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**Executive Board
Third Regular Session**

Rome, 21 - 24 October 1996

SUMMARIES OF THE WORK OF THE SECOND REGULAR AND THE ANNUAL SESSIONS OF 1996 OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Agenda item 12



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ENDORSEMENT OF THE SUMMARIES

In accordance with the Executive Board's decision at its Second Regular Session, regarding its methods of work (1996/EB.2/1), the summaries of the work of the Second Regular Session (document WFP/EB.2/96/12) and of the Annual Session (document WFP/EB.A/96/12) are hereby submitted for endorsement.

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**Executive Board
Second Regular Session**

Rome, 22 - 24 and 29 May 1996

SUMMARY OF THE WORK OF THE SECOND REGULAR SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD



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**SUMMARY OF THE WORK OF THE
MEETING**

SUMMARY

1. The Second Regular Session of the Executive Board was chaired by H.E. Béatrice Damiba (Burkina Faso) and Mr. Nils A. Kastberg (Sweden).
2. The Executive Board adopted the agenda as proposed in document WFP/EB.2/96/1. The agenda items were discussed in the following sequence: 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 5, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11.
3. The Board appointed Ms. Ginette Saint-Cyr (Canada) as Rapporteur of the Second Regular Session and the Annual Session.

Methods of work of the Executive Board (1996/1)

4. The President of the Board introduced several changes to the Board's methods of work which had been developed by the Board's Bureau and endorsed by representatives of United Nations and FAO Member States at an informal meeting held prior to the Board's Second Regular Session. The Board agreed that those modified methods of work should be applied henceforth and codified as appropriate at a later date.

Evaluation of protracted refugee and displaced person projects (1996/2)

5. Mozambique 4164 (Exp.4) - Displaced persons affected by food shortages and civil strife in Mozambique

Discussions focused on the impact of local purchasing of food commodities and transport services on domestic markets. The need to identify national institutions to deal with disaster mitigation, relief and rehabilitation and the importance of developing their capacity were stressed.

6. Bangladesh 5329 - Evaluation of WFP assistance to refugees from Myanmar in Bangladesh and for their reinstallation in Myanmar

The Board discussed the current status and modalities of the repatriation process and was informed of WFP's measures, within its mandate, to encourage refugees to return. The Board was assured that, despite some traditionalist attitudes, improvements in the training and in-project involvement of women were being made.

Evaluation work plan 1996-97 (1996/3)

7. The Board noted the ambitious but well-balanced work plan. The discussion revealed the need for continued dialogue between the Secretariat and the Board on the priorities of the work plan's elements. The Secretariat described the procedures for the organization and composition of missions. The development of an in-house



process whereby findings of evaluation missions were fed back to the policy and operational divisions was explained. The Board suggested the inclusion of additional topics in the work plan, such as monetization, nutrition, non-food items and environmental issues. Some delegates offered collaboration and resources for future evaluation activities.

8. The Board also suggested that capacity be left within the work plan for United Nations system-wide evaluations of the WFP Office of Evaluation together with the evaluation services of other relevant United Nations agencies, particularly for evaluations of complex emergency operations.

Country Strategy Outlines - General discussion (1996/4)

9. Three Country Strategy Outlines (CSOs) were presented to the Board with a view to seeking its guidance, a process which should assist in the development of Country Programmes (CPs). Concerns were raised about the varying quality of individual CSOs. The Board suggested that the CSO format be modified so as to provide more specific information on WFP's future involvement in the assisted country. It was also noted that CSOs could more substantially analyse the sustainability of the benefits generated by WFP assistance. The Board emphasized the need to provide more information on the commitment undertaken by the beneficiary government. It stressed the need for coordinating WFP's strategy with that of its partners.

Country Strategy Outline - Mauritania (1996/5)

10. The Board noted with appreciation that the WFP strategy in Mauritania would be directed to the poorest rural areas and families subject to food insecurity. It requested that the mechanism to develop that strategy should be clearly defined in the CP. Specifically, measures should be taken to ensure that community-based food-for-work activities resulted in sustainable assets owned and managed by the communities themselves, thus facilitating disaster mitigation in times of drought.
11. Members emphasized that the CP document should appropriately justify WFP assistance. They encouraged the Government to decentralize the decision-making process and provide adequate technical support and concomitant training to the beneficiary population.
12. The Board took note of the Government's support for WFP's proposed strategy. It appreciated the Government's commitment to establish monitoring and evaluation systems and to share the burden of land-based food transport costs.

