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de Alimentos

Executive Board  
Third Regular Session

Rome, 20 - 23 October 1997

## EVALUATION REPORTS

### Agenda item 5



Distribution: GENERAL  
**WFP/EB.3/97/5/Add.5**  
22 September 1997  
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

## PROJECT ANGOLA 5602

### Relief and post-emergency operations in Angola: A joint WFP/NGO/IFRC evaluation<sup>1</sup>

Total cost to WFP	49.2 million dollars
Date approved by the CFA	November 1995
Duration of project	Twelve months
First distribution date	February 1996
Official termination date	February 1997
Date of evaluation	October/November 1996

All monetary values are expressed in United States dollars.

<sup>1</sup> A joint WFP/NGO/IFRC team visited the country from 28 October to 15 November 1996. The team was composed of: a representative (staff member) from Action Internationale contre la Faim (ACF) Headquarters, Paris; a representative (consultant based in Addis Ababa) from CARE US; a representative (consultant based in Benguela, Angola) from German Agro Action (GAA); a representative (staff member) from IFRC Headquarters, Geneva; and a representative (staff member) from WFP's Office of Evaluation, Rome, as team leader. In addition, the team was actively supported by numerous NGOs on the ground in Angola, as well as the WFP country office and sub-offices, which also helped with the logistics.

### ABSTRACT

The evaluation confirmed the widely held opinion that the relief and post-relief operations in Angola supported by WFP and its NGO partners have been successful. The generally effective cooperation between WFP and its partners has certainly been a major factor in this success; overall, both WFP and NGOs have expressed satisfaction about their mutual cooperation. The evaluation, which focused mainly on the process of cooperation, found that the generally clear definition and common understanding of the respective roles of WFP and the NGOs have been major positive factors. This was the case especially during the emergency phase, when interdependency and complementarity of individual strengths were easily identifiable. By contrast, the type and intensity of cooperation have undergone some changes in the transition towards rehabilitation; the main issues are: increased complexity, different nature and timing of the interventions, and resourcing. Areas in which more harmonization in approaches and criteria was desirable included needs assessment, targeting and monitoring, and systematic planning of interventions in the short and longer term. The mission identified recommendations as well as lessons that might be replicable in similar operations elsewhere. A number have already been followed up; these include stepped up analysis of food security issues, improved targeting, intervention planning and standardization of monitoring indicators. Apart from factors that were unique to the Angola situation (such as the support of WFP staff to NGOs, the WFP Country Director being also the head of the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (Unidade de Coordenação para Assistência Humanitária - UCAH), etc.), more generic lessons referred to the clear identification of the respective roles of WFP and NGOs; the early inclusion of NGOs in strategic planning; the need for capacity-building (Government; national NGOs) with the aim of achieving sustainability of the interventions. The joint evaluation was considered useful. However, it was concluded that future evaluations should focus particularly on the impact of cooperation between WFP and NGOs.

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## NOTE TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

**This document is submitted for consideration to the Executive Board.**

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

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

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## BACKGROUND

1. In response to human suffering and devastation in Angola, caused by long years of civil war, WFP has provided relief food assistance under various emergency operations (EMOPs) and protracted displaced person operations (PDPOs) starting in 1989/90, as have its partners. The complex situation and sheer magnitude of the emergency called for close coordination and cooperation among all relief aid providers.
2. Throughout, there have been close relations between WFP and partners from the NGO community as well as the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC)—one of the largest implementing partners for WFP food distribution—although the intensity and type of the relationship have varied in response to changing situations. Working links were strong during the relatively stable period in 1992 until war broke out again and most of the humanitarian agencies evacuated the country. WFP (together with some partners from the NGO community, such as German Agro Action (GAA)) remained, established a strong logistics capacity and presence throughout the country, and linked up with partners such as national NGOs (NNGOs). International NGOs (INGOs) returned to Angola in 1993 and renewed their partnership with WFP, particularly in view of WFP's strengths in logistics.
3. When the Lusaka Peace Agreement was signed in 1994, prospects for durable peace seemed to improve and a major re-orientation (from relief to rehabilitation) of WFP and NGO food aid activities seemed possible. The changes in the political climate prompted also a much higher presence of NGOs and an increase in the number of NGO partners with which WFP cooperated.<sup>1</sup>
4. As in the case of Angola, cooperation between WFP and NGOs has intensified worldwide over the last years, particularly in the context of complex relief operations. Recognizing that both WFP and the NGOs have specific strengths and roles which can be complementary and reinforce relief and development efforts, WFP and a number of NGOs have signed Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs)<sup>2</sup> to facilitate global cooperation.
5. Moreover, in order to further enhance cooperation, a forum has been established by WFP and interested parties from the NGO community as well as IFRC to provide a mechanism of regular and systematic consultation and information sharing. During the first two sessions (1995 and 1996, respectively), monitoring and evaluation of assistance in emergency operations was identified as an important area of common interest, as organizations are facing pressure to step up accountability and improve future interventions.
6. It was decided to undertake a joint evaluation of relief operations. Angola was chosen because a) the operation had been complex and provided for a wide range of experience, given the numerous WFP/NGO agreements; b) it included elements of relief as well as rehabilitation; and c) the operation was considered as being a positive example of successful WFP/NGO cooperation, thus providing lessons to be applied elsewhere.

