to drought victims in 1972 and 1984. Development assistance by WFP has hinged around three main areas: rural development, education and health care. About 40 percent of the food has been allocated to rural development, 37 percent to health care and 23 percent to education. An assessment of the results achieved by area of intervention to date is given in the Country Strategy Outline. An evaluation of the project to assist mother and child health activities has been carried out since the CSO was presented to the Board in October 1997. A report on that evaluation is presented under document WFP/EB.3/98/5/1. The mission's recommendations have been taken into account for the future project. It should be noted that a new strategy for targeting areas of intervention and beneficiaries was drawn up by a consultant in April 1998.

### Strategic orientation of the WFP Country Programme and geographical targeting

19. WFP will continue to support the Government's efforts to combat poverty through its work in the key sectors of rural development, education and health care. Geographical targeting will group together the programme activities to maximize the strategic role played by this kind of aid.
20. In the rural development sector, WFP will continue supporting the work carried out in the region of Bouza, Abalak and Keita (the department of Tahoua). New activities being funded by Italy and other partners in the Ader Douchi Maggia Valley, covering the districts of Birni-Konni and Madaoua (in the same department of Tahoua) will also be covered. WFP will cooperate with the International Labour Office (ILO) from 1999 onwards in the department of Zinder (covering the five districts of Mirryah, Magaria, Mtatmeye, Tanout and Gouré) as part of an operation to strengthen food security in these food-deficit areas with agricultural and water management potential. Close technical monitoring, rigorous operational management, mobilizing the communities and ensuring the integrated participation of women are the common features of these WFP-assisted rural development activities.
21. One of the priorities of the Government of Niger is to aid primary education through school canteens. The schools covered are in food-deficit districts. WFP's aim will be to promote school attendance by girls among the nomads and transhumant pastoralists. A new form of targeting will be gradually introduced, covering only the schools in districts where nomadism is prevalent, and with a wider gap between the school enrolment rate of boys and girls. Raising the numbers of girl pupils who complete primary school will be a major objective. The necessary procedures will be laid down to ensure that WFP assistance



meshes as well as possible with assistance provided by the World Bank and other partners encouraging school attendance by girl pupils.

22. Mother and child health has been reviewed and will cover the functional centres in four departments: Diffa, Tahoua, Tillabéry and Zinder. The districts to be assisted in these departments will be chosen on the basis of their food deficits, poverty levels, malnutrition rates, population density and the presence of other partners, in order to improve the management and monitoring of activities. In addition to this geographical refocusing, the criteria for selecting beneficiaries will be more clearly defined and the composition of the food ration will be simplified and better geared to the nutritional requirements of the mothers and the children.
23. Generally speaking, more rigorous targeting will enable the WFP programme to concentrate on the Sahelian zone. The choice of districts will depend on the vital needs of the population in different areas of development, and take account of the risks in certain departments of difficult access where a monitoring and evaluation system is impossible. WFP's activities will therefore be carried out simultaneously, and most of the districts designated will be covered by the three basic activities, namely, rural development, education and health care.
24. The activities of the Country Programme will be implemented in rural areas only, to raise the living standards of the people. School canteens will be reserved for the nomadic and transhumant populations, food aid for the vulnerable groups in the poorest districts, and rural development work will be implemented where the community infrastructure already exists and where the women's groups are the most active.

## COUNTRY PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES

### Resources and the Country Programme preparation process

25. The CSO made provision for 63,500 tons of food to be supplied over a four-year period. Taking into consideration the observations made by the Executive Board, and the general level of WFP resources for development, and considering the priority given to least developed countries, the proposed programme will provide 48,117 tons of food whose direct operating costs are estimated at 22,955,000 dollars over the four years. This includes the 4.5 million dollars committed and already approved for the ongoing school canteen project.
26. The Country Programme will allocate 49.5 percent of the resources to rural development, which is one of the Government's main current priorities; 33.3 percent of the balance will go to education and 17.2 percent to health care. The proportion allocated to women, girls and children will account for 70 percent of the total resources by the time the programme is completed.
27. Input for the Niger Country Programme came from the results of the interim evaluation of the "Multi-purpose rural development" project carried out in June 1994 and the technical review of the education project in October 1995. The recommendations made in the multi-purpose rural development project evaluation report are still relevant: supervision must be guaranteed in advance, together with additional funding to complement WFP's; the activities must be clearly time-scaled, and be coordinated and geographically targeted. These recommendations have already been applied to the rural development project in the districts of Keita, Bouza and Abalak, and this has helped the villagers to reorganize self-



