

برنامج
الأغذية
العالمي



Programme
Alimentaire
Mondial

World
Food
Programme

Programa
Mundial
de Alimentos

Executive Board
Third Regular Session

Rome, 21 - 24 October 1996

EVALUATION AND TERMINAL REPORTS

Agenda item 5 a)

E

Distribution: GENERAL
WFP/EB.3/96/5-A/Add.3
9 September 1996
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

PROTRACTED REFUGEE AND DISPLACED PERSONS PROJECT: LIBERIA REGIONAL 4604

**Programme policy evaluation of the 1990-95
period of the WFP-assisted refugee and displaced
person operations in Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea
and Sierra Leone**

ABSTRACT

The operation has been one of the biggest but "most silent" of WFP's complex emergencies, experiencing low media visibility for long periods of its history. Similarly, WFP's response, although significant, has been relatively discreet and low-key. Between 1990 and 1995, total food commodities supplied by WFP to the four war-affected countries amounted to about 695,000 tons at a total cost of some 390 million dollars. Liberia received 38 percent of total deliveries, Guinea 28 percent, Côte d'Ivoire 21 percent and Sierra Leone 13 percent. The United States has been a major contributor throughout the operation, as was the European Union (EU) up to 1993. Several other countries, in particular Japan, Sweden and the Netherlands, have also contributed in food and cash.

In terms of quick response, the overall track record is excellent. With regard to delivery and (to a lesser extent) distribution, the performance of this relief operation is judged to have been of a very high standard. Huge amounts of food have reached the areas and their people in need, and many hundred thousands of lives have been saved, under the most difficult physical and security conditions. Yet, crisis-management has been the order of the day. The immediate term, the short run, has prevailed.

While needs for general distribution may have been reduced to some extent, they have in no way been eliminated. Phasing out general distribution by gradually reducing the ration and modifying the food basket, and in 1996 by introducing targeted feeding schemes, is viewed by the mission as an understandable response to a long-lasting relief situation. However, decisions on the available policy choices and their eventual implementation in the sub-region have been based on insufficient data on the socio-economic status of beneficiaries, their coping strategies and local economic conditions faced by them. Where it is right to end general distribution, another way must be found to do so (see recommendation a) - Phasing in and phasing out).

Targeting relief food to the most needy among the afflicted populations has been one of the most difficult issues facing the operation. This problem has been compounded further in many areas by renewed insecurity. In the absence of socio-economic-nutritional assessment data and monitoring of the affected populations and their circumstances, there is a risk that WFP will not know enough about their situations to render targeting effective and meaningful.

This document is produced in a limited number of copies. Delegates and observers are kindly requested to bring it to the meetings and to refrain from asking for additional copies.

Note to The Executive Board

This document contains recommendations for consideration by 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.

The WFP focal points for this document are:

Director of Evaluation: W. Kiene tel.: 5228-2029

Senior Evaluation Officer: A. Waeschle tel.: 5228-2032

Should you have any questions regarding matters of dispatch of documentation for the Executive Board, please contact the Documents Clerk (tel.: 5228-2641).



BACKGROUND TO THE EMERGENCY (Part 1. Section A. (i))¹

1. The recent period of civil strife in Liberia (since December 1989) has wreaked devastating effects on Liberia itself and has had major implications beyond its borders, especially in Sierra Leone, Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire. In the country, there have been periods of relative tranquillity, particularly during the second semester of 1995 after the Abuja peace accords, but at the time of writing this report (May 1996), war is ravaging Monrovia. Similarly, in Sierra Leone, since the elections of 26 February 1996, the situation moves between observance and violation of cease-fire.
2. In this region, some three million people have been affected; of these, more than two million are internally displaced persons (IDPs) and some 850,000 are refugees, out of pre-war populations of about 2.5 million in Liberia and 4.5 million in Sierra Leone. Other afflicted categories of the population classify neither as refugee nor internally displaced and are therefore often overlooked.
3. Liberia had experienced intermittent tension prior to 1989. However, the attack on 24 December 1989 in Nimba county by a group of Liberian rebels known as the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) sparked the beginning of a major civil war that six years later has yet to finish. Over time, factions and sub-factions have entered the conflict, creating great chaos, complicating any peace efforts and continually forcing people to flee their villages and seek refuge in the capital city (under the protection of the Economic Community of West African States Cease-Fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG)) and in the neighbouring countries of Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Sierra Leone in particular. It is thought that some 200,000 lives have been lost.
4. In Sierra Leone, the dynamics of the emergency are partly related to those in Liberia, but fuelled by forces internal to Sierra Leone. Civil strife commenced in March 1991 when members of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) launched attacks against government forces. The continuing violence from March 1991 into 1996 and the indiscriminate killing of thousands of civilians have led to large population movements to major towns and the capital city and into the neighbouring countries of Guinea and Liberia. It is estimated that one third of the 4.5-million population have been forced to flee their homes.