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<sup>1</sup> At the time of the mission, it was found that WFP cooperated with 42 international and 102 national NGOs in more than 1,000 interventions.

<sup>2</sup> At the time of the mission, this was found to involve Catholic Relief Service (CRS) (January 1995); CARE US, SCF (US), World Vision International and CARE Canada (16 and 17 July 1996, respectively); and GAA (September 1996).



## PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

7. In line with the understanding reached at the WFP/NGO forum, the main purpose of the joint evaluation was to assess strengths and weaknesses in the mechanisms of WFP/NGO collaboration at various stages of the operation, and to draw lessons that might be relevant for cooperation in future relief and post-relief situations elsewhere. A distinction was to be made between features that were specific to the Angola situation and others that were generic and could be replicated. Overall, the evaluation was to focus more on the process of WFP/NGO cooperation than on the impact of the operation as such.
8. In addition, the joint exercise was to help achieve a better understanding of procedures, methodologies and limitations of the evaluation of emergency relief and post-relief operations, particularly in a context of transition.
9. A number of key issues<sup>1</sup> were identified:
  - a) The respective roles and responsibilities of WFP and NGOs (both international and national) as well as of the Government, including the issue of substituting the Government's responsibilities with NGOs, particularly in the context of rehabilitation.
  - b) The role of MOUs and other contractual arrangements—have they provided practical frameworks to enhance cooperation?
  - c) Needs assessment and targeting—are methods applied harmonized? Is there complementarity and coordination of such exercises? Are selection criteria harmonized?
  - d) Monitoring, reporting and evaluation—are there common standards and understanding about the nature and scope of these tasks? What type of indicators and methodologies are being used?

## MAIN FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS<sup>2</sup>

### Context of WFP/NGO cooperation

10. Given its limited response capacity during the emergency as well as the transition period, the Government has welcomed close cooperation with both WFP and NGOs. In fact, WFP-assisted activities have been implemented by NGOs who have agreements with the Ministry of Social Affairs (MINARS) or by MINARS itself. Overall, MINARS expressed satisfaction with the cooperation received, apart from the notion that coordination of aid interventions could still be improved. Reference was made to an uneven presence of NGOs

<sup>1</sup> Since this was a first experience of a formal joint WFP/NGO evaluation, the terms of reference underwent some evolution during the exercise. Apart from having been commented on by a number of NGOs at their headquarters level, the terms of reference took also into account issues (e.g., WFP's inputs and services) identified in a participatory approach with NGO and IFRC partners and others through workshops/round table meetings in Luanda and at the provincial level.

<sup>2</sup> Findings and conclusions are based on analysis of documentation; discussions with international and national NGOs at the central and provincial levels; discussions with beneficiaries of joint WFP/NGO food aid interventions during field trips to nine of the 18 provinces of the country; contacts with WFP, UCAH, UNICEF, International Organization for Migration (IOM), UNHCR and other United Nations agencies; USAID and EEC; and the Government and UNITA at both the central and provincial levels.



on the national territory<sup>1</sup> (some areas such as Benguela, were “overcrowded”, while others were “underserved”), the need for redistribution of tasks between NGOs, and some lack of information on NGOs’ activities. Nevertheless, the Government has been increasingly involved over the years in coordinating humanitarian assistance programmes together with UCAH through the Humanitarian Coordination Group (in which WFP also participates). The Government, União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA), major donors and NGOs take part in meetings of the National Food Aid Coordination Group organized and chaired by WFP.

