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**Executive Board  
First Regular Session**

**Rome, 13 - 16 February 2001**

# **COUNTRY STRATEGY OUTLINES**

**Agenda item 7**

***For consideration***

**E**

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**WFP/EB.1/2001/7/3**

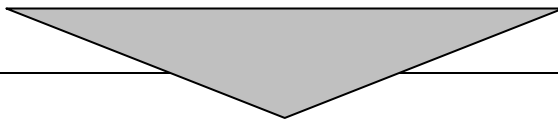
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## **COUNTRY STRATEGY OUTLINE— YEMEN**

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# Note to the Executive Board



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

The Secretariat invites members of the Board who may have questions of a technical nature with regard to this document, to contact the WFP staff focal point indicated below, preferably well in advance of the Board's meeting.

Senior Liaison Officer, Middle East      Mr P. Turnbull      tel.: 066513-2800  
and North Africa Region (OMN):

Should you have any questions regarding matters of dispatch of documentation for the Executive Board, please contact the Supervisor, Meeting Servicing and Distribution Unit (tel.: 066513-2328).



# Executive Summary

This CSO is the successor to document WFP/EB.3/96/6/Add.4. It provides the framework for the preparation of the second WFP Country Programme for Yemen, which will be presented to the Executive Board for approval in 2001. Yemen's Country Programme (CP) time frame (2002–2006) will coincide with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) cycle for Yemen, as the programming cycles of WFP, UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA have been harmonized.

Yemen is a least developed country (LDC) with a population that numbers approximately 17 million and a per capita income that has fallen from US\$525 in 1990 to a current level of US\$350. Some 31.5 percent of the population (about 5 million people) lives in poverty and about 2.7 million people live below the food poverty line, consuming less than 2,200 kcal per capita per day. Yemen is a food-deficit country and imports over 75 percent of its main staple, wheat. While food availability seems to be well secured from imports, access is constrained by low purchasing power. The FAO Aggregate Household Food Security Index (AHFSI) for 1993–95 was 81.5, reflecting no significant change from the 1979–81 index of 77.9. The 1999 UNDP Human Development Index of 0.35 ranks Yemen 148<sup>th</sup> out of 174 countries.

Yemen has serious gender gaps with a Gender Development Index (GDI) value of 0.389, ranking it 133<sup>rd</sup> among 148 countries considered. The adult literacy rate stands at 55.9 percent, with the rate of illiteracy among rural females (79 percent) being more than twice that of men. The gross enrolment rate for basic education is 33 percent for girls, compared with 75 percent for boys.

Approximately 52 percent of children under 5 are stunted and 13 percent suffer from wasting. Health care is limited to 16 percent of the population, access to safe water to 61 percent and sanitation to 66 percent. Low birth weight affects 19 percent of the newborns. The infant and under-5 mortality rates are estimated at 76 and 105 deaths per 1,000 live births, respectively. The maternal mortality rate is 1,400 per 100,000 live births, one of the highest in the world. The fertility rate is 7.6 children per woman.

The poor in Yemen are predominantly rural and mainly female. This CSO will concentrate on the needs of food-insecure women and children in ways that would enable them to participate in development opportunities.

In accordance with decision 1999/EB.A/2 of the Executive Board, this CSO focuses activities on Enabling Development priority objectives 1, 2 and 3. Accordingly, the following activities will constitute the Country Programme for 2002–2006:

- Nutritional support through the provision of micronutrient-fortified foods to malnourished expectant and nursing mothers, and children under 5;
- promotion of access to primary education for girls by providing incentives

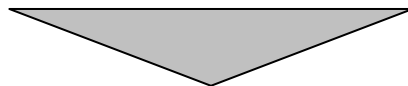


to poor households to send their daughters to school;

- empowerment of women by providing them with support to attend training, initiate income-generating micro-projects and supporting community-based activities that lead to saving time on activities carried out by women.