¹ The references made throughout this report refer to the relevant sections in the full report on the programme policy evaluation in the 1990-95 period of the WFP-assisted refugee and displaced person operations in Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Sierra Leone (available in English only).

The evaluation was coordinated by a senior evaluation officer, WFP. The mission to the four war-affected countries was undertaken from 12 February to 25 March 1996, and consisted of a senior public administration expert and team leader (consultant), WFP; a social anthropologist (consultant), WFP; a nutritionist for country assessments of Liberia and Sierra Leone (consultant), WFP; an agricultural economist, FAO; and a transport economist, WFP. A representative of the United States State Department participated as an observer in the Sierra Leone assessment.



OVERVIEW OF THE WFP RESPONSE (Part 1. Section A. (ii))

5. WFP assistance (initiated on 15 February 1990) was first channelled through six country-specific emergency operations (EMOPs). Following the escalation of the Liberian crisis and the increasing complexity of the overall operation, a regional "umbrella" approach¹ was introduced and implemented through three regional EMOPs and five regional protracted refugee and displaced person operations (PRO) - No. 4604 - including the current phase. The regional operation has also included 4,000 Liberian refugees in Nigeria (assisted by WFP up to the end of 1994) and 14,000 Liberian refugees in Ghana who are still being assisted under the present PRO.
6. Over the period in question, WFP assistance has aimed at providing as effectively as possible relief food to refugees and IDPs in the four war-affected countries. The 1996 programme has been designed in such a way as to progressively phase out general distribution in favour of targeted feeding schemes, i.e., emergency vulnerable group and school feeding and food for work.
7. With a view to promoting self-reliance and avoiding dependency, a phase-out strategy has already been in place since 1992 through a gradual reduction of the ration, and since 1994-95 through a modification of the food basket (see paragraph 35). On the basis of the yearly joint WFP/UNHCR/donor/NGO food needs assessments, this strategy took into account what was seen as the special nature of this regional emergency operation in which the majority of refugees and IDPs are integrated into local communities and engaged in productive and income-generating activities. However, the "safety net" and supplementary feeding schemes for vulnerable groups, i.e., pre-school children, unaccompanied children, expectant and nursing mothers and the elderly, as well as newly-arrived refugees or IDPs with a low nutritional status, (both in addition to general distribution), have been maintained throughout the different phases of the PRO.
8. The numbers of beneficiaries have fluctuated over the six years in question, both as a result of the intensification of the conflicts, and in relation to the accessibility of affected populations. Exact numbers are difficult to calculate for the fluid populations and even official figures vary between different documents. The following table shows estimated numbers of beneficiaries served by WFP over the period 1990-95.

¹ The regional "umbrella" approach was expected to facilitate better planning of WFP assistance. It includes a single overall budget and food basket, allowing for flexibility and rapid regional and local decision-making in the allocation of food and non-food resources to IDPs and refugees in the four war-affected countries, according to the pace and extent of population movement, and to changing needs.