Country Strategy Outline - Mozambique (1996/6)

13. The discussion highlighted the importance of collaboration with other agencies in Mozambique in the preparation of the CP. The Secretariat was asked to pay particular attention to issues of capacity-building of national institutions and to ensuring a strong government 'ownership' of the programme. Regarding the specific direction of WFP's activities over the coming years, consideration should be given to helping the country develop a strong food security strategy; applying



flexibility in the provision of cash and/or food inputs according to their appropriateness; ensuring an appropriate regional balance; and encouraging the active participation of women in rural areas.

14. The importance of WFP participation in programmes for the removal of the many land-mines which still existed in highly populated areas of the country was also stressed.

Country Strategy Outline - Colombia (1996/7)

15. The Board took note of the positive role of WFP assistance in support of rural families affected by extreme poverty and considered that Colombia could continue to be a recipient of modest levels of WFP assistance along the lines proposed in the CSO.
16. Some members of the Board questioned the appropriateness of proposing a CSO for Colombia, which since 1996 no longer qualified as a low-income, food-deficit (LIFD) country, and also referred to WFP's scarce development resources. Accordingly, the Secretariat was advised that given the modest amount of resources envisaged for the period 1996 - 2000, the preparation of a CP was not necessary.

Country Programmes (1996/8)

17. The Board provided some initial comments on the content and format of CPs. It requested the Secretariat to continue its dialogue with the Board members on the precise content and format of CPs, including specific information to be provided in tabular form. The Board also indicated that further clarity was required with regard to the flexibility of transfers between projects within a CP.

Country Programme - Pakistan (1996/9)

18. The document was discussed during an informal meeting as the Board felt that insufficient time had been available to give it proper attention during the session itself. The close collaboration between the Government of Pakistan and WFP in the preparation of this document was noted. While recognizing that the strength of the document was in its emphasis on reaching target groups, it was felt that further work on performance indicators needed to be carried out.

Development project proposals for Executive Board approval - Introduction (1996/10)

19. In a general discussion before consideration of specific project proposals, the Board commented on the contents of the documents, on measures to ensure the sustainability of school feeding projects, and on the need for information on the availability of resources prior to the review of specific project proposals.



**Development project proposal for Executive Board approval -
Cape Verde 2394 (Exp.5) (1996/11)**

20. In approving this project, the Board made specific recommendations calling for a greater involvement of the Government in defraying the costs of the project with a view to achieving a gradual take-over of project activities, for a strengthening of the monitoring and evaluation system, and for joint programming with other partners in order to improve the quality of the education system.

**Development project proposal for Executive Board approval -
Niger 2445 (Exp.4) (1996/12)**

21. In approving this project, the Board made specific recommendations calling for the development of quantifiable targets, for local and sub-regional purchases of commodities and for measures aiming at an increased enrolment of girls. It felt that the national authorities should develop with WFP a flexible plan for their gradual take-over of project activities.

**Development project proposal for Executive Board approval -
China 5652 (1996/13)**

22. In approving this project, the Board noted its technical soundness and expressed satisfaction that it had been jointly programmed with IFAD and was well integrated in the Government's development strategy.

**Development project proposal for Executive Board approval -
Viet Nam 5322 (1996/14)**

23. In approving this project, the Board noted that, in line with the agreed phasing-out plan, it would be the last WFP project proposal for Viet Nam.

**Development project proposal for Executive Board approval - Cuba
5686 (1996/15)**

24. In approving this project, the Board made specific recommendations calling for a solid and independent monitoring system, and a full participation of peasant farm communities in project activities. Some members expressed concern over certain technical aspects of the project but did not wish to oppose the consensus for its approval. The Board agreed to the Secretariat's proposal to treat Cuba "as if" it were an LIFDC.

**Budget increases for projects approved earlier, for Executive Board
approval - Sudan 531 (Exp.2) (1996/16)**

25. In approving this budget increase, the Board welcomed the project's focus on addressing gender disparity. The Secretariat assured the Board that the issue of monetization of food commodities would be re-examined during the forthcoming appraisal mission.



