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## COUNTRY PROGRAMMES

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## COUNTRY PROGRAMME—BENIN (2000–2003)

### ABSTRACT

Benin is classified as both a low-income, food-deficit (LIFDC) and a least developed country (LDC). The UNDP 1998 Human Development Report ranked it 145th out of 174 countries with a gross domestic product below US\$356 per capita in 1998 (compared with 362 in 1995); the mortality rate of children under 5 years of age was 84 per 1,000. For the period 1993/95, the FAO Aggregate Household Food Security Index was 83.1 percent. The largest agricultural production deficits are found in west Atacora, north-west Borgou and northern Zou. About 34 percent of the population live below the poverty line.

The Country Programme is based on the Country Strategy Outline (CSO) submitted to the Executive Board in October 1998, the Government's Country Strategy Note (CSN) and the needs identified in the Common Country Assessment drafted by the agencies taking part in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). This process will facilitate closer partnership between UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP and UNDP, whose programmes have all been designed for completion simultaneously in 2003. Complementarity between WFP, the United Nations agencies, the NGOs and bilateral aid donors should be evident from the formulation phase, but it will also be essential in the implementation and internal monitoring and evaluation phases.

The Government has included poverty eradication in the framework of a sustainable human development as one of the basic objectives of its economic strategy. The Country Programme will therefore hinge around the issues of reducing food insecurity, the educational and social dimensions of development, protecting the most vulnerable groups and the victims of social ills, and improving the material conditions of poor households. In accordance with decision 1999/EB.A/2 of the Executive Board, WFP focuses its development activities on five objectives. This Country Programme includes three activities addressing objectives 1, 2 and 3, (enable young children and expectant and nursing mothers to meet their specific nutritional and nutrition-related health needs; enable poor households to invest in human capital through education and training; and make it possible for poor families to gain and preserve assets).

The activities covered by this programme are: primary education, girls' education, nutritional rehabilitation, and rural development. These will be given a priority focus in geographical areas where food consumption is inadequate. The participatory approach will be fostered through training which will be monitored throughout the implementation of activities.

The WFP Executive Director recommends the Executive Board to approve this four-year Country Programme (2000–2003) for a total of US\$11,808,800, covering all direct operational costs, provided that the necessary resources are available. The Board is also requested to take note of an additional amount of US\$300,000 needed for supplementary activities.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

AFVP	French Association of Volunteers for Progress
CARDER	Regional Action Centres for Rural Development
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CSN	Country Strategy Note
CSO	Country Strategy Outline
DN/PAM	National Directorate for WFP projects
DOC	Direct operational costs
GTZ	German Technical Cooperation
ITSH	Internal transport, storage and handling
LDC	Least developed country
LIFDC	Low-income, food-deficit country
LTSH	Landside transport, storage and handling
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDR	Ministry of Rural Development
PNCSA	National Whole Programme of Food Security
SAD	German Development Service
SNV	the Netherlands National Development Service
SPFS	Special Programme for Food Security
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
VAM	Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping



## STRATEGIC FOCUS: FOOD INSECURITY AND THE HUNGRY POOR

1. The Country Strategy Outline (CSO) submitted to the Executive Board in October 1998 was designed to refocus WFP assistance on the most vulnerable areas and communities in Benin, giving priority to human development. According to the CSO, food aid is to be geographically focused on the food-deficit regions, and socially on the most disadvantaged rural communities, women and children.
2. In its comments, the Executive Board asked for more information on the actual state of nutrition and average per capita income in Benin, both of which appeared to be better than in the neighbouring countries. The Executive Board enquired whether WFP assistance was appropriate in the cotton-producing areas. The Board also requested an improved project monitoring system. Bearing all these comments in mind, the Country Programme preparation mission paid particular attention to the issues raised.

## THE HUNGRY POOR: PRIORITIES IN MEETING THEIR NEEDS

### Food Availability

3. Local production and commercial imports cover virtually the whole of Benin's food requirements, but this coverage is extremely uneven, because access to food by many groups is unpredictable. Pockets of food insecurity are present in virtually every department, with chronic shortages in the towns and the poorest rural areas. The many surveys that already exist have identified the following as the main food-deficit areas:
  - a) The cut-off areas in the North, with poor and highly eroded soils, including North-East Atacora, the Gourma plains and Northern Borgou;
  - b) The degraded threshold areas in the southern part of Zou; and
  - c) The coastal region around Sekoi, with two very serious food-deficit areas: the far south-west (Grand Popo, Agoue) and the south-east (Seme, Porto Novo and its environs).
4. Taking the country as a whole, the average national daily caloric availability of 2,532 kilocalories does not really seem to reflect the actual state of the people. The Programme national complet de sécurité alimentaire (National Whole Programme of Food Security—PNCSA) estimates that 20 percent of the households suffer from food insecurity. Recent maps drawn up for the SECAL food security project have identified 10 sub-prefectures in which all the food-risk parameters (distance, production deficits, low incomes, lack of organization) are found. These are Karimama (Borgou), Cobly, Boucoumbe (Atacora), Zakpota and Agbangnizou (Zou), Grand Popo and Athieme (Mono), So-Ava (Atlantique), Aguegue and Seme-Podji (Oueme).