The gender focus in the activities will be enhanced by enlisting the participation of women beneficiaries and community members in the implementation of each activity. WFP assistance will be concentrated in areas selected on the basis of vulnerability and food insecurity. Consistent with the principles of the Enabling Development policy and the recommendations of the evaluation of the current CP, the strategy also concentrates on partnerships and collaboration through UNDAF and other mechanisms, such as national capacity building, and monitoring and evaluation. WFP will assume a greater role in internal transport and the management of WFP resources within an enhanced partnership with the Government, in order to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of operations.

## Draft Decision



The Board endorses the Country Strategy Outline for Yemen (WFP/EB.1/2001/7/3) and authorizes the Secretariat to proceed with the formulation of a Country Programme, which should take into account the comments of the Board.



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## FOOD INSECURITY AND THE HUNGRY POOR

### Introduction

1. The Republic of Yemen was established in 1990 by merging the Yemen Arab Republic in the North and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen in the South. Yemen has an estimated population of nearly 17 million, growing at a rate of 3.5 percent a year. The majority of the population (77 percent) reside in rural areas. Agriculture contributes to 58 percent of employment, 2.6 percent of foreign exchange earnings and represents 17 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This excludes the value of *qat* (a leaf containing an amphetamine-like stimulant), estimated at 13 percent of GDP. The economy depends heavily on oil exports that represent 93 percent of total exports and 26 percent of GNP (1998). Earnings from exports of oil have been highly variable in the last decade.
2. Yemen is classified both as a least developed country (LDC) and a low-income, food-deficit country (LIFDC). It is among the world's poorest, measured not only by its per capita GDP which decreased from US\$525 in 1990 to the current US\$350, but also by most measures of the quality of life. The UNDP Human Development Report for 1999 ranks Yemen 148<sup>th</sup> out of 174 countries, with a Human Development Index (HDI) of 0.35. Around 52 percent of children under 5 are stunted, reflecting chronic malnutrition. Some 13 percent suffer from wasting. Health care is limited to 16 percent of the population, access to safe water to 61 percent and sanitation to 66 percent. Low birth weight affects 19 percent of new borns. This contributes to the very high rate of infant and under-5 mortality which is estimated at 76 per 1,000 and 105 per 1,000 live births, respectively. Anaemia affects 41.5 percent of children under 5 and 20.5 percent of women of reproductive age.
3. The Government has been able to arrest a serious decline in economic conditions experienced after unification, mainly as a result of its Recovery Programme, implemented since 1995. Between 1995 and 1997 the economy grew at 6.4 percent and inflation dropped from 71 percent to just over 6 percent. That modest economic growth was cut short as a result of the loss in oil revenues associated with the sudden drop in global oil prices in 1998. This led to a declining rate of growth (2.7 percent in 1998), higher levels of inflation and overall export and public revenue reduction by 28 percent and 22 percent, respectively. Prospects for stronger economic growth are linked to the rebounding of oil prices and the impact of the economic reforms.

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## FOOD INSECURITY AT THE NATIONAL AND HOUSEHOLD LEVELS

### Food Availability

4. Food availability in Yemen is highly dependent on imports. In 1998, about 78 percent of the cereal supply came from imports. Until the early 1970s local cereal production covered almost all cereal requirements. In 1998, local production accounted for only 26 percent of an estimated cereal availability of 3.2 million tons (FAO). The 1980s were characterized by significant changes in the rural economy, arising from rapid economic growth, significant investment in agriculture, and a strong shift, in terms of trade, away from cereals that has resulted in the neglect of traditional rain-fed cereal production. The process has transformed the agricultural sector, moving it away from staple food crop production, towards a heavy reliance on market-oriented and irrigation-dependent cash crops: mainly fruit, vegetables and



*qat*. Recent estimates of rural poverty imply that these changes in the agricultural economy have not had a significant impact on low-income rural households.