11. From the time UCAH was established in 1993, cooperation between WFP and NGOs must also be seen in the context of a general collaboration between United Nations agencies and NGOs, on which agreement was reached under the auspices of UCAH. The general agreement was “that the UN agencies’ logistic and technical capabilities would be combined with the expertise of the field-based personnel of Angolan and international NGOs”;<sup>2</sup> distribution of responsibilities was established accordingly. The fact that WFP, as the main agency in Angola, was invited to second a staff member to the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) to become the director of UCAH certainly helped in understanding food aid issues and enhancing cooperation between WFP and its NGO partners.

### **Needs assessment and beneficiary targeting**

12. Joint crop and food needs assessments (WFP/FAO/United Nations agencies/donors/NGOs) have been undertaken regularly. These appear to have had a beneficial effect in that they have inspired donor confidence and ensured resourcing. Food security and nutrition assessments have been undertaken by individual NGOs, sometimes on WFP or Government request. WFP had also made efforts to compile anthropometric indicators by area in order to monitor malnutrition levels. However, it has been difficult to obtain a general view allowing for adjustments in the operation or setting of priorities in case of food-supply problems.
13. Few such assessments were undertaken jointly by WFP and NGOs. Moreover, the Government was not always involved; as a result, it occasionally questioned the results of the assessments. The exchange of information and harmonization of different approaches for needs assessments, particularly during the transition phase, have been limited. While a number of the partners emphasize conducting nutrition assessments on the basis of anthropometric indicators (which is satisfactory during the emergency phase), others include complementary methodologies related to food security and socio-economic indicators (which is appropriate during rehabilitation). The lack of concertation might be connected to the fact that WFP and some NGO partners have different views on the role and potential of food aid. This in turn influences their preference on the distribution of food aid: free food distribution (FFD); vulnerable group feeding (VGF); or food for work (FFW).
14. The mission observed that food aid interventions and types of activities selected are not necessarily based on systematic and coordinated needs assessments. While this might be a consequence of the otherwise desirable flexibility to respond quickly to changing needs and opportunities in the transition from relief to rehabilitation, it has not been helpful for initiating and enhancing a process of sustainable response to longer-term needs of the population.

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<sup>1</sup> This concern might have been raised in relation to assistance in Government- and UNITA-controlled areas, in spite of the fact that UNITA areas had received relatively little assistance.

<sup>2</sup> Report on DHA in Angola by T. Lanzer (1995).



15. The targeting of beneficiaries and the implementation of relief or rehabilitation interventions have often been hampered by the regional division into Government and UNITA areas. However, overcoming these problems has been one of the successful examples of WFP and NGO cooperation: UNITA has respected WFP as a fair and impartial international organization and WFP has achieved a good working relationship with UNITA. This has led the way for quite a number of NGO implementing partners<sup>1</sup> to work in UNITA areas or to implement interventions.
16. Criteria for targeting have not been entirely uniform among WFP and NGOs, nor have they been clearly stated in the respective agreements. While the targeting exercise was obviously easier during the emergency phase (based on anthropometric indicators), it has become more difficult during the rehabilitation period when socio-economic criteria need to be applied. However, it seems that some NGOs engaged in numerous small-scale FFW activities are unable to target in an active way (nor do they see a need for it in an overall emergency context). They deem it more appropriate to let the community determine the beneficiaries. Selection criteria for targeting vulnerable groups seemed to have been quite diverse as they are difficult to determine. More would have to be done to enhance a common understanding on the concept of vulnerability.
17. Targeting is becoming a more important issue as people become more food-secure (initially in Government-controlled areas). A number of NGOs have requested joint WFP/NGO workshops on issues of common interest, such as targeting and nutritional surveillance.