### Rural Poverty

5. Rural poverty in Benin has been fairly clearly identified and quantified in terms of three thresholds: the food poverty threshold, the non-food poverty threshold and the global poverty threshold. According to SECAL, unless exceptional events occur 64 percent of the rural households are not threatened with food shortages; 17 percent live below the food poverty threshold, and 19 percent are permanently vulnerable. The sub-prefectures in



which cotton growing predominates, which have comparatively high monetary incomes, are among the most vulnerable regions. This paradoxical situation is due to the fact that the people have given up farming food crops, and the income from cotton-growing goes solely to the men, whose households do not profit from it; the women and children have to grow their own food on increasingly shrinking lands. In the other areas mentioned in the previous paragraph, food insecurity is due to drought, inadequate rural credit systems, isolation, insufficient or very costly agricultural inputs, and insufficient incomes to procure food for consumption. A survey carried out by the Ministry of Rural Development (MDR) and FAO has shown that in rural areas 29 percent of children aged under 5 suffer from malnutrition according to the weight/age classification, and 25 percent suffer from stunted growth.

### **Government Strategies In Food Security and Poverty Eradication**

6. The Government of Benin has comprehensive documentation on the poverty and malnutrition situation in the country. These surveys have been used in the preparatory work for implementing the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and have been summarized in the Common Country Assessment. Within the limits imposed by structural adjustment, the Government has approached poverty eradication in the context of sustainable human development as its basic objective. This strategy is based on: diversifying agricultural production; primary education for all school-age children, giving priority to girls; incorporating women into the development process; developing basic social services; and rehabilitating the environment.
7. The success of this ambitious strategy has varied from one region to another. The spirit of enterprise, investment and technical know-how required to implement it seems to be concentrated in the southern part of the country, which is however affected by the problems of overpopulation and the shortage of land. The areas in which the WFP Country Programme is to be implemented have made virtually no economic progress whatsoever. In most of the regions, food security for all cannot be a realistic prospect in the short term.

### **Government Food Aid Policy**

8. In Benin, there is little food aid, comprising WFP assistance (an annual average of 7,200 tons since 1990), Catholic Relief Services (CRS) (an average of 5,300 tons since 1996), and "programme" type aid of between 3,000 and 5,000 tons from a bilateral donor. The Government therefore does not have a proper food aid "policy" as such, but indicates its choices through ongoing dialogue with WFP and the bilateral donor.

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

9. The Country Strategy Note (CSN) adopted by the Government in January 1997 forms the framework for the programmes and operations of the United Nations system. Under it, WFP plays a paramount part in implementing national poverty eradication priorities, and food security improvement is stated as the focal point of the strategy. The Common Country Assessment published in March 1999 takes up the priorities already identified in that note. The WFP Country Programme is based on the guidelines and priorities defined in those documents.



## Cooperation with Other United Nations Agencies, Bilateral Donors and NGOs

10. The majority of the United Nations agencies and the main bilateral donors and international NGOs are all present in Benin. Many of these agencies work in the sectors assisted by WFP, including:
- a) The education sector, which receives substantial support from the World Bank (loans to build boarding facilities for girls and women), USAID (equipping primary schools and supporting the basic education reform), UNICEF and international NGOs (health education, school-related infrastructure, managing rural schools, promoting parents' associations), and religious missions to educate and protect children and young people.
  - b) The agricultural development sector which, *inter alia*, receives support from FAO, German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) and a number of leaders and technicians belonging to international NGOs such as the Netherlands National Development Service (SNV), the German Development Service (SAD), and the Association Française des volontaires du progrès (French Association of Volunteers for Progress—AFVP).

## ASSESSMENT OF WFP PAST AND ONGOING ACTIVITIES

11. The effectiveness of WFP projects and the relevance of their objectives have not varied over the past ten years, but there has been a certain degree of continuity in the way the aid has been used, through school feeding and rural development. WFP operations in Benin have only recently been redirected towards gender promotion and targeting of the poorest people and zones. For a long time, internal project monitoring and evaluation have given pride of place to quantitative aspects, with the result that little social data is available on these projects.
12. Since 1996/97 the school feeding project has been directed to basic education and the education of girls. The selection of the beneficiary schools is based on four criteria: food insecurity, location in the rural areas, low school attendance rates, and the poverty of the area. These criteria are not yet being fully applied because of local considerations and the need to gradually phase in implementation. A number of surveys on some of the areas nevertheless show that there has been a substantial increase in the number of girls attending schools with canteens, but it is not possible to establish the degree to which food aid and other factors have actually contributed to this progress. Generally speaking, the proportion of girls in primary schools rarely exceeds 25 to 30 percent of the total. In the secondary school boarding facilities, where WFP assistance is reserved exclusively for girls, this assistance is vitally important to enable poor rural girls, whose parents live a long way from the post-primary schools, to continue their education and thereby help to foster the advancement of women.
13. WFP also supports multi-purpose rural development projects covering a wide range of different activities. The resources devoted to these projects since 1968 total around US\$55 million. According to some evaluations, the results have varied widely in terms of both quantity and quality. The projects have often lacked cohesion and there have been weaknesses in implementation. The current project (Benin 5215.00) is not immune from the difficulties that are generally found in least developed countries, because the selection criteria are linked to the presumed technical capacity of beneficiary groups; their poverty or food insecurity levels have not always been sufficiently taken into account. The geographical breakdown also appears to be somewhat skewed, giving great priority to the



four southern departments (Oueme, Atlantique, Mono, Zou). Even though monitoring has not been broken down by gender, women appear to be in the minority in these projects.