Budget increases for projects approved earlier, for Executive Board approval - Haiti 4111 (1996/17)

26. In approving this budget increase, the Board recommended greater collaboration with other donors to improve project monitoring. It expressed concern over the monetization of wheat in view of the difficulties experienced in the past.

Budget increases for projects approved earlier, for Executive Board approval - Morocco 2288 (Exp.4) (1996/18)

27. The Board noted that consideration of this item was postponed until such time as the results of a project audit were available.

Projects approved by the Executive Director - Senegal 5655 (1996/19)

28. The Board noted with satisfaction that this pilot project had been developed and implemented jointly with the World Bank.

Budget increases approved by the Executive Director, 1 July - 31 December 1995 (1996/20)

29. The Board took note of the information provided in the document.

Progress reports on approved projects - China 3923, Colombia 2740 (Exp.1), Guatemala 2581 (Exp.1), Peru 4512 (1996/21)

30. The Board took note of the Secretariat's document entitled "WFP Development Portfolio - Annual Progress Reports" and discussed the four progress reports submitted for information. On project China 3923, questions were raised about outstanding borrowings of commodities, technical aspects of the forestry component and women's participation. On project Colombia 2740 (Exp.1), the Board requested further information on the micro-credit component and the mechanisms of monetization of WFP commodities. With regard to projects Guatemala 2581 (Exp.1) and Peru 4512, the Board called for the identification of appropriate measures which would help ensure continuation of the project after WFP's withdrawal.

Losses of commodities after delivery to recipient countries (1996/22)

31. The Board noted the magnitude of the task of monitoring the quantities involved in a large number of countries receiving food shipments. It felt that the reported losses were low compared to the total volume of commodities handled but remained high in absolute terms and therefore called for continued vigilance. It noted with appreciation WFP's initiative to formalize agreements on food aid management with beneficiary governments and other local food aid agents. It stressed the importance



of accelerating the installation of a WFP commodity tracking system and welcomed the news that the financing of such a system was now confirmed.

Protracted refugee and displaced person projects approved by the Executive Director during the period 1 July - 31 December 1995 (1996/23)

32. The Board took note of three projects approved by the Executive Director during the period under review and asked to be informed in future introductory statements of any new projects approved thereafter.

Budget increases for protracted refugee and displaced person projects approved by the Executive Director within her delegated authority during the period 1 July - 31 December 1995 (1996/24)

33. The Board took note of six budget increases approved by the Executive Director during the period under review and asked to be informed in future introductory statements of any new increases approved thereafter.

Emergency operations (1996/25)

34. The Board took note of the review of emergency activities in 1995. It recognized the Programme's strategic approach to emergencies, including the combined focus on preparing for and mitigating emergencies. It emphasized the need for activities in areas such as vulnerability analysis and mapping, the pre-positioning of food and equipment stocks, regional approaches, gender considerations and environmental protection. It was pointed out that resources pledged upfront had not been sufficient to facilitate an effective response to all emergency situations and that increased untied contributions through the IEFR and IRA were needed. It encouraged joint programming missions with bilateral donors, other United Nations agencies and NGOs.

Configuration of the Executive Board Room for the Annual Session (1996/26)

35. The Board expressed appreciation for the improved Executive Board Room and indicated a preference for the round-table arrangement to be used at both regular and annual sessions.

World Food Summit (1996/27)

36. The Board appreciated the Secretariat's contribution to the preparations of the World Food Summit and encouraged it to be active in the follow-up to the Summit.



Information document on project Kenya 2502 (Exp.3) (1996/28)

37. The Board reviewed the response of the Government of Kenya on the subject of the levy of import duty and *ad valorem* tax on food aid for direct distribution. It suggested that the WFP country office and representatives of major food aid donors in Kenya continue to negotiate with the Government with a view to agreeing on the conditions for early implementation of the project.



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**Executive Board
Annual Session**

Rome, 27 - 30 May 1996

SUMMARY OF THE WORK OF THE ANNUAL SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

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**SUMMARY OF THE WORK OF THE
MEETING**

SUMMARY

1. The Annual Session of the Executive Board was chaired by H.E. Béatrice Damiba (Burkina Faso).
2. The Session's agenda was adopted as proposed in documents WFP/EB.A/96/1 and WFP/EB.A/96/1/Corr.1. The agenda items were discussed in the following sequence: 1, 2, 4, 7, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11.
3. The appointment of Ms. Ginette Saint-Cyr (Canada) as Rapporteur of the Annual Session was confirmed by the Board.