### Planning of interventions

18. Recognizing the relative strength of experienced NGOs, who usually have an in-depth knowledge of the geographical areas, WFP has largely responded to proposals presented by NGOs as long as they fall within its mandate and strategy. NGOs in turn have developed their proposals on the basis of their assessment or requests from the Government or UNITA. Communities seem not to have been involved much in determining their own priorities. The mission noted different approaches to the use of food aid, even when the geographical areas of intervention were the same and the population needs were similar. Some NGOs would consider FFW as a valuable means of engaging the population in activities of common interest; others would insist on community participation without any remuneration. The decision for one strategy or the other depends on whether the NGOs recognize food aid as a development instrument or as being appropriate solely for emergency relief. In addition, NGOs with expertise only in emergencies might not grasp whether it would be possible in a given area to shift to rehabilitation interventions.
19. As protracted displaced person operations (PDPOs) are resourced for a duration of one year, WFP allocated food commodities to NGO partners for projects only for up to three months—expandable for additional three-month periods. This makes predictability of food inputs and therefore programming difficult and had apparently represented a problem for a number of NGOs. The issue becomes more important during rehabilitation, which implies longer-term strategies and planning. NGOs felt the need to be kept informed on WFP's longer-term strategy which obviously had to take into account a still volatile situation in the country as well as WFP's resource position. WFP had already initiated work on a Country Strategy Outline (CSO) in consultation with its partners. By contrast, NGOs had not always kept WFP abreast on their longer-term plans and strategies.

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<sup>1</sup> Others, such as GAA/Benguela, were themselves able to establish workable relations with UNITA.



## Selection of partners

20. Since WFP has entered into partnership with an increasing number of NGOs, particularly to implement distribution and monitoring in the framework of rehabilitation activities, the issue of selecting efficient partners with the right expertise has become even more important. It is recognized that not all NGOs which have been successfully implied in relief activities are equally qualified to identify and implement rehabilitation and development-type interventions. While it has applied basic criteria such as proven track record, experience, technical competence, logistics capacity and geographical location in selecting its implementation partners, WFP seems not to have done so in a systematic and pro-active way. Rather, it had been driven by the type of interventions presented by NGOs, provided they were compatible with WFP's mandate and action strategy. This was understandable, given the country's overwhelming need for assistance, the Government's limited implementation capacity and WFP's own limitations. The problem of selecting the right partners becomes more acute in the context of (basically desirable) cooperation with NNGOs. In spite of their limitations in human and financial resources, WFP has initiated partnerships with NNGOs in a number of activities such as school canteens and rehabilitation of social infrastructure.
21. Another factor in the selection of implementing partners is the need—and at the same time difficulty—for the majority of NGOs to work in UNITA-controlled areas: at the time of the mission, only 20 percent of food aid was allocated to UNITA areas.

## Contractual arrangements

22. Although WFP has signed MOUs with a number of NGOs, the mission could not ascertain whether these had an influence on the relationship between the partners. Moreover, at the provincial level, only a few of these NGOs were aware of the existence of such agreements. More important to NGOs were formal project agreements, which are signed countrywide in Luanda or—more frequently—at the provincial level, and cover a given activity.
23. Some NGOs would welcome country-level MOUs as umbrella arrangements which not only provide clarity on the respective responsibilities of the partners for their joint activities but also address macro- or strategy-level issues. This is an interesting notion because it recognizes the potential such arrangements have for enhancing common understanding between the partners.
24. Certain problems connected with landside transport, storage and handling (LTSH) arose because of a lack of knowledge about procedures. The contracts generally determine the LTSH costs and reimbursement rate and items; however, a number of NGOs felt that contracts lacked clarity and that NGOs had not always all been treated equally. In fact, they had been treated differently, even in the same areas. In the case of remote areas, transport subsidies did not always meet the actual costs of hired transport. Concerns were also raised about delays in reimbursement by WFP. The issue of LTSH eventually had led some NGOs, such as CARE US, to break away from arrangements with WFP, especially after the acute emergency was over, and to turn to other food aid providers. However, in the transition period funding and resourcing become important for some NGOs that need cash for additional items apart from food.
25. The criticism raised by some NGOs that WFP's logistics services are expensive is not entirely correct. NGOs have by and large not found their own arrangements to be cheaper, as WFP moves larger volumes and therefore has better bargaining power.
26. On another note, it is recognized that LTSH arrangements, coupled with the lack of other funding, are particularly hard on NNGOs, which cannot resort to international donors and



have limited human and financial resources. On the other hand, it is important that NGOs, particularly international ones, share these costs with WFP in the context of a true partnership as opposed to a mere contractual relationship. It seems that NGOs occasionally expect too much from WFP in terms of inputs and services.