14. As far as natural disasters are concerned, WFP assistance has remained secondary. Since 1993 Benin has been through a few short abnormal food deficit periods on a limited scale and only for short periods which were able to be kept under control by the national authorities. WFP has always been able to respond to these minor demands for emergency aid by providing food allocated to ongoing development projects. Benin is fortunately not subject to recurrent disasters.
15. The Country Programme will draw a number of lessons from past experience:
  - a) WFP aid is not a substitute for monetary incomes, and it is essential to target it to the communities that are suffering from food and nutrition problems.
  - b) The advancement of women must be more vigorously pursued as a priority.
  - c) Geographical targeting is essential and must be based on the many available surveys. The basic unit for establishing geographical priorities should be the sub-prefecture, which is both close to the people and sufficiently large.
  - d) Clear, specific indicators for targeting the beneficiary groups and for internal monitoring and evaluation must be defined before the final choice of activities.
  - e) The participatory approach must be promoted starting at the design phase of activities.
  - f) Partnership with donors or NGOs must be strengthened to ensure greater complementarity between the objectives and improve synergies in implementation.

## STRATEGIC FOCUS OF THE COUNTRY PROGRAMME

16. The Country Programme for 2000–2003 is designed to:
  - a) Reduce food insecurity and malnutrition;
  - b) promote the educational and social aspects of development;
  - c) support vulnerable groups and victims of social ills; and
  - d) offer opportunities for economic development to the most disadvantaged areas and communities.
17. Rural women, girls and children will be the priority beneficiaries of the programme. The activities covered by this programme will focus on the departments of Atacora, Borgou and Zou, where the food intake is inadequate. The only exception is the support for children in distress, which will be supplied to every area in the country depending upon the presence of host facilities.
18. WFP will continue to sensitize its national counterparts to gender issues. In the first activity linked to education, WFP will ensure that the number of girls benefiting by the end of the project will be significantly higher than the number in year 1. In its second activity, WFP assistance will go exclusively to young children, girls and women. In the third activity devoted to rural development, WFP will ensure that priority is given to women heads of households with regard to their participation in the activities and share of the benefits of the project. The internal monitoring and evaluation of all these activities will be designed primarily to assess the impact of this programme on the overall food security of the people concerned, and from the beginning of each activity, it will calculate the



proportion of the local population living under the minimum energy/food consumption threshold and calculate the percentage of their income spent on food.

19. **The role of food aid.** The food aid provided by this programme will be a means of combating hunger and malnutrition. It is intended to reduce the hunger of the rural populations in lean periods, allay the hunger of abandoned children or minors living under precarious conditions and ensure that schoolchildren are not hungry, cover pre-and post-natal malnutrition of mothers and babies, and help to bridge the dietary inadequacies resulting from poverty.
20. In education, the Country Programme will give priority to poor households wishing to invest in education and training for their children. To achieve this, food aid will fulfil the following functions:
  - a) improve the nutritional status of schoolchildren;
  - b) help families to enrol their children in school and keep them there;
  - c) promote primary education, particularly in the food-deficit most disadvantaged areas; and
  - d) assist rural communities to run their own schools.
21. In the area of social welfare it will:
  - a) feed abandoned children and young people, and those in distress or in danger; and
  - b) protect the health of mothers and their babies.
22. In the area of rural development the programme will be designed to support the poor and food-insecurity-prone households, giving priority to the involvement of women, particularly with regard to stock protection, food silo management, and training in basic agricultural techniques. Food aid will be designed in particular to:
  - a) help the most disadvantaged populations undertake land preparation and management, and water management activities, improve rural infrastructure and protect natural resources;
  - b) promote cereal banks, train people to manage them and protect their stocks; and
  - c) train agricultural extension workers.
23. In this framework, the following strategic priorities will be pursued:
  - a) redirecting the programme towards more sustained action in implementing WFP's Commitments to Women, giving much greater priority to women, young girls and children in allocating resources to this programme;
  - b) economic and social targeting, geographical targeting, and targeting in time;
  - c) giving priority to the development of human resources connected with the creation of infrastructure facilities;
  - d) increasing short-term food consumption while creating the conditions needed for long-term beneficiary self-reliance; and
  - e) closely integrating the internal monitoring and evaluation in day-to-day management.
24. Within the framework of WFP's Commitments to Women and to the hungry poor, education and training will remain one of its priority areas in order to enable the most vulnerable households to invest in human capital. The departments of Atacora, Borgou and





Zou, with school attendance rates of between 42 and 48 percent, are considered to be the most disadvantaged, and these will be given priority under this programme.

25. Malnutrition and the disadvantages stemming from it remain high despite the nominal economic expansion of recent years. Food insecurity, poor health, failure to attend school, the exploitation of women and children, are both economic and cultural in origin. The lack of resources reduces families to a state of permanent insecurity, and well-targeted WFP aid, even in small quantities, to create assets in the same areas in which school attendance assistance will be provided, will make it possible to use small-scale development activities to raise the local food security level.
26. If additional resources become available, the Government and WFP could study the possibility of using limited amounts of food aid to support resettlement on the free agricultural lands by young people and young poor women from the region who wish to exploit these lands to contribute to agricultural production and thereby improve their own food security.