Annual Report of the Executive Director (1996/1)

4. In adopting the Annual Report, the Board praised the clarity of the document and generally agreed that it addressed the right issues. While considering the report, the Board emphasized the importance of:
 - a) ensuring that adequate resources be available, particularly for development activities but also for relief operations, striving for an appropriate balance between these;
 - b) continuing to focus on the poorest people in the neediest countries, particularly in countries emerging from disasters;
 - c) developing WFP's partnerships further with other United Nations agencies, bilateral donors, NGOs and local institutions;
 - d) preserving the multilateral nature of WFP;
 - e) giving greater importance to health and nutrition issues in WFP's development activities; and
 - f) continuing its efforts in disaster prevention and preparedness.
5. The Board appreciated WFP's strategy for an orderly phasing-out of operations in non-LDC/non-LIFD countries and noted that that should be done in a prudent manner, which would ensure that WFP's obligations in projects in their final phase of implementation be properly met.
6. The Board underlined the need for opportunities to discuss and give guidance on policy issues, and felt that the report should more clearly identify areas that might need to be addressed at future sessions of the Board. The following issues were mentioned for future policy discussions: monetization, directed multilateral funding, nutrition, role of women, phasing-out strategy.
7. The Board welcomed the emphasis given to improvements in the financial systems.



Reports to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

8. Parts I, II, and III

The three reports were discussed together and approved by the Board with the recommendation that they be submitted to the Council. In reviewing the reports, the Board made the following comments:

- a) Follow-up to the implementation of General Assembly resolutions 44/211, 47/199 and 50/120 - Triennial policy review (1996/2)

The Secretariat was commended for its efforts in improving inter-agency coordination, noting in particular WFP's support to the Resident Coordinator system; the importance to link, where possible, WFP's country programming with Country Strategy Notes (CSNs) was stressed; and appreciation for WFP's follow-up to its commitments resulting from the Beijing Summit was expressed.

- b) Follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/50 - Collaboration with the Bretton Woods institutions (1996/3)

The Board took note of the steps taken by the Secretariat to strengthen collaboration with the Bretton Woods institutions, and particularly with the World Bank. It appreciated the many examples of existing cooperation in development, rehabilitation and emergency projects.

- c) Follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/51 - Overall guidance on operational activities for development to the United Nations funds and programmes (1996/4)

The Board expressed satisfaction with WFP's initiatives in evaluation and monitoring, in particular the current orientation towards the impact on beneficiaries and the sustainability of projects. It noted that evaluation could further assist national governments in the management of projects and welcomed the training of national counterparts through WFP-sponsored workshops.

9. Part IV - Follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/56: Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (1996/5)

10. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Ms. Sadako Ogata, participated in part of the discussion under this agenda item. The Board also benefited from the participation of a representative of DHA.

11. The Board commended the Secretariat for a thought-provoking document outlining the role and operational responsibilities of WFP in providing humanitarian assistance, presenting options for future roles, and identifying gaps in the emergency response process. It acknowledged WFP's comparative advantages in many areas listed in the



document and stressed the importance of capitalizing on WFP's strengths, particularly in areas that were within its mandate as articulated in the Mission Statement.