supervision on new bases since 1997, and to improve the management of WFP food allocations. Site management operations (organizing the beneficiaries, compliance with technical standards, distribution of WFP food) have been entrusted to women chosen from among the beneficiaries. The tripartite meeting on phase three of the project held in March 1997 recommended that the rural environment organization should be strengthened by gradually enabling the local people to take over the project themselves. The paramount role played by the women in guaranteeing the success of the sites has led to a recognition of their importance if the successes of the project are to be safeguarded and the coverage of its activities is to be extended. For this reason, literacy training for women has been stepped up and encouragement given to the establishment of women's groups. More and more women are now working on the sites and taking on most of the complementary and income-generating activities. To enable them do this they have been given all the support needed to facilitate access to credit. The women have been given the opportunity to become the proprietors of their lands. The WFP Country Programme will pursue the same approach in the framework of the rural development of the Ader Doutchi Maggia Valley, around the Keita district. WFP will step up its support for the women's groups through the socio-economic unit which is already in place.

28. In the past, activities in the education sector covered the whole of Niger. But this coverage did not make comprehensive data collection possible. The 1995 project preparation mission recommended geographical targeting to reach the children in areas with the weakest food security and the lowest school attendance rate, and giving priority to the nomadic and transhumant populations. Particular attention will have to be given to promoting the schooling of young girls. A UNESCO consultant had previously studied the situation of school-age girls in the nomadic and transhumant populations, and her conclusions were incorporated into the educational activities.
29. WFP health care assistance was evaluated in February 1998. The evaluation mission felt that despite all the weaknesses encountered there was justification for continuing with WFP assistance with certain readjustments. A technical review was carried out in April 1998 to prepare the Country Programme activities. In conjunction with the national officials and other parties involved in health care, the technical mission identified the health care centres qualifying for WFP aid in terms of the new strategy, and established the type and the number of beneficiaries together with the volume of aid and the procedures for providing it.





### SUMMARY OF THE COUNTRY PROGRAMME, 1999–2002

| Basic activities     | Estimated tonnage | Direct operating costs (million dollars) | Approximate no. of beneficiaries (per year) | Percentage of women/girls/infants (0-5 yrs) |
|----------------------|-------------------|--|---|---|
| 1. Education         | 14 790            | 7.6 (33.3 percent)                       | 22 500                                      | 35*   |
| 2. Health care       | 7 958             | 3.9 (17.2 percent)                       | 25 000                                      | 100   |
| 3. Rural development | 25 369            | 11.4 (49.5 percent)                      | 24 220                                      | 75  |
| <b>Total</b>         | <b>48 117</b>     | <b>22.9 (100 percent)</b>                | <b>71 720</b>                               | <b>70</b>                                   |

\* In 1996 only 20 percent of school-age girls attended school. The aim is to bring this to 35 percent by the year 2000.

#### Basic activity 1: Education

30. The main aim of the Government's education policy is to raise the primary school attendance rate by the year 2000 to at least 35 percent for both girls and boys. WFP aid to the education sector through school canteens is underpinning this human resource development effort. The aim is to guarantee basic education to the children in the nomadic and transhumant areas and equip them with the necessary knowledge to enable them to take part in the country's social and economic development. WFP aid will help reduce the discrepancies between urban and rural areas and between boys and girls in the matter of school education. The ongoing activities under the Operating Plan signed by WFP and the Government for the period 1996–2000 are assisting the children in areas where food security is most critical. WFP and the Government have agreed that priority must be given to the nomadic and transhumant populations. A special supplementary component is encouraging households to send their girls to school and keep them there.
31. A total of 16,000 nomadic beneficiaries will be assisted for 280 days each year, and 6,500 pupils, on average, in the transhumant population will be assisted for 200 days. It is estimated that 2,000 households sending their daughters to school will receive a dry millet ration. These include 1,500 families that send one or two daughters to school, receiving in exchange 50 kilograms of millet and 500 families sending more than two daughters to school, who will receive 100 kilograms every quarter.
32. The total estimated WFP food requirements for the school canteens is 11,904 tons of cereals (of which 1,500 tons of special assistance to girls), 1,848 of pulses, 346 of fish and 692 of vegetable oil, for a direct operating cost estimated at 7.6 million dollars.