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## COUNTRY PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES

### Country Programme Resources and Preparation Process

27. The level of resources proposed for this programme is based on the following parameters: the current programme costs, including logistical costs; the limited size of the areas and institutions being assisted; the monitoring support needed; and the adjustment of funds available for Benin, bearing in mind the general level of WFP resources and the needs of other countries.
28. On this basis, the Country Programme should total US\$2.9 million a year for the three basic activities, making approximately 1.8 million for education, 600,000 to 700,000 for supporting young people in distress and vulnerable groups, and 400,000 for rural development activities, to reflect the priority given to human development while taking account of the absorption capacities of the communities in the various areas. The tonnages should be virtually identical for the two first activities, while the costs will vary depending upon the composition of the food basket.
29. If more resources become available, an additional annual budget of between US\$200,000 and 300,000 could be allocated to supplementary activities to resettle young people on non-farmed lands.
30. Emergency operations at the national level do not need to be budgeted in the framework of the Country Programme because of Benin's low vulnerability to major natural disasters. Authority to earmark US\$200,000 to the WFP Directors/Representatives seems adequate to be able to face all eventualities.
31. Government co-financing, subject to structural adjustment constraints, will cover the recurring costs of the national management of WFP projects and the costs of receiving and distributing the food.
32. This Country Programme, whose planning has already begun with the CSO submitted to the Executive Board in October 1998, will be implemented in close cooperation with UNDP and the agencies participating in UNDAF. This document has been discussed in depth with the Government of Benin whose priorities and comments have been taken into



account at every phase of its preparation. Many of the guidelines indicated in the CSN and subsequently the Common Country Assessment will be incorporated into this document.

### Basic Activity 1—Development of Basic Primary Education and Assistance to the Education of Young Girls

33. **Problem analysis.** Food insecurity caused by poverty is both the cause and the effect of delayed education, particularly in the case of women and girls. Such a delay only creates further disadvantages for the poorest households, women and young girls who for this very reason are unable to cope with the future challenges of production, health care and the environment. The departments of Atacora, Borgou and Zou, whose school attendance rates are between 42 and 48 percent, are considered to be the most deprived, and they will be given priority under the programme.
34. **Strategic objectives.** The education component of the Country Programme will use food aid as a means of ensuring the physical welfare of schoolchildren, enabling them to concentrate during school time, and of supporting poor families suffering from food insecurity to enrol their children and keep them in school. The education of girls from poor rural communities will be a top priority. The programme will target the most disadvantaged departments in terms of nutrition, income and social services.
35. **Key areas and types of assistance.** The strategic focus proposed here will comprise three components:
- supporting formal education through school canteens, primary school boarding facilities in rural areas and homes for secondary school girls from poor families living a long way from the post-primary schools;
  - supporting non-formal basic education in women's centres; and
  - distributing dry rations to girls in the poorest areas where the communities are unable to open a canteen.
36. WFP will give priority to school attendance and keeping the girls at school in order to increase the number of girls attending every beneficiary school in comparison with the initial numbers, until the number of girls is equal to that of boys. Some of these institutions are already working to the limits of their capacity and the rebalancing between girls and boys will take place mainly in the first year.
37. The departments targeted by this activity are in a state of food vulnerability with a level of economic development lower than the national average. School attendance rates by girls are substantially lower than the national average except for the department of Zou. In 1997 the gross school attendance rates for these departments were at the following levels:

Department	Average rate (%)	Boys (%)	Girls (%)
Atacora	48	62	33
Mono	72	96	48
Zou	71	87	53
Borgou	42	50	32
<b>National average</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>52</b>

The net school attendance rate is 10 to 15 percent lower on average than the gross rates.



38. ***Roles and modalities of food aid.*** Food aid will help children to attend school, and to maintain them there, and will encourage the children to concentrate by preventing “early hunger” through the distribution of breakfast. The dry rations will ensure that the young girls are not taken out of school. For households and apprenticeship centres for girls, food aid will contribute to helping the children grow up physically fit and will release resources to raise the living standards of the boarders.
39. ***Selection of institutions and implementation.*** When selecting schools with canteens, priority will be given to departments whose food and educational situation is judged to be the most critical (Atacora, Mono, Borgou and Zou). Priority will also be given to schools receiving assistance from other donors in order to improve the school environment and school management (training Parent and Teacher Associations (PTAs), constructing wells and latrines, supplying small school materials, repairing buildings, etc.). For the “non-formal basic education” component WFP will support institutions that look after girls who have not attended school and who live in a critical physical and moral situation, providing them with vocational training. For the “dry rations” component, coordination with the donors (mainly NGOs) to improve education opportunities will be strengthened.
40. ***Supplementary activity.*** Besides girls’ education, WFP will support literacy training for women; this will be added to all the other basic activities in this programme and will rely on schools, boarding facilities, homes, and other participating institutions. This assistance will give women access to non-formal education.
41. ***Beneficiaries and resources.*** The number of beneficiaries of this activity should rise from 40,000 in year one to 55,000 in the final year, with annual tonnages rising from 2,000/2,500 to 2,500/3,000 tons. For dry rations, the estimated yearly tonnage (included in the total indicated earlier) should be 250/300 tons. Depending upon food prices, freight charges and other variables, the cost per ton, as estimated in the CSO, will vary between 500 and 600 dollars. The costs to the Government will include the personnel provided (full time or part time), some of the reception, transport and storage costs, and the contribution to improving monitoring and evaluation.
42. ***Support, coordination, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) arrangements.*** The National Directorate for WFP projects at the Ministry of Planning, the Economy and Restructuring, will play a twin role, which includes coordinating activities and the logistical management of food received from WFP. In coordination with the Ministry of Education and the WPF office, the National Directorate will also identify the schools to be assisted, programme the activities, and contribute to monitoring the operations in terms of both quantity and quality.
43. The monitoring indicators will be the same as those proposed or included in the Common Country Assessment, mainly the comparison between the net primary school enrolment ratios and the school attendance ratios, and the percentage of pupils who stay on from the first to the last year. The ratios will be broken down by gender. On a limited sample of schools there will also be an anthropometric examination of a certain number of pupils at the beginning and at the end of the school year in order to assess the effects of school feeding on their growth and health status. Other indicators will include the number of days the school canteen is run, and the number of meals served. The project authorities will have to be trained to carry out monitoring and evaluation, and their technical capacities enhanced. In addition, they must be supplied with appropriate tools. The collection and punctual transmission of the data will be considered a professional priority for all the officials.