12. The Board provided preliminary comments on the proposed expansion of WFP's roles in areas such as transport and logistics, resourcing and delivery of essential non-food inputs, and requested that information be provided on the capacity and cost implications for WFP assuming wider responsibilities. It requested that further analysis of the policy, operational and financial implications of those proposals be carried out prior to its October session. It cautioned against the introduction of new or expanded activities that could possibly not be sustained due to lack of funding, or which could divert resources and attention away from WFP's primary roles.
13. The Board commented as follows on specific topics and proposals contained in the document:
14. The Board recognized WFP's dual mandate of providing both relief and development assistance as its major strength. It noted that the Programme was in the unique position of not only being able to respond quickly to emergency situations, but also to encourage the transition from relief to rehabilitation and development.
15. The Board noted that cooperation and coordination with other agencies could be reinforced through discussions leading to the development of Memoranda of Understanding, such as the one between WFP and UNHCR. It considered the Consolidated Appeal Process as a valuable contribution to promote coordination.
16. The Board recognized the need for clear institutional responsibility to ensure the protection and material requirements of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and for the appointment of an operational lead agency responsible for coordination at the field level at the onset of a complex emergency. It deferred a definitive recommendation on those issues at this stage of the debate.
17. The Board acknowledged the issue of responsibility and accountability for end distribution of food to refugees as one that was particularly sensitive, given the respective mandates of WFP and UNHCR. It encouraged the two agencies to continue consultations on that matter as well as on the issues of census and accurate registration of refugee populations in the context of ongoing revisions of the WFP/UNHCR Memorandum of Understanding.
18. The Board felt that the possible extension of WFP's role in transport and logistics to cover the delivery of humanitarian assistance on behalf of other organizations required further consideration. It requested an analysis of WFP's transport and logistic costs, including the potential for cost-savings resulting from infrastructure development activities, to enable the Board to fully appreciate the Programme's comparative advantage in that area.
19. The Board also addressed the questions of WFP's competence in the field of procurement and transport of non-food items, including seeds, in support of the work of other organizations. The Board considered that consultations with partner agencies on those issues should continue.



20. The Board encouraged WFP to continue its efforts in strengthening indigenous capacities to better enable populations to deal with emergencies and to support rehabilitation and recovery efforts.
21. Concern was raised with regard to the recognition of the sovereignty of states in connection with assistance provided to IDPs without the specific request of a government, or in areas where there was no clear government authority. The Secretariat clarified that, in accordance with WFP's General Regulations, the Programme could provide humanitarian relief assistance at the request of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and stressed that WFP assistance in such exceptional cases would be fully coordinated with the United Nations system and NGO efforts.

Report of the Executive Board to ECOSOC and the FAO Council on the activities of the Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes (CFA) in 1995 (1996/6)

22. The Board considered that the report correctly reflected the decisions taken by the CFA in 1995 and agreed that it be transmitted to the two Councils.

Reform and revitalization measures in the World Food Programme (1996/7)

23. The Board expressed its satisfaction with the wide-ranging reform initiatives undertaken in WFP over the last several years and noted the leadership it had shown in that regard. It suggested that additional reform measures, which were to be considered in the years ahead, be included in Strategic and Financial Plans. The Executive Director agreed that changes in the wording of the document, as suggested by the Board, be incorporated before its transmission to ECOSOC and the FAO Council.

Resource and financial matters: Budgetary performance report 1994-95 (1996/8)

24. The Board took note of the steps taken by the Secretariat to improve WFP's financial management and commended it for the cost savings achieved during the biennium. The Board was satisfied with the clarifications provided by the Secretariat on a number of specific points it had raised. While appreciating the low overall programme support and administrative expenditures and encouraging the Secretariat to pursue further its efforts in that area, it noted that that should be done in a way that would not affect the quality of the delivery of programmes.

Composition of WFP international professional staff (1996/9)

25. The Board expressed its appreciation for the transparency of the information provided in the document. It asked the Secretariat to report annually on progress made towards attaining the United Nations target of a professional staff gender balance by the year 2000, and towards geographical balance. Suggestions on ways to improve future reports were noted by the Secretariat.



Status report: Provisional WFP headquarters building (1996/10)

26. The Board acknowledged the unacceptable condition of the WFP headquarters building, as described in the Secretariat's documents and corroborated by tours of the building by delegates. It requested that consultations with the Italian authorities be continued along the lines recommended by the Board with a view to presenting concrete proposals, entailing a definitive solution, at the Third Regular Session in October 1996. It offered to assist the Secretariat further, as required, in the pursuit of that matter.

Enhancing the internal oversight mechanisms in operational funds and programmes (1996/11).

27. The Board took note of the draft report of the Secretary-General and expressed its appreciation for WFP having already established its own Office of Inspection and Investigation. It also acknowledged that the Programme was already implementing five of the report's eight recommendations and acting on the others. It requested the Executive Director to inform the Secretary-General accordingly.

Revision of WFP's Financial Regulations and General Regulations (1996/12)

28. The Board agreed that the open-ended working group established for the revision of the Financial and General Regulations should assume its work on the basis of the proposed work plan and timetable.