#### Basic activity 2: Health care

33. Despite all the effort being made by the Government of Niger in the area of health care, the particularly high rates of maternal, infant, infant-juvenile mortality and chronic malnutrition remain a major cause of concern. The reasons are the lack of personnel and drugs, and the inadequate sensitization of the local people to health care issues.
34. To improve this situation, the Government's Health Care Development Plan for the period 1994–2000 has set the following objectives: to extend health care coverage from 32 to 45 percent of the population, reducing malnutrition among children aged under 5 from 16.7 percent to 11 percent, reducing the number of underweight children at birth (under 2.5



kilograms) from 20 percent to 10 percent, reducing by one third the number of women suffering from anaemia, fostering and regularly monitoring the growth of 80 percent of the children aged under 3 within a range of 5 kilometres from the stationary health care centres.

35. The recent evaluation of project Niger 2072.03 "Support for mother and child health activities, rehabilitation and nutrition education" confirms that food aid is a valuable resource in helping to attain these objectives by making adjustments that have been taken into account when formulating this new phase.
36. Against this background, the specific objectives are:
  - a) to increase regular attendance at the prenatal clinics; and
  - b) to improve and extend the monitoring of the nutritional status of children under 5 in order to prevent malnutrition.
37. In accordance with the strategic orientation of the Country Programme, the project is focusing on 13 districts in four departments which are both extremely vulnerable and prone to chronic malnutrition and dire poverty (see Annex I).
38. The health care centres will be selected on the basis of the following criteria: they must be situated in highly food-insecurity-prone rural areas, with adequate coverage for prenatal examinations, and examinations for breast-fed babies, in terms of the population density, access to WFP food, the presence of a storage facility, and the availability of sufficient personnel.
39. The selected children will receive either imported or locally available weaning food. The at-risk or malnourished children over one year that no longer frequently attend the consultations for breast-fed babies will be assisted during the medical visits or at the community level, by the midwives and the women volunteers, who will take charge of them with the participation of their mothers.
40. WFP mother and child health care work will be closely coordinated with the work of the other partners, particularly with regard to the vaccination programme and the distribution of micronutrients. The internal monitoring and evaluation system, with performance indicators, will become operational as soon as the project takes off.
41. During the period covered by the programme, it is estimated that 15,000 nursing or expectant mothers will benefit from the health care activities, and an estimated 10,000 pre-school-age children, each year. A total of 5,475 tons of cereals, 730 of weaning food, 1,424 of pulses and 329 of vegetable oil will be distributed through this activity for which the direct operating cost to WFP is estimated at 3.9 million dollars. Encouragement will be given to producing weaning food using local products, which is more beneficial than direct food imports.

### **Basic activity 3: Rural development**

42. The rural sector in Niger still performs inadequately on the whole, and has even deteriorated as a result of the increased degradation of the agro-ecological potential of the country, which in turn accentuates the encroachment of desertification. Within the framework of the revival of this sector, government policy gives priority to the following activities in combating desertification: improving the food production system, water management and diversifying agricultural production.



