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OTHER BUSINESS

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INFORMATION NOTE ON METHODS OF WORK AND RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE WFP EXECUTIVE BOARD

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NOTE TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

This document is submitted for information to the Executive Board.

Pursuant to the decisions taken on the methods of work by the Executive Board at its First Regular Session, 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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INTRODUCTION

1. Pursuant to parallel resolutions 9/95 of the FAO Conference and 50/8 of the United Nations General Assembly, adopted on 31 October and 1 November 1995, respectively, the Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes (CFA) was transformed into the WFP Executive Board with effect from 1 January 1996.
2. At its First Regular Session in January 1996, the Board approved the recommendations made by the CFA at its Fortieth Session that the Board should use the rules provided by the United Nations General Assembly resolution 48/162 and the Rules of Procedure of the CFA where the former were insufficient. At the same session, the Board also decided to revise its rules of procedure as it found necessary and useful with a view to codifying them after a suitable period of operation.
3. In this connection, the Board agreed at its First Regular Session to adopt a number of provisions governing its methods of work, in particular with regard to: a) representation on and attendance of members and observers at the Board's sessions; b) composition of the Board's Bureau; c) location of sessions; d) documentation; e) procedures for taking decisions; f) the use of official languages; and g) abolishment of subsidiary bodies.
4. At its Second Regular Session in May 1996, the Board agreed on additional methods of work pertaining to: a) the approach to be followed in the discussion of agenda items during sessions; b) the preparation and contents of reporting documents on such sessions; c) the reference in the documents to WFP focal point officers; d) the interventions by WFP staff and national experts at sessions; and e) the seating arrangements for the observer delegation of the Commission of the European Community.
5. The purpose of this information note is to present to the Executive Board, for information, a compendium of the mandates and guidance received - since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 48/162 on 20 December 1993 and including recommendations of the former Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes, and decisions of the Executive Board itself - that complement and/or amend the Rules of Procedure of the CFA, and thus are part of the transitional rules of procedure and methods of work of the Board. The relevant text is hereby quoted from the documents indicated in square brackets at the end of each paragraph. Editorial changes were made for the sake of brevity, clarity and consistency. Those changes are indicated in bold type face.

Rules of procedure

6. **At its First Regular Session, the Executive Board decided** to use the rules provided by United Nations General Assembly resolution 48/162 and the Rules of Procedure of the CFA where the former were insufficient. The Executive Board should revise those Rules of Procedure as it found necessary and useful with a view to codifying its rules after a suitable period of operation. [WFP/ExB.1/96/3, para. 3]

Representation on and attendance at the Executive Board sessions

7. **Paragraph 27 of** General Assembly resolution 48/162 stipulates that, in addition to the 36 members of the Board, the right of participation **in the deliberations of the Board sessions, without the right to vote**, shall also be reserved to a member State [...] when its country programme is under consideration. In the case of WFP, this includes development



projects. The Board may also invite member States of **WFP** who manifest a special interest in the item or items under consideration to participate in the deliberations without the right to vote. [WFP/ExB.1/96/3, para. 4]

8. In accordance with this provision of the General Assembly resolution, [...] **the Board decided at its First Regular Session** that members of FAO or the United Nations, who are not members of the Board, would be invited upon request to attend the annual session of the Board as observers. Those members who manifested a special interest would also be invited, upon request, to attend regular sessions of the Board as observers. In addition, representatives of appropriate United Nations bodies would be invited to all sessions of the Board. Other organizations with a special interest may be invited, upon request, to attend sessions of the Board. [WFP/ExB.1/96/3, para. 5]

Composition of the Bureau of the Executive Board

9. **At its First Regular Session, the Board decided** that the Executive Board Bureau, which shall be elected from among the country representatives of the Board, should consist of five members, one from each WFP electoral list A to E. Of these five members, one should be the President of the Board and another the Vice-President. The other three members should be representatives of their respective electoral lists. Each year, the President should normally be replaced by the Vice-President. Annually, the President's position should alternate between a Bureau member from lists A, B or C, and a Bureau member from lists D or E. Detailed arrangements for implementing that rotation should be left to the electoral lists to finalize. [WFP/ExB.1/96/3, para. 6]