Year	Liberia		Sierra Leone		Guinea	Côte d'Ivoire
	Refugees	IDPs ¹	Refugees	IDPs	Refugees	Refugees
1990		46 000	125 000		325 000	300 000
1991		800 000	125 000		325 000	300 000
1992		800 000	10 000	230 000	450 000	240 000
1993	100 000	1 000 000	8 000	255 000	485 000	180 000
1994	100 000	1 000 000	6 000	255 000	485 000	180 000
1995	100 000	1 400 000	6 000	294 000	485 000	250 000

¹ Liberian IDPs include the 800,000 population of Monrovia, designated "war-affected". Although an estimated 600,000 war-affected people in need of aid were identified by 1991 in Greater Monrovia, this area has only been accessible sporadically.

9. Between 1991 and 1995, the relief operation succeeded in delivering an average of 130,000 tons a year, or nearly 9,000 tons a month. In terms of volume, it was not an extraordinarily large undertaking for the Programme. However, the operation was particularly complex in terms of delivery, primarily because of continuing civil conflict and deteriorating physical infrastructure.
10. There has been a fairly constant flow of WFP-supplied food commodities transiting through the four main ports of Freetown, Monrovia, Conakry and San Pedro, although with some important variations in the use of individual ports. WFP has taken responsibility in conjunction with implementing partners, i.e., non-governmental organizations (NGOs), for the whole process, from the port to the extended delivery points (EDPs) up to final delivery points and, for internally displaced persons, up to distribution. For the refugee population, food distribution, monitoring and reporting are undertaken by UNHCR's implementing NGOs. WFP works indirectly with them, except in Côte d'Ivoire, where WFP's implementing partners assume this responsibility for reasons given in the full evaluation report.

NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION (Part 1. Section B. (i) - (v))

11. This evaluation was primarily commissioned to carry out a programme policy analysis of the 1990-95 period of WFP's assistance to Liberian and Sierra Leonean refugees and IDPs in Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Sierra Leone. The mission was entrusted with the task of taking a retrospective look for the purpose of coming up with lessons to be learned "for next time" (as well as for the remainder of the current regional operation "this time"), whether in this region or another. The evaluation is therefore in the form of a thematic overview of issues mentioned in the following paragraph, including matters of policy and institutional design. All policy concerns were examined in an operational context and one mission member looked in particular at the delivery system and the cost-effectiveness of the programme.
12. The mission was requested by WFP to examine the following issues: a) efficiency and effectiveness in identifying and targeting beneficiaries in the light of overall assistance provided and individual survival strategies; b) effectiveness of coordination between the organizations involved in the relief operation; c) relevance and efficiency of the regional approach; and d) relief-rehabilitation-development linkage. During the course of the mission's work, other issues were included, such as that of general distribution versus targeted feeding schemes.



FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Delivery and distribution (Part 3. Section B. (ii) - (iii))

13. With regard to delivery and (to a lesser extent) distribution, the performance of the regional relief operation is generally believed to have been of a very high standard. Huge amounts of food have reached the areas and the people in need under the most difficult physical and security conditions. However, because of shortcomings in commodity tracking and reporting, this record could not be defended unambiguously, when criticized. On at least two occasions during the operation, allegations of significant commodity losses in Liberia and Sierra Leone were brought forward to WFP by major donors. Owing to the Programme's inability to respond promptly and in a convincing manner, the issues had been allowed to reach a point where—even after provision of evidence refuting the claims—donors' confidence in WFP's ability to manage the food entrusted to it had been eroded further.
14. In general, delivery was reasonably cost-effective given the dispersed and changing beneficiary locations, the intermittent, and often hazardous, obstacles to access and the character of the transport sector in the region. However, further economies might have been achieved with more and better qualified logistics staff.
15. The relatively unsatisfactory track record regarding final distribution and accountability has mainly arisen from ineffective institutional and organizational arrangements and the lack of a pro-active policy dialogue with UNHCR, resulting from communication problems between WFP and UNHCR, to assess current arrangements in terms that could lead to real improvements (see paragraph 26).