43. WFP aid to rural development will continue, in order to help the Government implement its policy. It will encourage villagers to take part in works of community interest, and the food ration will represent a transfer of income to the participating families and help to top up the food needed for the communities living in areas where chronic food shortages are widespread.
44. The Country Programme will only support the rural development activities in areas where structured and supervised projects are being financed by other partners. WFP will continue to cooperate with FAO and the Italian Government in the districts of Keita, Bouza and Abalak until May 1999. This cooperation will then continue with the same partners and others in order to extend the activities in the Ader Doutchi Maggia Valley after mid-1999. Both activities will subsequently merge because the centre of the project will remain at Keita. The work will continue in the five districts in the department of Tahoua: Keita, Bouza, Birni-Konni, Madaoua and Abalak.
45. The work will be organized in conjunction with the socio-economic and women's advancement division of the project, and will extend the agro-pastoral areas through the following measures: land recovery, water management and increased water availability for cropping, reducing waterborne and airborne erosion, opening up the roads in the project zone, improving technical knowhow in agriculture and raising fodder production, and increasing the availability of fuelwood. All these techniques have already been designed, and they will be gradually taken over by the local people organized, *inter alia*, in the form of women's cooperatives. The Government will provide supplementary assistance to exploit the achievements and extend this work to cover the whole valley.
46. For the four-year period of the Country Programme, WFP will also support the activities in the framework of the ILO programme at Zinder, entitled "Participation of cooperative enterprises in the food security of villages and in local development in the department of Zinder". WFP assistance will help to create new cereals banks, and particularly food-for-work (FFW) activities, but only in areas where the cereals banks successfully established in the first phases of the project make it possible for the local people to take over these activities.
47. In the area of rural development, an estimated 6,800,000 days' work will be supported by WFP. Each person taking part in a FFW activity will be entitled to one household ration per working day, equivalent to five individual rations. The total quantity of food required for this basic activity will be 20,080 tons of cereals (including 3,080 tons for the ILO project), 680 tons of vegetable oil and 1,360 tons of pulses, for which the direct operating cost is put at 9.9 million dollars.
48. It is also proposed to support the village "food-for-work" activities of the IFAD project. This project is now in phase two of a four-year extension period. WFP took part in the first phase of the project, which ended in 1994. The purpose of the project is to give responsibility to the village units under the supervision of agronomists and village land management officials for the supervision of community work established by the people themselves. With a daily household ration that WFP has put at 2.5 kilograms of cereals, 200 grams of pulses and 100 grams of oil for the 1,160,434 working days scheduled, a total of 2,901 tons of cereals, 232 tons of pulses and 116 tons of oil will be required. The direct operating cost of WFP assistance to this activity is put at 1.5 million dollars.



## Key issues and risks

49. A major food crisis caused by widespread drought or some other natural disaster could destabilize the Country Programme, with an unexpected priority given to the emergency operations. Such a situation would result in massive food imports, which would be well beyond the response capacities that normally exist at the national level. Drawing on its long experience in emergency food aid management, WFP will play an active part in backing the government services and coordinating with the other donors, collecting and analysing all the information on the people affected by the crisis, the survival mechanisms, the assistance requirements and the distribution networks. Depending upon the seriousness of the crisis, WFP will assist the Government firstly by supporting all the activities already being undertaken and, depending upon the circumstances, intensifying or extending them to cover the most seriously affected people, before appealing, if necessary, for free food distribution within the framework of an emergency operation. These potential measures in case of a crisis should also form part of a broader prevention strategy for the whole of the Sahel region.
50. Another risk element will be the national socio-political situation, whose fragility could limit the financing and implementation of development activities in the country. If the government services and the other partners responsible for implementing the Country Programme find their capacity reduced, this programme would be less effective and its scope would be restricted. Over-mobility on the part of the counterpart supervisors would also jeopardize the sound implementation of the activities.

## PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT PROCESS

### Preliminary assessment

51. At the present time there are adequate institutional procedures to enable WFP to examine the food aid applications from the Government in the areas to be covered by the Country Programme: a) Education: WFP and the Ministry of Education of Niger and its executing partners will prepare a thematic evaluation of assistance in the area of education and school attendance by girls; b) Health care: the final evaluation document of Project Niger 2072.03 "Support for MCH, rehabilitation and nutrition education" and the survey on identifying zones, centres, types of beneficiaries and the volume of WFP assistance, will provide the basis for activities in this sector; c) Rural development: WFP's executing partners will play an active part in evaluating assistance in this sector and in carrying out a technical review to lay down rules and standards for implementing the Keita, Bouza and Abalak project, and the ILO/Zinder project; the partners will also take part in setting up a revised and more flexible monitoring and evaluation system.
52. The proposed Country Programme will run from 1 January 1999 to 31 December 2002. The resources previously approved by the Executive Board for project Niger 2445.04 should be sufficient to cover the needs of the programme in the education sector for 18 months, or five school terms. This project will be extended for the rest of the period of the programme, taking account of all the adjustments needed as a result of the programme's policy orientation.



## THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COUNTRY PROGRAMME

### Capacity-building

53. The Ministry of Planning, through its WFP Programme Coordination Unit, has the necessary personnel to supervise the implementation of the Country Programme. The technical services of the Ministries of Agriculture, Education and Health have officials capable of supervising the various activities that will be supported by WFP. The Government will select and appoint the most competent supervisors who, drawing on their training and the refresher courses to update their knowledge, will be able to enhance Niger's capacity to manage the programme.
54. The WFP country office in Niamey will be given more staff and facilities to improve the planning of activities, monitor them in the field and carry out an ongoing evaluation. Within the framework of the direct support budget, if the necessary resources are mobilized, two new international officials will be recruited and based at the auxiliary WFP offices at Zinder and Tahoua, the capitals of the departments where WFP will be stepping up its activities under the programme. They will be supported by two United Nations volunteers.
55. The WFP officer responsible for the advancement of women will refocus his/her efforts with the project officers. The officer will study the management of the sites under the direction of the women's committees in the framework of the rural development activities. He/she will help the Ministry of Education to step up its work regarding the schooling of girls and promoting pupils' parents' associations, and help the Ministry of Education identify women who can work at the unit for monitoring and evaluating school attendance by girls. Efforts will be made to ensure that the WFP unit and the technical directorates of the ministries involved in the Country Programme place more women in decision-making posts.
56. To enhance its implementation capacity, WFP will continue to sensitize its national counterparts to the gender issue, and support their training in data analysis, management and accounting, monitoring and drafting regular reports. The following initiatives will also be emphasized: a) sensitizing the authorities to the needs of the beneficiaries, particularly women, by participatory evaluation techniques; b) helping the implementing organizations to improve project management by further refining their monitoring and data processing methods; and c) putting into place systems to enable the participants, particularly women, to take part in project planning and management.

### Logistics

57. Food will continue to be imported by WFP through the port of Cotonou in Benin and will be channelled to the more advanced delivery points in Niger: Tillabéry, Maradi, Keita, Tahoua, Zinder and Diffa. The stores in these towns will also act as storage depots and transit depots for food purchased locally. The WFP national project unit (at the Ministry of Planning) will be responsible for managing these stores in close cooperation with WFP, which will have the right to inspect the resources it supplies. The various project directorates will be responsible for transporting the food from the more advanced delivery points to the activity sites and distributing them with the help of the representatives of the beneficiaries, particularly the women.



58. WFP, working in close cooperation with government authorities, intends to commission private transporters, through competitive tenders, to channel the food from the more advanced points to their final destination for distribution. During the period covered by the programme, arrangements regarding WFP's subsidies for overland transport, storage and maintenance will continue. The expenses and subsidies will be regularly revised by the WFP logistical services.
59. Part of the food required, particularly cereals and pulses, could be purchased locally if available and if prices are competitive. WFP will conclude agreements with the other donors to harmonize their local procurement policies, particularly with regard to prices.

### **Coordination, implementation, and reporting**

60. In the framework of United Nations assistance, a local committee to approve WFP's activities, to be used by all the United Nations organizations, will be established to evaluate the implementation of the Country Programmes approved by the Executive Boards and management of each institution, to enhance cooperation between all the agencies concerned.
61. The national WFP projects unit, which is already in operation and comprises a coordinator from the Ministry of Planning and representatives of other ministries, will become the National Country Programme Coordination Unit. It will take responsibility for collecting all the data from each ministry. The National Country Programme Coordination Unit will meet every quarter with WFP. Each meeting will be jointly chaired by the Unit Coordinator and the WFP Representative.
62. The Unit will submit to WFP the studies, accounts and data needed to draw up the quarterly reports on resources, and the half-yearly reports on progress with implementing the activities. Each sector can be subjected to a specific WFP and Ministry of Planning study. The Unit will also cooperate with WFP to monitor developments regarding vulnerability and the food situation during the agricultural seasons using the AGHRYMET, SIM, SAP, FEWS and DIAPER systems.
63. Joint missions will be proposed for all the programme's activities. Even though each sector has different needs for evaluating and monitoring activities, food accounts and food management reports, missions of the Government, WFP and other donors directly involved in these activities will be organized regularly and will constitute a rule-of-thumb approach that will provide input for the debate on hunger and poverty eradication.
64. In order to improve the reports, measures relating to the reports and monitoring and auditing all the resources allocated to each activity will be defined in detail in regular standardized reports for each of the programme components. At each stage, the presentation of these monitoring reports will be simplified so that the information they contain can be summarized and included in the quarterly reports on resources and the six-monthly progress reports. These reports will reflect the level of WFP commitment to the women of Niger. Instructions regarding the annual auditing of accounts at the end of each calendar year will also be issued. The personnel involved in all these information-gathering activities will be given the necessary training.