## Basic Activity 2—Assisting Vulnerable Groups and Combating the Effects of Malnutrition

44. **Problem analysis.** Children and young people are subject to physical risks in many communities. The prime risk is post-natal malnutrition, followed by infant malnutrition; the second risk is undernutrition during the formative years; and the third is the ill-treatment of girls.
45. Acute malnutrition is present throughout Benin at levels varying from 10 percent in the south to 25 percent in Borgou. Chronic malnutrition (stunted growth) is common in Mono and Atacora. Malnutrition rates are highest in the departments which are the most seriously affected by food insecurity, but they are equally serious in the large towns in the south. Malnutrition also affects mothers, 15 percent of whom suffer from chronic energy deficiency with particularly serious repercussions on young and adolescent mothers, and an excessively high rate of maternal mortality (498 per 100,000 births).
46. Young people who have escaped food shortages, disease and being abandoned in their early years may subsequently be exposed to ill-treatment because many parents find it impossible to feed and educate their children properly. Thousands of them fall prey to organized networks that exploit children, while girls are victims of such practices as kidnapping, abduction, forced marriage and other forms of alienation. The Government, the churches and the NGOs are all trying to combat these practices by offering asylum and education to threatened minors.
47. **Strategic objectives.** WFP will support the efforts being made by the Government and civil society to:
- a) contribute to the security, growth and education of orphans, abandoned children and young girls in physical or moral danger being looked after in institutions; and
  - b) curb the effects of undernutrition on the health of women and children, and reduce infant mortality.
48. **Role and modalities of food aid.** The reduction of infant and maternal mortality, reducing malnutrition, and guaranteeing health care and education for at-risk children are all provided by the different types of actions which the Country Programme proposes to:
- a) support nutritional monitoring and screening by providing selective support to the organization of community training and leadership sessions (excluding weighing or vaccination sessions); and
  - b) help to directly care for individuals suffering from acute or moderate forms of malnutrition, by supplying food to the relevant structures, including homes to take in abandoned children and orphanages, and the centres accommodating young girls at risk or victims of maltreatment.
49. **Implementation.** WFP will cooperate with the structures responsible for nutrition monitoring and with NGOs running complete programmes to deal with malnutrition, on the basis of a specific set of technical specifications, indicating their capacities and their facilities. WFP will provide regular food rations to orphans, young girls living in homes or boarding facilities and other children or young people who are in danger or have been abandoned. This assistance will be distributed through reliable institutions, and no assistance provided by WFP can exceed a given proportion of the global resources of these institutions. The number of beneficiaries of this second basic activity will be between 5,000 and 6,000 a year for a total annual average volume of 850 tons of food. The annual cost of this activity will be about US\$600,000.



50. **Support, coordination, and M&E arrangements.** The structure managing the food aid will be the same one that manages education: the National Directorate for WFP projects at the Ministry of Planning, the Economy and Restructuring. The logistical facilities will be shared by all the activities being implemented within the framework of the Country Programme, and the quantitative monitoring criteria will be similar. WFP-supplied food will be distributed through the assisted nutritional rehabilitation centres, medical centres run by NGOs, pre- and post-natal assistance centres, orphanages, homes for young girls, and all other institutions that are recognized as working for similar purposes. The monitoring indicators, similar to those proposed within the framework of the Common Country Assessment, will include among the pre-project basic data the percentage of children under 5 years of age suffering from malnutrition, the local infant mortality rates, and the mortality rates of children aged under 5. The reports will state the number of days the centres are operating, the rations or meals which are served there, attendances and all other information relating to the nature of the institutions being assisted. All this information will be supplied through the Departmental Health Directorates (DDSs).

### Basic Activity 3—Rural Development

51. **Problem analysis.** Agriculture in Benin suffers from the same shortcomings that one finds throughout the whole Region: a lack of land, soil depletion and degradation, demographic pressure, the ineffectiveness of techniques used, the shortage of inputs and lack of credit facilities, isolation, and poor natural resource management. These difficulties are most severe in the northern regions and the cotton production areas. Women and children with socially and economically deprived statuses are more poverty-prone, and the food to which they have access is generally inadequate.
52. **Strategic focus.** In the areas identified as being particularly vulnerable to food insecurity, the programme will support local activities to create assets to contribute towards increasing food production and protecting harvests and natural resources, for the direct benefit of those taking part in these activities. Priority will be given to areas in which one or two activities of this programme are being carried out in order to create complementarity and contribute to strengthening food security. The development of cereal banks and training in community management will be wholly organized by and for the women.
53. **Principles for action.** Food aid will be used in compliance with WFP's new policies by helping the poor rural communities in areas of food insecurity to produce assets or to exploit them. These activities must be geared more to the women, both in terms of participation and share of the outputs of these activities. The possibility of measuring the results achieved thanks to this aid will be a decisive criterion when choosing the actions to be supported.
54. **The selected activities.** The work being carried out under this activity will comprise:
- a) construction of rural access roads;
  - b) hydroagricultural management, by sinking wells, managing bottomlands, constructing small dams or fish culture ponds;
  - c) community reforestation with a transparent sharing of benefits;
  - d) establishment of cereal banks, construction of warehouses, provision of training to manage the cereal banks (through international NGOs); and
  - e) provision of training and refresher courses for extension workers and farmers.