Identifying and enumerating the populations at risk and their food needs (Part 3. Section A. (i) - (iv) and Part 3. B. (iv))

16. The individual ability of a refugee or IDP to cope varies according to a number of factors such as a) economic conditions of the area in which displaced or seeking refuge; b) level of training and education of beneficiary, former occupation, support of access to extended family, etc.; c) access to complementary aid; and d) registration and distribution systems. As a result of these factors, there are marked differences in abilities to cope across the refugee and displaced populations which have sometimes been neglected in generalizations such as "the integration of refugees into host family households in areas with functioning markets" and internally displaced populations' access to local means of support.¹
17. Registration is carried out in a number of ways, and by different types of agencies.² Problems have been experienced, partly due to the inherent difficulties of counting large numbers of people. This has been compounded by the "self-settling" nature of the refugee and IDP influxes, which has made it very difficult to differentiate between intended beneficiaries and local populations. The changing security situation throughout

¹ Source: Joint food needs assessment report.

² The registration of refugees is undertaken by UNHCR's implementing partners, i.e., the Ministry of Planning in Guinea and the Ministry of the Interior in Côte d'Ivoire, while that of IDPs is carried out by NGOs.



the period in question and the proximity to people's homes of many safe havens for refugees and IDPs have created further problems as new influxes arrive into areas, and as people have attempted to return home. Some registration systems have tended to lead to higher levels of fraud and corruption than others, increasing pressure on limited existing resources. For example, in parts of the region, local chiefs were asked to register either their own people (as in Sierra Leone for IDPs), or the number of refugees in their town or village. This system has allowed the registration of local people who are neither IDPs nor refugees, thus resulting in over-registration. Verifications and physical counts, although time-consuming and costly to organize, consistently addressed the problem of over-registration and thus ensured that more of WFP assistance went to the right target groups.

18. Major differences between the situations of the basic beneficiary population categories—refugees, internally displaced and war-affected—influence the type of problems they face. Hence, these differences require different responses. For example, due to the weakened local economies and generalized insecurity, war-affected persons and IDPs in Liberia and Sierra Leone were often in far greater need and much more reliant on WFP and other assistance than the refugee populations in Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea.
19. The population in Monrovia, whose normal activities have been undermined by the war, was initially referred to as internally displaced, blurring distinctions with later displaced persons in the camps of the city. While the population of Monrovia was certainly in need of general food distributions in 1990, at the height of the war, many in the region agreed that this urgency had diminished in 1992. However, general distribution continued, partly because of the political difficulties of phasing it out.
20. Despite the recommendation made on several occasions by the joint food needs assessment missions to undertake household surveys, these were carried out only once by local consultants and only in 1994 in Côte d'Ivoire and in 1994/95 in Guinea. Funded by UNHCR, both surveys were cross-sectional and so only reflected a "snap-shot" of conditions at the particular time.
21. Given the lack of detailed data regarding the socio-economic characteristics of the affected populations, targeting those truly in need has proved to be even more difficult than reaching the needy people. Decision-making about food aid needs based on data from nutrition surveys suffers from a number of constraints such as: a) restricted geographical and population coverage due to poor security; b) limited description of population surveyed, for example in terms of length of displacement and host/non-host residents; and c) insufficient data on the causes of malnutrition.

Meeting emergency food needs (Part 3. Section C. (i) - (iii))

22. *General distribution.* Widespread famine in the region was avoided by increasing the absolute availability of food. There is some evidence from nutrition surveys that malnutrition rates dropped quickly when food aid in adequate quantities reached crisis areas. However, the decline in malnutrition rates noted in Liberia and Sierra Leone in areas that became accessible after having been inaccessible for protracted periods is unlikely to have been due only to inputs from WFP and other relief organizations, as commercial traffic and trade would probably have restarted simultaneously. At the same time, food aid was not always successful in meeting needs, partly because of interruptions in distribution (mainly due to security conditions) when the ration scale was



inadequate to make up for previous shortfalls. (Retroactive distribution is not authorized.)