### **Adjustments and complementary measures**

65. The Country Programme Coordination Committee will regularly examine the performance of each activity on the basis of the reports furnished by the committee members and by WFP. In the case of activities that give rise to problems, the committee will analyse the reasons for the problems and provide advice on the measures to be adopted to make the necessary improvements. It will also recommend withdrawing or halting any further aid to certain activities, or increasing this aid or even launching a new pilot activity, in compliance with the ceilings set on the programme's resources.
66. WFP's office in Niamey will examine the results of all the activities under the Country Programme based on an analysis of the regular reports submitted by the governmental technical services and the projects assisted, and the conclusions of the WFP personnel carrying out field missions. The field missions will be particularly useful for carrying out simple diagnostic tests on the strong and weak points in programme implementation. The conclusions of the WFP office will be summarized in the six-monthly reports which will be drawn up in conjunction with each governmental technical service, the development partners and the Country Programme Coordination Unit at the Ministry of Planning.

### **Involvement of beneficiaries in planning activities, and gender equality**

67. The proposed Country Programme fits in very substantially with the sectoral programmes drawn up by the Government with the participation of the beneficiaries. To implement it, and particularly the food-for-work activities, WFP assistance is mainly designed to mobilize the beneficiary population to get them to cater for their own needs. All WFP's operational partners use the participatory approach so that the beneficiaries themselves become the agents and the driving force of their own development. It is an essential condition for the sustainability of all these activities that the local people are eventually able to take them over. The food-for-work activities are based on grass-roots measures proposed by the village associations. In the case of the school canteens, the children's parents and the representatives of the students play a full part in running them and finding ways to enable their gradual takeover by the local community.
68. During the implementation of the Country Programme, targeting will be more finely tuned in order to increase the numbers of women and children benefiting directly from WFP aid. The school canteen programme will seek to increase the number of girls receiving WFP aid; the health care project will be directed exclusively at women and children; the rural development activities will give priority to women's groups. In addition to the policy of encouraging greater participation of women in the benefits of the programme, a training programme will also be run to enable them to take part in decision-making in their communities. WFP aid will be incorporated into the activities financed by multilateral and bilateral partners, and the activities of NGOs applying government policy for the advancement of women. This policy makes training one of the main pillars of its strategy for greater involvement of women in community decision-making, particularly at the level of development projects. The training of women must underpin the sensitizing and awareness-building campaigns when they are necessary, to remove the obstacles that prevent women from owning land and gaining access to other locally available factors of production. A budget will be drawn up every year for this component through joint consultation with the partners concerned. The WFP contribution will be taken out of available resources for the programme's basic activities, if necessary complemented by special allocations as WFP commitments to women.



69. Under the WFP Country Programme, the following activities will be receive particular support: a) management training for women to enable them to oversee and supervise food distribution; b) literacy and training for women, particularly in techniques that form part of the programme's activities and; c) technical training for processing local foodstuffs that are able to replace WFP food aid.