55. **The role of food aid.** Food aid will be reserved to areas suffering from structural food deficits, giving priority to communities taking part in other activities under this programme. It will be directly consumed by the people taking part in this work and by their families, to support them during the lean season and provide them with an opportunity to carry out the additional heavy work required to develop their communities.
56. **Implementation.** The implementation and internal monitoring and evaluation arrangements will very largely be the same as those under project 5215.00. United Nations Volunteers will play a vital role in identifying, formulating and monitoring the activities. Food aid management will be unified for all the activities provided under this programme. Technical and financial cooperation with development partners will be actively sought. On the Government side, operational procedures will be defined with the Centres d'action régionale pour le développement rural (Regional Action Centres for Rural Development—CARDER). NGOs already working on this type of activity, and in some cases already cooperating with project 5215.00, will provide technical support and train the participants while contributing to the monitoring of the activities. These NGOs include—*inter alia*—SNV, *Solidarité France Afrique* (SFA), SAD and AFVP. There will also be very close cooperation with the United Nations system under UNDAF in general, and for this particular activity with FAO through the Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS) and with the World Bank, through its Project for Local Action for Food Security, whose “intensification and diversification” components can also include some of the scheduled activities.
57. This activity should benefit 6,500 to 7,000 people for between 90 and 150 days a year. The annual tonnage earmarked for this activity will reach 800 to 1,000 tons at an estimated cost of about 400,000 dollars.
58. **Support, coordination, and M&E arrangements.** The procedures for collecting and consolidating the data will be generally similar to those of the other two activities and in accordance with the formulation of the Common Country Assessment. Reference will be made in particular to the participation of women in planning and implementing rural development actions and giving them access to the outputs of these actions. The reports will contain both physical data on achievements (kilometres, hectares, cubic metres, etc.) and a qualitative estimate of the impact of these actions on the food security of the beneficiary communities. This qualitative monitoring will be carried out by locally available experts.

## SUPPLEMENTARY PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES

59. If additional funds become available, a pilot scheme could be tested within the framework of the participation of young people in developing agricultural production. Many rural young people do not manage to become acclimatized to villages where the lack of work or income gives them a very precarious social and physical status. These young people would like to return to the land in their regions of origin, and land is available in some of the regions, but families are unable to feed their children during the first two seasons. This lack of food could cause the whole experiment to fail. Food aid coupled with small-scale credit and the supply of small implements by the Ministry of Rural Development could enable these young people to get through the first two agricultural seasons and enable them to take responsibility for their own food security.



## Main Problems and Risks

60. The peaceful political situation in Benin is enabling the economy to grow at an annual rate of about five percent. With the population growing at about three percent, however, the impact of this good macroeconomic performance on the living standards of the people, particularly the poor, is weakened. This economic growth is centred around Cotonou, Porto Novo and the south, while the centre and the north stagnate. The Government of Benin does not seem to envisage any major institutional changes except for its decentralization policy which is not only an opportunity to give responsibility to the grass-roots communities, but also a risk, because it removes from the Government its power to intervene and redress matters, which could reduce the budgetary credits made available to the provinces. The WFP Country Programme will have to adapt to the pace of decentralization, but it will still be managed at the national level under current administrative arrangements. The WFP office in Benin will have to step up its efforts to identify new partners among the donors and associations. But it would be prudent to be selective when looking at the plethora of NGOs of all kinds that are mushrooming. Food aid must be preferably channelled through institutions that are well established and credible. The establishment of new “opportunist” institutions focusing on WFP assistance must be discouraged.

## Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (VAM)

61. Very comprehensive studies of poverty and of the food situation in Benin have been carried out by UNDP, UNICEF and WFP and a number of research institutions within the framework of the Common Country Assessment process. These documents and the poverty, food insecurity and risk-prone maps of Benin, which are updated by SECAL, have been widely used in the preparation of this programme. The contribution of the vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM) project will nevertheless be needed to implement the programme in order to more finely target the activities, underpin the decision-making process and strengthen monitoring. The results of the VAM activities will be regularly shared with the Ministry of Planning, the National Directorate for WFP projects and the partners involved in implementing this programme.

## MANAGEMENT OF THE COUNTRY PROGRAMME

### Prior Examination

62. This Country Programme is based on the Benin Country Strategy Note and the Common Country Assessment with a harmonized cycle for the period 2000–2003 after concluding an agreement with UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP and UNDP. The preparation of this document has been facilitated by a WFP mission, with FAO, UNESCO and WHO participation, which visited Benin from 10 to 31 March 1999, visiting all the departments in the country, holding talks with the national and local authorities involved in the future of the programme, and the partner agencies of the United Nations system, bilateral donors and the NGOs interested in taking part in the programme.

63. In accordance with WFP rules, the activities proposed in this programme will be examined beforehand, coordinated by the Director/Representative of WFP in Benin. The United Nations agencies represented in Benin will play a major part in this process, in which a number of bilateral donors and the NGOs involved in the scheduled activities will also play an active role.