23. *Supplementary feeding.* Reports from medical NGOs running supplementary and therapeutic feeding centres in Liberia and Sierra Leone suggest that, in general, the short-term impact of the centres has been positive (individual children gained weight). However, the centres have a number of limitations. For example, the long-term impact is likely to be diminished when children are discharged into the same conditions that led them to become malnourished in the first place; providing a take-home ration has not always been found to be effective, as it may be used to feed the entire family or be sold; high numbers of defaulters have been reported from some centres. Furthermore, the cost of running feeding centres is high: the monthly cost of food alone is about four times higher than that of the basic ration. While supplementary and therapeutic feeding may be essential in crisis situations, in view of the above limitations, the question is raised whether food allocated for this purpose could have been better targeted for preventive purposes rather than for curative purposes.
24. *Emergency school feeding* was initiated in Liberia in 1991, operating primarily in Monrovia. In Sierra Leone, where the programme started in 1992, children from some refugee and displaced camps have received school meals. Non-camp dwellers were excluded. In the context of both countries, school meals act as an income transfer, encouraging families to send their children to school. The nutritional impact of the meal is therefore less important. There were reports that the preparation of the meal was difficult where only cereals were supplied and the school was expected to provide condiments, so children were given dry rations instead. Where school feeding has a "return-to-school" role, take-home distribution carried out later in the day may be as effective as providing cooked food. Unlike supplementary feeding programmes, school feeding is not directed at a vulnerable child in particular, and so diversion within the family is less problematic.

Coordination between organizations involved in the emergency (Part 3. Section E. (i) - (iv))

25. The extent of coordination and communication in the region between WFP, UNHCR and other United Nations organizations varied considerably. The United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA), created in March 1992, arrived in the region only in 1995. Before that date, the UNDP Resident Representative (now United Nations Resident Coordinator) was designated to be DHA's representative in Liberia and Sierra Leone. WFP has stressed on various occasions the importance of experienced people being nominated for the position of DHA Coordinator.
26. In Liberia, coordination was generally considered to have been good, especially in the early stages of the conflict. WFP played a lead role, partly as one of the largest United Nations agencies in the country, and due to its early arrival in Monrovia during the war. Good coordination and relationships with the relief community have also been attributed to the strong personality of the WFP Country Director in office from 1991 to 1995, who enjoyed the respect and confidence of his colleagues. However, the importance of personality in this case demonstrates the arbitrary nature of the system of leadership and coordination. In Guinea, for example, the crucial relationship between WFP and UNHCR was somewhat unsatisfactory during the period, although it has improved recently. This was due partly to problems inherent in the work—the issue of



case-load registration and numbers to be served had caused considerable dispute—but again also to design problems in the system of intervention. The current renegotiation of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between WFP and UNHCR is addressing some of these issues.

27. The ad hoc response to emergency needs as they arise has implications for the extent of the response, one example being the lack of any designated agency with responsibility for the non-food needs of IDPs. The lack of complementary aid to IDPs undermines WFP's efforts.
28. Coordination mechanisms between WFP and governments, with the exception of arrangements with Côte d'Ivoire's Ministry of the Interior, leave much to be desired, although situations vary in the region for different reasons.
29. The problems that arise in the relationship with local and international NGOs relate to issues of ambiguity of mandates and responsibilities, and the lack of effective channels for dealing with problems as they occur. Where WFP deals direct with NGOs as implementing partners, it has developed MOUs that attempt to address some of these problems. The activities of NGOs that may affect the work of WFP but are independent from it are more difficult to control. For example, in Sierra Leone there have been incidences where CRS applied a different food basket and ration scale to beneficiary groups in the same areas. In spite of the recent MOU between WFP and CRS, these incidences continue to occur.

The regional approach (Part 3. G. (i) - (ii))