## Evaluation

70. With the support of WFP's office of evaluation in Rome and the sub-regional office for the Sahel in Ouagadougou, WFP and its partners will regularly take part in thematic and other evaluations. Each activity site will be visited at least twice a year by WFP officials. Increasing the number of multi-disciplinary missions organized in conjunction with the partners concerned with the same objectives will improve data collection. Food aid will be incorporated more appropriately into mobilization and training activities for all the beneficiary groups.
71. WFP and its partners will set up a number of indicators to assess the impact of food aid on strengthening the capacity of the beneficiary groups to enhance their food security and improve their educational levels and raise their health status. These indicators will be regularly readjusted. A mid-term evaluation of the programme will be carried out at the end of the year 2000. It will provide an excellent opportunity to acquire an external opinion on the performance of the programme. Surveys, nutritional studies and specific inquiries will be carried out to enable the Country Programme objectives to be readjusted.





## ANNEX I

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| <b>ESTIMATE OF POVERTY AND EXTREME POVERTY OF<br/>THE POPULATION AND MALNUTRITION RATES IN NIGER</b> |
|--|

| Department   | Total population | Poverty rate (%) | Extreme poverty (%) | Malnutrition rate (%) |
|--------------|------------------|------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Agadès       | 184 100          | 44               | 24                  | 35                    |
| Diffa        | 193 500          | 49               | 19                  | 37.9                  |
| Dosso        | 1 204 800        | 76               | 43                  | 10                    |
| Maradi       | 1 628 700        | 65               | 39                  | 21.1                  |
| Tillabéry    | 1 553 100        | 80               | 53                  | 37.9                  |
| Tahoua       | 1 429 500        | 51               | 20                  | 35                    |
| Zinder       | 1 612 600        | 59               | 24                  | 37.9                  |
| Niamey       | 493 300          | 42               | 18                  | –                     |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>8 299 600</b> | <b>63</b>        | <b>34</b>           | <b>–</b>              |



## ANNEX II



## ANNEX III

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| <b>GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF THE PROGRAMME'S ACTIVITIES</b> |
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| <b>Basic activities</b>  | <b>Departments (districts)</b>   |
|--------------------------|--|
| <b>Education</b>         | <b>Diffa</b> (Diffa, N'Guigmi and Mainé-Soroa)<br><b>Maradi</b> (Dakoro, Tessaoua, Mayahi and Guidam Roudji)<br><b>Tahoua</b> (Madaoua, Birni-Konni, Tahoua , Bouza, Tchintabaraden, Abalak, Keita and Illéla)<br><b>Tillabéry</b> (Say, Ouallam Téra, Kollo and Filingué)<br><b>Zinder</b> (Magaria, Tanout, Mirryah, Gouré and Zinder) |
| <b>Health care</b>       | <b>Diffa</b> (Diffa, N'Guigmi and Mainé-Soroa)<br><b>Tahoua</b> (Abalak, Bouza, Tchintabaraden, Keita and Tahoua)<br><b>Tillabéry</b> (Filingué, Ouallam, Téra and Tillabéry), Zinder (Tanout)   |
| <b>Rural development</b> |  |
| Ader Douchi Maggia       | <b>Tahoua</b> (Keita, Bouza, Birni-Konni, Madaoua and Abalak)  |
| Zinder                   | <b>Zinder</b> (Magaria, Tanout, Mirryah, Gouré and Zinder)   |
| FIDA                     | <b>Tahoua</b> (Illéla, Tchintabaraden)<br><b>Tillabéry</b> (Ouallam, Tillébery, Téra, Kollo, Say)  |



## ANNEX IV

| PROGRAMME COMPONENTS      |                         |                                  |                                   |              |        |      |     |  |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|--------|------|-----|--|
| Activities                | Number of beneficiaries | Number of rations for four years | Composition of ration (grams/day) |              |        |      |     |  |
|                           |                         |                                  | Cereals                           | Weaning food | Pulses | Fish | Oil |  |
| Education* (canteens)     | 22 500                  | 23                               | 450                               | 0            | 80     | 15   | 30  |  |
| Health:                   |                         |                                  |                                   |              |        |      |     |  |
| Women                     | 15 000                  | 10                               | 500                               | 0            | 130    | 0    | 30  |  |
| Children                  | 10 000                  | 7                                | 0                                 | 100          | 0      | 0    | 0   |  |
| Rural development** (FFW) | 24 220                  | 7                                | 2 500                             | 0            | 200    | 0    | 100 |  |

\* An additional 1 500 tons of cereals for special rations for school attendance by girls.

\*\* An additional 3 080 tons of cereals for the cereals banks and joint activities.