### **Monitoring and evaluation (M&E)**

27. Together with food distribution, monitoring and reporting are core responsibilities of the NGO implementing partners. In general, monitoring is limited to food quantities distributed and verification of beneficiary lists. Little has been done to attempt monitoring of the effects of food aid on beneficiaries; neither had WFP insisted upon and provided for this in reporting forms and contracts.
28. However, some efforts have been made to monitor the impact of a seeds and tools project (in which food rations are distributed to prevent farmers from consuming the seeds which are provided at the same time) on production and the eventual effect of food aid on market prices (Save the Children Fund (SCF) UK). Regular monitoring of the nutritional situation was also agreed upon between WFP and some NGOs. In addition, SCF UK has done end-monitoring of dry rations at the level of a health post to measure the impact of such rations on malnutrition.
29. Overall, approaches to monitoring and evaluation are quite diverse, left to the initiative of the implementing NGO partners, and could benefit from standardized guidelines and a common understanding on indicators to be monitored. This situation is probably a consequence of the absence of clearly stated objectives at the time the initial emergency response was designed.
30. Although WFP and the NGOs agree on the need to evaluate emergency and post-emergency interventions, there is no clear definition of the type of impact to be evaluated. The use of malnutrition rates as indicators for impact evaluation of a given operation has been the most common approach in justifying the food aid intervention or adjusting ration levels. This methodological approach stems from the emergency phase and has been maintained during the rehabilitation phase. Although the emphasis on monitoring the rates of malnutrition and mortality is pertinent during acute emergencies, it is less so during the rehabilitation phase. It does not provide a full understanding of the context in which the malnutrition is developing nor does it help to envisage other than food-aid-type interventions that might be more suitable.
31. The performance and compliance with contracts of NGOs are not monitored in a systematic way. Monitoring is left mainly to the initiative of WFP staff, and is limited to short visits to project intervention sites to ensure that activities undertaken correspond to those reported. Related monitoring by WFP staff occasionally has been considered as interference with the programmes managed by some NGOs, which reveals some lack of understanding on the partnership.

## **WFP'S SPECIFIC ROLES VIS-À-VIS ITS PARTNERS**

### **WFP food inputs**

32. Timely and steady food supply is one of WFP's most important responsibilities towards its implementing partners. At the same time, WFP's good reputation is a major reason for NGOs to team up with WFP in order to enlarge their basis of action and increase visibility



with beneficiaries, communities and authorities. Conversely, problems on the WFP side affect the NGOs' credibility.

33. Overall, NGOs have informed the evaluation team that they were satisfied with WFP's performance in spite of occasional pipeline and transport difficulties. The latter may have been due also to the fact that NGOs sometimes do not inform WFP sufficiently in advance on their programming. Some problems have occurred sporadically in the lack of certain commodities, quality and/or packaging. The standardization of rations for similar interventions implemented by different NGOs has not always been respected, in spite of WFP's coordination efforts. These problems may be due to the lack of guidelines, but may also be a result of individual NGOs' concepts and strategies. However, differential ration levels may pose problems for NGOs working in the same geographical areas.

### **Food aid coordination**

34. WFP's role in coordinating food aid issues through meetings at the central and provincial levels and provision of information (situation reports, monthly distribution plans, etc.) is well established. It is generally appreciated by its partners, the Government and UNITA. WFP's role in coordinating food aid comprised other issues such as information on access and security in certain areas, as well as negotiations (outside formal meetings) with UNITA (sometimes on behalf of NGOs) to support food aid interventions in their area.
35. The information exchange coordinated by WFP helps in obtaining a picture of the food situation of the population. However, the picture is not complete, mainly because UNITA representatives often did not attend provincial meetings and the coordination of food aid among the food providers (WFP, the European Union and USAID) at the national and provincial levels is insufficient.
36. Several NGOs would like to see WFP's role expanded to issues of food security in the phases of transition and rehabilitation. However, an ever increasing coordination role for WFP and a growing involvement of INGOs in implementation could hinder the Government in taking on more responsibility.