30. The regional approach has greatly facilitated delivery activities. Regional resource reallocation between countries, cross-border operations, local purchases of palm-oil, swap operations and cost-effective delivery activities were highly positive. More specifically, the regional approach allowed decisions regarding commodity reallocation between the four countries to be made much later than would have been possible for country-specific projects. The advantages of this lag were significant in terms of optimum delivery targeting, particularly under conditions of important changes in beneficiary locations and numbers and fluctuations in the pipeline. Furthermore, the regional approach has facilitated the utilization and accounting of ITSH funds.
31. The drawback of the regional approach lies in the tendency to apply oversimplified standardization to the food basket and rations. As the conditions faced by displaced, refugee and resident populations were diverse, the impact of this standardization may have been to provide too much food to some populations and too little to others.
32. The mission is of the opinion that the full potential of this regional approach with respect to communication, institutional learning and memory has not been realized. There does not appear to be a clear division of responsibilities and tasks between WFP headquarters and the Country Director in Abidjan acting as the WFP Regional Emergency Coordinator and, in addition, since June 1995, as DHA's Regional Focal Point and Emergency Coordinator for Liberia and Sierra Leone. Neither do there appear to be clear criteria according to which emerging areas of policy currently not covered by either should be decided at headquarters or by the Abidjan office. Of course, if the country office assumes regional functions, which in the opinion of the mission it should do, this requires strengthening of its mandate, resources and capacity.



Relief-rehabilitation-development linkage (Part 3. Section H. (i) - (v))

33. The mission's findings on this difficult issue are tentative. While recognizing the many practical constraints, the mission felt that the potential exists to use a portion of the total relief food aid in a more productive way in complex emergencies, thereby maximizing opportunities. It is important to view such activities as being parallel to the main relief effort, but also to recognize the potential for their expansion. Positive models exist in the region, especially in Monrovia, where food for work has been used in an innovative way by local NGOs. The National Volunteer Programme used food for work to support former combatants in vocational training, swamp-rice development and infrastructural rehabilitation projects. Emergency school feeding implemented in Liberia and Sierra Leone is a laudable attempt to use relief food to achieve more productive objectives. However, institutional capacity and non-food inputs are crucial ingredients for productive relief ventures and need to be established through improved coordination between local or international NGOs and other United Nations agencies.

Phasing out of general distribution (Part 3. Section D. ((i) - (vi))

34. Various methods have been employed in attempts to ensure that the populations are helped to become self-sufficient, and to promote the efficient use of WFP's resources by targeting the neediest. The policy of gradual reduction of the ration was based on the perception of beneficiaries as having access to other means through their own "coping strategies". While some population groups and categories within them may have succeeded in gaining access to local economic activities in the four countries, this has depended on a number of factors which have not been examined in detail by the joint food needs assessment missions. Some sections of beneficiaries, particularly IDPs, have found it difficult to gain access to stable sources of income to supplement food aid. Even without detailed information, differentiation could have at least been made on the basis of how the different groups are affected by the war. Refugees in Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire have always had different needs from IDPs in camps in towns and cities.
35. The replacement of high-value rice with less expensive commodities (bulgur wheat in Liberia and Sierra Leone, maize meal in Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire) was a beneficial move in that it reduced the rate of diversion and lessened the disincentive effects on the local price of rice. Bulgur wheat has a higher caloric content than polished rice. Furthermore, this shift was considered to be of a more self-targeting nature, i.e., only the most needy would have recourse to the programme. It is to be regretted that, in spite of recommendations made on more than one occasion by the joint WFP/UNHCR/donor/NGO food needs assessment missions, the decision to distribute lower-cost commodities could not have been implemented at an earlier date.
36. The phasing down of the ration across the different populations and the standardization of this reduced ration have failed to take into account the beneficiaries' differential access to complementary survival strategies. While IDPs (as in Greater Monrovia) and vulnerable groups within the refugee populations have received an additional allowance under the "safety net", depending on security in the former case and correct identification in the latter, the benefits received have still not always been sufficient. Reliance on very marginal activities, although difficult to measure, is widespread.
37. In the refugee host countries, the policy was further based on an integrated strategy, involving complementary aid in the form of non-food items provided by UNHCR and income-generating projects, to support the promotion of self-sufficiency. While provision



of this complementary aid has varied considerably for the refugee populations in terms of quantity and quality, for the IDPs in Sierra Leone and Liberia it has often been completely lacking, increasing their reliance on the supplementary food provided. For the refugee populations, the household surveys reported that only four percent and six percent that arrived before 1993 in Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea, respectively, benefited from UNHCR-funded income-generating or agricultural projects.