64. For all the other activities, joint WFP/donor missions will analyse the needs and the opportunities in the priority provinces, identifying the recipient institutions and communities and designing procedures for implementation and internal monitoring and evaluation. If necessary, a range of different forms of technical support can be requested from the WFP Regional Office for West Africa (Abidjan). A local advisory committee chaired by WFP will discuss the final summaries of the activities. The composition of this committee will vary depending upon the activities and the sectors.

## **Programme Implementation**

### ***The Capacities of the Country Office***

65. The WFP country office in Benin comprises a director, an official responsible for the national programme, and a small number of support staff. A trainee administrator is being supplied by a donor only as a temporary measure. Four United Nations Volunteers will be used as food aid monitors in the provinces. In order to implement the VAM project more effectively, to concentrate on gender issues and improve monitoring and evaluation in general, it is highly desirable to provide the country office with a national administrator who is a computer and communications expert.

### ***National Coordination***

66. The present WFP assistance management structures will remain in place and be upgraded, because their experience and field knowledge guarantee their effectiveness. The Ministry of Planning will retain its strategic and coordination role while the technical ministries—education, social affairs, public health, rural development etc.—will supervise the implementation of the programme in the field and contribute to the internal monitoring and evaluation. The National Directorate will take on its traditional responsibilities for receiving food and arranging internal food supplies and drafting reports.

### ***Logistical Arrangements***

67. The National Directorate for WFP projects (DN/PAM) will be responsible for receiving the food in the ports, managing the central and departmental stores in conjunction with the WFP office which has the right to decide on the destination and management of the food supplied. DN/PAM will guarantee the delivery of food to:
- a) school canteens and girls' educational establishments;
  - b) institutions assisting the vulnerable groups; and
  - c) participants in the cereal banks and rural development activities both at the level of secondary storage and final delivery.
68. WFP will encourage the use of private transporters following competitive bidding for the transport of food to the departmental stores. It will be essential to retain the internal transport, storage and handling (ITSH) 50 percent subsidy rates to ensure that the activities are properly performed. This rate will be periodically reviewed. The local purchase of certain foods (maize and beans) could be envisaged if it is possible to identify a reliable and competitive source of domestic supply.





### ***Preparation of Annual Plans***

69. The demand from groups, communities and institutions to participate in the activities of this programme must come from the local level to the centre. Very special attention will be paid to any requests coming from civil society. The activities will be designed to harmoniously combine the contribution of the administrative party and the participatory approach. The final selection of activities, which will take place yearly or half-yearly for each activity, will involve the technical ministries, the WFP office and the Ministry of Planning. A similar procedure will be used to eliminate activities which are not performing properly.

### ***Monitoring and Auditing the Country Programme***

70. Internal monitoring and evaluation will be a joint responsibility of the National Monitoring Committee of the Country Strategy Note, which will evaluate the implementation of the various programmes approved by it. DN/PAM, which is now operational, will provide WFP with surveys and studies, the accounts and all the data needed to enable quarterly reports to be produced regarding resources, and half-yearly reports on progress with activities. Joint visits will be organized in the framework of all the activities. United Nations Volunteers based in the province will play a vital part in collecting information, checking it and analysing it, and will report to the WFP representative. The main indicators required to monitor each activity are set out in the relevant section above. The data which are collected will be disaggregated down by gender. Parallel to the internal monitoring and evaluation, the accounts will be audited every year by auditors in the region or in the country, and will be reviewed by the WFP Audit Office.

### ***Adjustment and Complementary Measures***

71. The WFP office will closely supervise the results of all the activities under the Country Programme. To do this it will use an analysis of the reports provided by the government, by its own personnel and the communities and NGOs taking part in the activities. The WFP office will summarize its conclusions in a six-monthly report which will be drawn up in close cooperation with the national party and the development partners. A meeting to review the whole project will follow this report. Adjustments needed to the programme and the implementation of the activities will be sought and discussed at these meetings. Depending upon the annual availability of new resources, the WFP representative will notify DN/PAM and the technical ministries when supplementary activities can be set in train. These activities will be identified, implemented and monitored like the basic activities.

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## **EVALUATION**

72. A thorough evaluation of the Country Programme will be carried out by WFP with the participation of the United Nations organizations taking part in the coordination, the partner NGOs, the representatives of the donors and the beneficiary communities. These evaluations must nevertheless remain simple and be finely targeted, dealing with the essential issues relating to the activities, giving priority to analysing the relevance of the outputs and their impact on the beneficiaries in terms of the set objectives.

73. A complete evaluation of the programme throughout its whole life will be carried out in the final phase. A mid-term review will be carried out in 2002. This review will



concentrate on such points as the design and management of the programme, the quality of the results and outputs, the financing, the effectiveness of the targeting, the visible or foreseeable impact, the sensitivity of the participants to the gender issues, the participation of the beneficiaries in all the stages, its sustainability in time, its follow-up and the prospects for phasing out.