Sessions and other meetings of the Board

10. **Paragraphs 26 and 27 of** General Assembly resolution 48/162 stipulate that the Board meet in an annual session and that it determine the timing of that session, [...] **and that the Board meet** in regular sessions held between the annual sessions. **Paragraph 28 of that** resolution also calls for improved modalities to be developed by the Funds and Programmes for regular informal briefings. [WFP/ExB.1/96/3, para. 7]
11. The **Board** members fully endorsed the principle of holding regular informal briefings for the benefit of Board members and observers [...]. [WFP/ExB.1/96/3, para. 8]

Location of the sessions of the Board

12. **Paragraph 27 of** General Assembly resolution 48/162 states that the regular sessions of the Board should be held at the premises of the headquarters of the respective organization [...] **The Board decided** that the venue for Executive Board meetings should be WFP headquarters. [WFP/ExB.1/96/3, paras. 9 and 10]

Reports and documentation

13. **The Board decided** [...] to keep the documentation prepared by the Secretariat [...] brief and decision-oriented, and to include, where applicable, elements of draft decisions requested of the Board. **It** also decided that Executive Board documents should be available, **upon request**, to any member of WFP [...]. [WFP/ExB.1/96/3, para. 11]
14. **At its Second Regular Session, the Executive Board decided that** at the end of the session, a paper containing all decisions and/or recommendations be provided to the Board's members, who **would** verify its accuracy on the understanding that the debate is



not to be reopened. The title of the relevant agenda item will be changed to read: “Verification of the adopted decisions and recommendations”. [decision 1996/EB.2/1 d), WFP/ExB.2/96/11/Rev.1]

15. **At the same session, the Board also decided that** a brief summary of the work at the meeting **would** be sent by the President to all members of the Board. The document **would** be prepared by the Rapporteur and discussed by the members of the Bureau, who **would** ensure the report **was** balanced and faithfully **reflected** the spirit of the debate. Bureau members are responsible for consulting with their respective regional groups. This document **would** be endorsed by the Board at its first subsequent session. [decision 1996/EB.2/1 e), WFP/ExB.2/96/11/Rev.1]
16. Each document is to include the names of the officers responsible, to facilitate any clarification needed in advance of the session, thus allowing the Board to focus discussions on strategic issues and adoption of decisions and/or recommendations. [decision 1996/EB.2/1 f), WFP/ExB.2/96/11/Rev.1]

Procedures for taking decisions

17. **Paragraph 27 of** General Assembly resolution 48/162 states that decision-making shall continue to be according to existing rules and that the practice of striving for consensus should be encouraged. [WFP/ExB.1/96/3, para. 12]
18. **Rule VIII, paragraph 1, of** the CFA Rules of Procedure [...] affirms this position by stressing that every effort shall be made to arrive at a decision on any matter other than a question of procedure by consensus of the members. [WFP/ExB.1/96/3, para. 13]
19. **At its Second Regular Session, the Executive Board decided that** following the discussion of an item, **agreement be reached** on the decision or recommendation the Board **adopted** in regard to that item. The decision and/or recommendation may contain a brief commentary of a background nature. [decision 1996/EB.2/1 c), WFP/ExB.2/96/11/Rev.1]

Subsidiary bodies

20. General Assembly resolution 48/162 did not foresee the establishment of any subsidiary bodies [...]. Accordingly, the **Board** decided at its **First Regular Session that the** Sub-Committee on Projects should be abolished and country strategy outlines, country programme documents and projects should be [...] reviewed by the Board itself. [WFP/ExB.1/96/3, para. 14]

Languages

21. **The Board decided that its** official languages should be those used by the CFA, namely, Arabic, English, French and Spanish, with special arrangements for Chinese. [WFP/ExB.1/96/3, para. 15]

Agenda

22. At its Second Regular Session, the Board decided to avoid all pro forma statements. To that end, it was proposed that the item entitled “Statements” be deleted from Board agendas. If a special guest is invited to address the Board, he/she should make a contribution to a specific agenda item. It further decided to avoid prepared speeches from



members of the Board. The Board should adopt an open dialogue that encourages a free exchange of ideas. [decision 1996/EB.2/1 a) and b), WFP/ExB.2/96/11/Rev.1]