38. In the mission's view, the policy of phasing out by reducing the ration could work if the following points were taken into account: a) knowledge of beneficiaries (who they are, where they are, and what kind of needs they have at the general and household level); b) the registration procedure (designed and implemented in such a way as to get the right numbers, and the right kind of household composition data); and c) the right kind and amount of complementary aid is provided.
39. Since 1996 the gradual change to targeted feeding schemes has meant that only particular segments of the affected populations¹ receive food. Within these basic categories, all groups are treated the same. Certainly some segments have become self-sufficient. According to the household surveys in Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea, an estimated 30 to 50 percent of the refugee population that arrived before 1993 have reached a certain degree of self-sufficiency. However, it has not been possible with the data currently available to find out to which segments of the overall population they belong. For example, while urban refugees who arrived before 1993 were classified as self-sufficient on the basis of having income levels similar to those of local urban inhabitants, a closer analysis of data in the household surveys reveals that income levels are correlated geographically with those in areas with more active markets, whether rural or urban, having higher incomes than in other areas. Thus, urban refugees in Gueckedou (Guinea) and Tabou (Côte d'Ivoire) may be more vulnerable than rural refugees in Nzerekore (Guinea) and Danane (Côte d'Ivoire) regions, whose markets are more abundant. As with the policy of gradual reduction of the ration, targeting (as a phase-out strategy) could be implemented in a more efficient manner through the collection and analysis of data on the populations involved, and the economic realities they face.

RECOMMENDATIONS, FOLLOW-UP AND LESSONS LEARNED

40. The mission made a lengthy and detailed list of recommendations, lessons learned and follow-up actions which are given in the full evaluation report. The major points are highlighted below.

Recommendations (Part 4. (i) - (xii))

Leading principles for humanitarian aid

- a) The rationale for food aid in complex emergencies should be primarily humanitarian. It should not exclude others, but the humanitarian rationale should be paramount.

¹ Those groups identified as vulnerable include households headed by women, children, rural dwellers and rural refugees who arrived in 1994 and 1995, and IDPs in rural Liberia and Sierra Leone, as well as the sick, disabled and elderly.



Therefore, general distribution is the principal modality of food aid to be pursued as long as the majority of the population in question faces an emergency situation.

- b) Linkages between relief, rehabilitation and development should be sought through "productive relief", but not to the extent of subordinating the urgent and the immediate to what is important in the longer run, or of neglecting all of the needs of the weaker and weakest categories afflicted.

Phasing in and phasing out

- a) Two different options to end general distribution, when relief needs are no longer of the same nature as at the full emergency stage, were considered by the mission. One option is to continue with general distribution for all up to a predetermined cut-off point, with due advance public notice being given of this intention. The final such general distribution may in some circumstances be made with reduced food baskets and rations, and with or without, as it were, a "golden handshake" in the form perhaps of an additional ration (thus making the last general distribution in fact a double one). The second option is general distribution being continued not for all, but only for those segments of the population deemed to be still in need of it. This could be called "selective" general distribution. The former option is relatively the simpler to undertake while continuing to meet humanitarian objectives. It requires humanitarian monitoring, assessment and decision-making. The latter is to be advised only where there are sufficient socio-economic data to make it a feasible option. "Feasible" in that context means what is administratively possible as well as objective-achieving. It requires socio-economic-nutritional monitoring, assessment and decision-making.
- b) The way of ending general distribution should be decided from the moment general distribution is started, and made known to all concerned. It should not be left unplanned, just to happen later, because it would then risk being strongly influenced or actually decided by "donor fatigue", "policy vacuum", etc. The choice of method to be used must depend on the type of monitoring and assessment data. The availability of this information is indispensable.

Delivery and distribution

- a) The present delivery system should be maintained, but with improvements that would allow a comprehensive commodity tracking and reporting system to provide accurate and timely information for WFP's own management purposes and donor reporting. The mission understands that the Programme is taking such steps, and recommends that this should be given priority.
- b) With regard to institutions and final distribution, it is recommended that WFP's logistics and operational responsibilities be expanded to include—besides delivery up to the final delivery point—distribution from this point, also for refugee populations. However, the arrangement would not necessarily be the same for all seasons and circumstances, but would vary (for example as between NGOs, and refugees' or displaced persons' own organizations) to suit the local context and conditions.