### **Air transport services**

37. Air services provided by WFP to NGOs for passengers and cargo were vital during the emergency phase, but continued to be greatly appreciated because of insecure access (mines, bandits) to a number of areas. At the same time, NGO implementing partners were quite critical and sensitive when problems arose. Concerns were raised about the lack of flexibility in transport of vital non-food inputs such as demining equipment, changes in schedule without advance notice, priority given to certain passengers over others in spite of confirmed booking, and cancellation of flights. These problems are important for the NGOs, as even minor difficulties with WFP's services could affect the implementation of their programmes and their credibility.

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## **WFP/NGO COOPERATION IN STRATEGIC ISSUES**

38. To the extent that assistance shifts from emergency to rehabilitation, quality and intensity of WFP/NGO cooperation may change: interventions oriented towards quick action with obvious complementarity of the partners contributing their respective strengths are diminishing; advantages of cooperation are not so evident and have to be reassessed; a number of NGOs have it found more convenient to work directly with their donors; an



increase in the presence of NGOs with different technical background which alters the nature of WFP's coordination role and makes it more complex; and, finally, a change in the role of food aid from FFD to targeted and FFW assistance.

39. At the same time, in striving for sustainability it is necessary for WFP and its NGO partners (as for the donor community) to look into capacity-building issues regarding the Government and local NGOs. WFP and a number of international NGOs (GAA, SCF UK, CARE) have made some efforts, not always with positive results. One reason has been the increase of NNGOs, which often lack competence and are more interested in obtaining easy access to funding. However, limited financial resources have sometimes prevented even serious NNGOs from getting more involved and acquiring expertise in the process. This problem has been addressed to a certain extent by a Swedish-financed fund which is specifically allocated for projects implemented by NNGOs. Initially the mechanism discriminated somewhat against NNGOs, as they had access to funds only when their activities were overseen by an international NGO. The selection of promising NNGOs has also been difficult, given certain institutional difficulties in enforcing norms for the establishment of NNGOs as well as standards of conduct.

## LESSONS LEARNED<sup>1</sup>

### Operational lessons

40. In order to stimulate a more systematic and coordinated approach, the contracts between WFP and NGOs should include details on how needs were determined as well as indicators for monitoring progress and measuring impact. Assessments and indicators should be compiled at the provincial and central levels and made available to interested partners. Where feasible, WFP should compile results of surveys pertaining to food security and food aid. To facilitate impact monitoring and evaluation, clear objectives should be defined for all aid interventions.
41. The criteria for beneficiary targeting should be agreed upon jointly by WFP and NGOs at the central level, refined at the provincial level and specified more clearly in the contracts. At the same time, joint WFP/NGO efforts should be made to base the targeting criteria (and type of food aid interventions) on a more precise knowledge about the socio-economic conditions of the target population by using instruments such as Rapid Rural Assessments (RRAs). To the extent feasible, WFP should consider facilitating training, in the interest of local capacity-building.
42. To improve understanding and transparency, the contracts between WFP and partner NGOs should provide clear details on expenditure items reimbursable under LTSH as well as on reimbursement procedures and schedules.
43. WFP should pursue its efforts to ensure greater standardization of rations for the same type of activities. In the interest of transparency, common guidelines and policies should be established to this effect and agreed upon at the central level by the WFP/NGO partners. Such

<sup>1</sup> Since the evaluation a number of recommendations and lessons presented here have already been followed up, particularly the need for a thorough analysis of food security issues and improved targeting (e.g., the WFP country office now disposes of a Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping Unit); a more systematic approach to planning of activities (a CSO has been adopted); and development of more comprehensive and standardized monitoring indicators.



guidelines and policies would cover ration levels for FFW activities (some NGO partners applied higher rations for skilled as opposed to unskilled labour) and issues regarding whether recurrent costs should be funded with food rations; it was found that some NGOs were providing FFW in lieu of salaries to health and education staff.

44. Information on food aid issues provided by WFP (e.g., situation reports, monthly distribution plans) is highly valued. NGO partners should ensure that this type of information is made available to their staff at the provincial level.
45. WFP has been instrumental in coordinating food aid issues at the central and provincial levels. However, during the period of transition towards rehabilitation, the Government should take on more responsibility for these issues, for instance, through the mechanism of Food Aid Coordination Committee meetings.
46. Regarding the air transport services provided by WFP, some improvements in terms of advance notice on changes in schedules would be desirable.