**ESTIMATED OPERATING COSTS**

| Basic Activities             | Products                               | Tonnage       | Cost per ton | FOB value (dollars) | Freight cost per ton | Total shipping cost | Total overland transport (100 dollars per ton) | ITSH (30 dollars per ton) | Total operating costs |
|------------------------------|--|---------------|--------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------|--|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>1 Education</b>           |  |               |              |                     |                      |                     |  |                           |                       |
|                              | Cereals                                | 11 904        | 204          | 2 421               | 80                   | 952 320             | 1 190  | 357 11                    | 4                     |
|                              | Fish                                   | 346           | 2 004        | 693 38              | 190                  | 65 740              | 34 600   | 10 31                     | 804                   |
|                              | Beans                                  | 1 848         | 430          | 794 64              | 80                   | 147 840             | 184 800  | 55 4                      | 1                     |
|                              | Oil                                    | 692           | 750          | 519 00              | 160                  | 110 720             | 69 200   | 20 71                     | 719                   |
|                              | <b>Subtotal</b>                        | <b>14 791</b> |              | <b>4 431</b>        |                      | <b>1 276</b>        | <b>1 479</b>                                   | <b>443 71</b>             | <b>7</b>              |
| <b>2 Health care</b>         |  |               |              |                     |                      |                     |  |                           |                       |
| 12 500 beneficiaries         | Cereals                                | 5 471         | 204          | 1 111               | 80                   | 438 000             | 547 500  | 164 21                    | 2                     |
| 75 000 women                 | Beans                                  | 1 424         | 430          | 612 32              | 80                   | 113 920             | 142 400  | 42 71                     | 911                   |
| 56 000 children              | Maize-soya mix                         | 730           | 320          | 233 60              | 130                  | 94 900              | 73 000   | 21 91                     | 423                   |
|                              | Oil                                    | 329           | 750          | 246 75              | 160                  | 52 640              | 32 900   | 9 81                      | 342                   |
|                              | <b>Subtotal</b>                        | <b>7 954</b>  |              | <b>2 201</b>        |                      | <b>699 460</b>      | <b>795 800</b>                                 | <b>238 71</b>             | <b>3</b>              |
| <b>3.1 Rural development</b> |  |               |              |                     |                      |                     |  |                           |                       |
|                              | Cereals                                | 20 080        | 204          | 4 091               | 80                   | 1 606               | 2 008  | 602 41                    | 8                     |
|                              | Beans                                  | 1 360         | 440          | 598 40              | 80                   | 108 800             | 136 000  | 40 81                     | 884                   |
|                              | Oil                                    | 680           | 750          | 510 00              | 160                  | 108 800             | 68 000   | 20 41                     | 707                   |
|                              | <b>Subtotal</b>                        | <b>22 120</b> |              | <b>5 201</b>        |                      | <b>1 824</b>        | <b>2 212</b>                                   | <b>663 61</b>             | <b>9</b>              |
| <b>3.2 Rural development</b> |  |               |              |                     |                      |                     |  |                           |                       |
|                              | Cereals                                | 2 901         | 204          | 591 80              | 80                   | 232 080             | 290 100  | 87 01                     | 1                     |
|                              | Beans                                  | 232           | 440          | 102 08              | 80                   | 18 560              | 23 200   | 6 91                      | 150                   |
|                              | Oil                                    | 116           | 750          | 87 00               | 160                  | 18 560              | 11 600   | 3 41                      | 120                   |
|                              | <b>Subtotal</b>                        | <b>3 249</b>  |              | <b>780 88</b>       |                      | <b>269 200</b>      | <b>324 900</b>                                 | <b>97 41</b>              | <b>1</b>              |
|                              | <b>Subtotal (Activities 3.1 + 3.2)</b> | <b>25 369</b> |              | <b>5 981</b>        |                      | <b>2 093</b>        | <b>2 536</b>                                   | <b>761 01</b>             | <b>11</b>             |
| <b>GRAND TOTAL</b>           |  | <b>48 117</b> |              | <b>12 631</b>       |                      | <b>4 069</b>        | <b>4 811</b>                                   | <b>1 41</b>               | <b>22</b>             |