Regionalization

- a) The "regional approach" should be strengthened following an analysis of division of responsibilities and tasks between WFP headquarters and the country office in



Côte d'Ivoire. The aim is to maximize its potential as a regional office and, in turn, its interrelations with other country offices.

Information, assessment and monitoring

- a) Present procedures regarding logistics and operations systems should be strengthened, especially with regard to data on operations required for internal and other accountability. Data need to be reconciled at the end of each PRO phase, preferably through an internal audit.
- b) For socio-economic-nutritional assessment and monitoring, a major change is required, i.e., the creation of a new kind of recurring short-term WFP staff position. To begin with, on a trial basis, a specialist should be attached to the regional office in Abidjan for six months with the single purpose of trying to develop and test a methodology for this kind of assessment and monitoring.
- c) Ways and means must be found to improve the resources and capacity of the joint WFP/UNHCR/donor/NGO food needs assessments, appropriate to their present scope and nature as joint assessments of operations.

Policy instruments

- a) With regard to policy dialogue, advocacy, coordination and communication, there should be focal points or lead agencies at every point in the process and chain. Where cross-mandates (such as between WFP and UNHCR), etc. continue to elude an effective grasp, lead roles should be played by agencies concerned with the issue. The purpose should be to minimize conflicts, whether these be about mandates, resources or capacities.
- b) Programme policy evaluation should be a regularly scheduled activity, undertaken by evaluation teams that are versed specifically in programme policy evaluation, not operational evaluation. Normally these should be mixed in composition and include internal as well as external evaluators with emergency-specific competence. Donor participation in such evaluations is to be encouraged in ways that fit the circumstances of the particular case.

Lessons learned

- a) To find a solution to a problem, it must first be identified and then monitored. For humanitarian emergency, the problem is what has become known as "complex emergency", not least because it is likely to be a changing series of problems, not just a singularity, and moreover not exactly the same for all the actors and parties concerned. What is therefore meant by "complex emergency" has first to be understood, in terms which permit intervention and aid to become part of its solution.
- b) The major achievement of reaching the populations at risk in complex emergencies can be neither fully appreciated nor conclusively defended in the absence of satisfactory logistics and management data.
- c) Programme policy should be policy-driven, not resource-driven (even though resources may always be a constraint), through periodic evaluations by mixed teams of internal and external evaluators.



- d) Within a regional approach, one needs to be fully aware of the sometimes counterproductive tendency to encourage an oversimplified standardization of food baskets and rations.
- e) Without specialized assessment and monitoring of the socio-economic circumstances of the afflicted populations, and their nutrition, there is a risk that WFP will not know enough about their situations to render targeting effective and meaningful.
- f) In order for effective distribution systems to be strengthened, the responsibility for distributing WFP relief food should not simply be handed over to bodies whose credentials and promise fall far below the organization which is responsible for the process up to that part. (See recommendation b) - Delivery and distribution).

Follow-up (Part 6. (i) - (v))

- 41. It is recommended that the following actions be implemented as early as possible:
 - a) A follow-up workshop be held in Abidjan. Its purpose would be to qualify the mission's findings; to consider the programme policy principles in its recommendations for their significance for operations; and to propose a work plan for follow-up in this region. Another workshop should be held at WFP headquarters with the aim of exploring general themes in complex emergency programme policy evaluation, with particular emphasis on methodology.
 - b) A post of socio-economic-nutritional assessment and monitoring officer be established (see recommendation b) - Information, assessment and monitoring) to ensure that WFP assistance can be better and more efficiently allocated to those in need.
 - c) In addition, consideration needs to be given to further strengthening (and resourcing) the Abidjan office by way of regional procurement, finance, logistics, emergency and reports officers.
- 42. The mission's recommendations and follow-up actions are currently being considered by the Executive director.