### **General policy and strategy lessons**

47. Some factors were important elements for the success of the Angola operation, such as openness and supportiveness of the WFP Country Director(s) towards NGOs, and flexibility in style. The fact that the WFP Country Director was at the same time the UCAH Director also had positive repercussions on the relationship between WFP and NGOs. However, these factors were unique in the case of Angola and cannot easily be replicated. By contrast, a number of other lessons from the Angola operation are of a more generic nature and should be considered in similar emergency and post-emergency situations.
48. These lessons are mainly the following:
  - a) The roles, responsibilities and relationship of WFP and NGOs were jointly defined from the beginning of the operation. From the time of UCAH's establishment, NGOs have actively participated in the design of strategies in the context of preparation of consolidated inter-agency appeals. This type of involvement has not only increased the credibility of the operation vis-à-vis donors, but has also given the NGOs a sense of joint ownership.
  - b) Both NGOs and WFP have clearly seen the comparative advantages of their individual roles and joint actions, particularly at the height of the emergency. This has been an important condition for successful cooperation between the partners. In times of transition from relief to rehabilitation, when the nature of WFP/NGO cooperation may change (not least because of a certain pressure by some donors on NGOs to directly use food and funding from them), close and regular consultations between WFP and NGOs on shifts in strategies and perceptions of roles are very important.
  - c) WFP's strong presence and logistics capacity recognized by the partners demonstrate that WFP is often in a position of playing, and should be prepared to play the role of lead agency when it is the United Nations agency with the strongest presence on the ground (particularly at the early stage of an emergency). This can include roles which on initial analysis are not necessarily within WFP's mandate, such as that of intermediary between warring factions on food and other humanitarian issues.
  - d) Most NGOs agreed that WFP, particularly during the transition phase and later on, could and should play a wider coordinating role on issues directly related not only to food aid, but also to food security. Vulnerability mapping exercises organized by WFP can play an important role.



- e) As soon as re-orientation of assistance from relief to rehabilitation is possible, WFP and NGO partners should consider entering into longer-term project agreements (six months to one year—to be stated in the contracts) in line with their longer-term strategy planning efforts. Reasons for this are: short-term contracts do not allow for long-term planning; a better synergic effect is produced by synchronizing inputs on a longer term; and longer-term contracts are helpful for shifting from ad hoc interventions to more systematic approaches.
- f) A checklist of minimum requirements for selection (“pre-qualification” process) should be developed at the central and reviewed at the provincial level; it should pay particular attention to criteria relating to logistics capacity (in relationship with activity type and volume) and the quality of internal control mechanisms. An additional aspect to be taken into account is the potential partner’s ability—and willingness—to work in areas of major need (e.g., not exclusively in Government areas). In the context of transition and rehabilitation, the partner’s capacity and expertise in rehabilitation and development interventions (involving issues such as project design and sustainability), should be considered important criteria.
- g) As operations shift from relief to rehabilitation, WFP has to cope with a situation in which quite a number of NGOs are either not experienced in rehabilitation or no longer available as partners. This calls for WFP to train NNGOs in areas such as logistics and management. However, WFP and INGOs need to be careful not to create “their” NNGOs. The legitimacy and sustainability of such NGOs could be questionable in case they are established predominantly to serve WFP’s and the INGOs’ relatively short-term needs for counterparts without a vocation and perspective for playing a role in the country’s civil society in the long run.
- h) As the Angola case has shown, a strong involvement by WFP, particularly in coordination, and of NGOs in implementation, can pose a risk that WFP and NGOs are “replacing” Governments and discouraging them from assuming responsibility for their population, particularly during rehabilitation. This also raises questions related to the sustainability of actions supported by WFP and NGOs, as well as capacity-building. A balance must be struck between justified assistance and doing too much; the situation has to be carefully monitored. The Government has to be included as early as possible in the planning and coordination process (e.g., active involvement in food aid coordination efforts).
- i) Finally, the joint WFP/NGO evaluation was a useful experience, as mission members had the opportunity of gathering complementary but also diverging viewpoints from both WFP and partner NGOs, particularly the respective agencies they represented. While the mission found it justified that the main focus of the evaluation was on the process of cooperation, it considered that in building upon the positive experience made, future joint evaluations should emphasize an assessment of the impact of cooperation between WFP and NGOs.