## ANNEX I

## BENIN COUNTRY PROGRAMME (2000–2003) DIRECT COSTS BUDGET

Totals by Activity		Food Volume (tons)	Direct Operational Costs (DOC)			Total DOC (US\$)
			Food Cost (US\$)	Transport, LTSH (US\$)	Other DOC <sup>1</sup> (US\$)	
Activity 1: Development of Basic Primary Education and Assistance to the Education of Young Girls	Basic (WFP)	10 760	4 750 000	1 565 600	987 000	7 302 600
	Government					0
	Supplementary					0
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>10 760</b>	<b>4 750 000</b>	<b>1 565 600</b>	<b>987 000</b>	<b>7 302 600</b>
Activity 2: Assisting Vulnerable Groups and Combating the Effects of Malnutrition	Basic (WFP)	3 400	1 632 000	498 000	465 400	2 595 400
	Government					0
	Supplementary					0
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>3 400</b>	<b>1 632 000</b>	<b>498 000</b>	<b>465 400</b>	<b>2 595 400</b>
Activity 3: Rural Development	Basic (WFP)	3 480	1 208 000	478 800	224 000	1 910 800
	Government					0
	Supplementary					0
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>3 480</b>	<b>1 208 000</b>	<b>478 800</b>	<b>224 000</b>	<b>1 910 800</b>

Totals by Category	Food Volume (tons)	Direct Operational Costs (DOC)			Total DOC (US\$)	Direct Support Costs
		Food Cost (US\$)	Transport, LTSH (US\$)	Other DOC <sup>1</sup> (US\$)		Total DOC (US\$)
Basic (WFP)	17 640	7 590 000	2 542 400	1 676 400	11 808 800	1 522 400
Government <sup>2</sup>	0	0	0	0	0	
Supplementary	0	0	0	0	0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>17 640</b>	<b>7 590 000</b>	<b>2 542 400</b>	<b>1 676 400</b>	<b>11 808 800</b>	<b>1 522 400</b>

<sup>1</sup> Staff resources, non-food items and services exclusively for use by beneficiaries, government or implementing partners and/or all costs related to food transformation, such as milling.

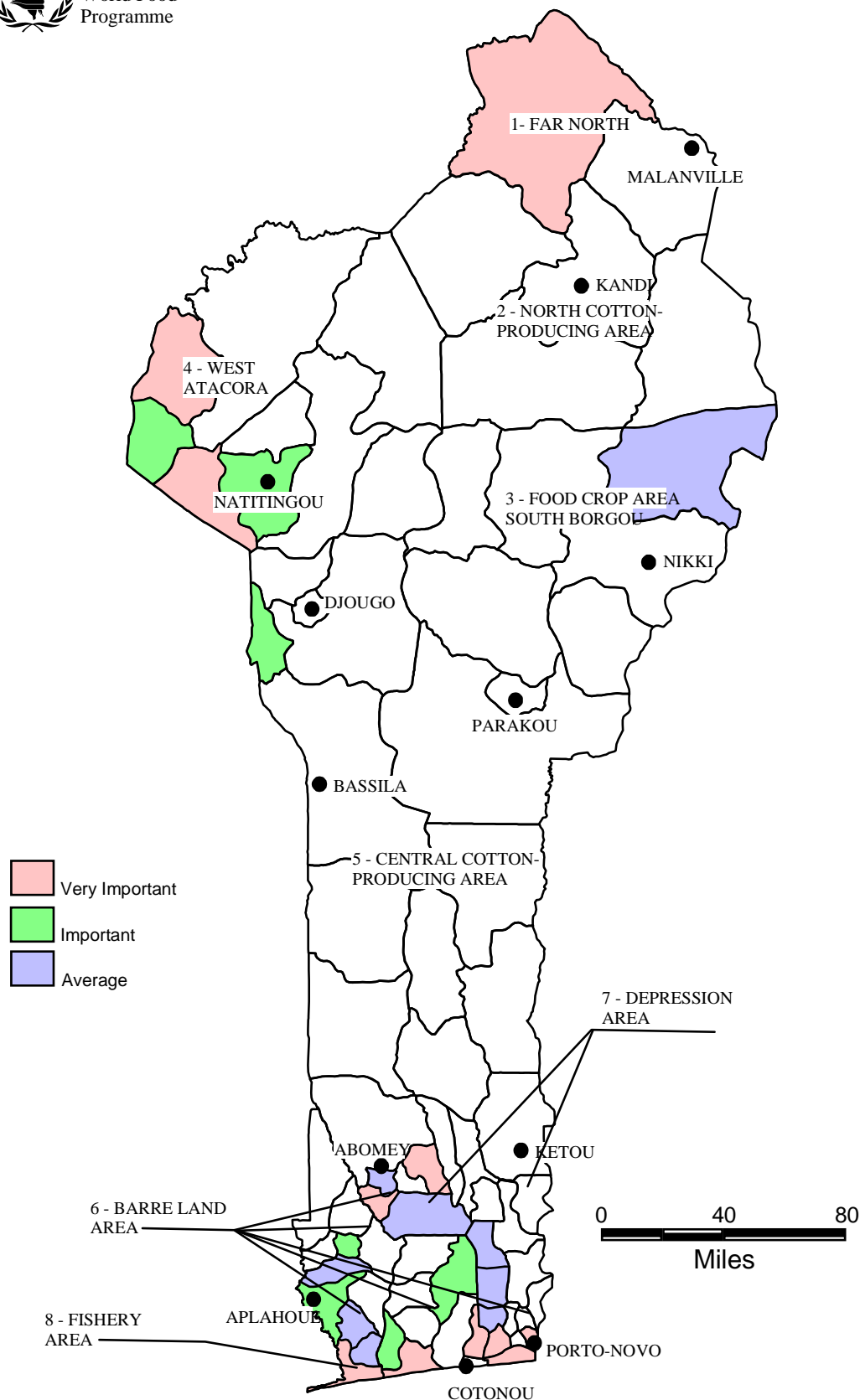
<sup>2</sup> Government contribution by activity will be defined at the project appraisal stage of each activity. It is expected to be significantly higher than WFP's contribution.



**ANNEX II**



**Benin: Zones of risk of food insecurity**



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

Source: FAO/SECAL