5. Over the past two decades the Government actively promoted groundwater irrigation through credit, trade protection and subsidies. These policies have led to overdraft and inefficient use of the groundwater, thus making irrigation development unsustainable in the long run.
6. In spite of heavy import dependence, unstable oil revenues and fluctuating international prices of grain, the country has strived to maintain a stable and adequate supply of cereals during the last decade. The average per capita cereal availability was 170 kg during 1995–1998 compared with an estimated per capita cereal requirement of 160 kg a year. Given that the cultivated land constitutes only 2 percent of Yemen's total land area and agricultural production in this limited area increasingly favours high-value non-cereal crop production, cereal import dependence is unlikely to decline. This raises two issues: (i) whether the economy will be able to sustain the increasing food import bill; and (ii) the plight of a substantial section of the population, who do not have the resources to purchase an adequate supply of food available in the markets.

### Access to Food

7. Although food availability at the national level appears to be adequate in relation to the per capita requirements, a substantial section of the population does not meet the food consumption requirements due to a lack of resources. Although the accuracy of data may be limited, data gathered from the Household Budget Survey by the Central Statistics Organization (CSO/UNDP-PIMS, 1998) indicate that 31.5 percent of the population (nearly 5 million people) live below a poverty line that is based on expenditures required to meet food and other basic non-food requirements. Based on the FAO's Food Balance Sheet for Yemen, the Central Statistics Organization has defined the food poverty line as the inability of an average person to acquire a basket of food providing about 2,200 kcal per day. Some 17.5 percent of the population (2.7 million) are estimated to be living below this cut-off level.
8. In the rural areas, 32.8 percent of the people face the problem of access to food, while 25.5 percent of the urban population is affected. Five out of 18 governorates have been identified as having over 40 percent of the population below the poverty line, including Taiz and Ibb, which have high rainfall and good agricultural productivity. These characteristics raise some questions about the data and point to the need for further analysis into issues such as land distribution patterns and unemployment levels.
9. Low income and inadequate purchasing power are among the major factors contributing to the poor nutritional and health status of Yemeni people. The food security of households is also threatened by other factors such as droughts and floods which have an impact on the incomes of poor households.
10. The falling per capita incomes have aggravated further the food insecurity situation of low-income households, whose access to food is also constrained by the short-term negative impact of structural adjustment measures. Inefficient and poorly integrated food markets, coupled with geographical isolation, are additional factors which combine to further limit access to food for the poor. The consumption of *qat* represents about 11 percent of the total monthly household expenditures. These resources are diverted from other types of consumption, including food.



## Target Population

### 📌 *The Food-insecure*

11. The majority of food-insecure households are dependent on marginally productive lands, where agricultural production depends on highly variable rainfall. They are engaged in cropping and/or herding. There are those without access to land or with very small holdings. Their food insecurity is significantly affected by the environmental context in which they live, which often does not allow for more lucrative production activities, like growing *qat* and other cash crops.
12. There are also certain ethnically distinct disadvantaged groups concentrated in areas around Hodeidah and refugee populations, mostly Somalis, who live in major cities. Other categories of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, not geographically concentrated, include female-headed households, households with large families, and households with high rates of illiteracy. A large number of households who no longer receive remittances from abroad by family members, following the gulf war, are also facing serious economic hardships.

### 📌 *Women and Children*

13. Yemen is considered as one of the most conservative countries in the Middle East and is characterized by serious gender gaps. It is ranked 133<sup>rd</sup> out of 148 countries in the Gender Development Index (GDI), valued at 0.389 in comparison with the average GDI value of Arab States of 0.612; this represents a mere 63 percent of the average GDI value of the Arab States and 61 percent of the average for developing countries (0.634).
14. Access to education is limited for both males and females, with an overall adult illiteracy rate of 55.9 percent. In urban areas, the adult illiteracy rate is 36 percent for men and 79 percent for women, while in rural areas the corresponding figures are 36 percent and 85 percent, respectively. Basic education enrolments (55 percent) are not only low but distinctly inequitable. The gross enrolment rate for girls is 33 percent, compared with 75 percent for boys. The rates tend to vary from one governorate to another, ranging between 11 and 81 percent for girls, and 23 and 92 percent for boys. By the age of 10, more than 50 percent of girls, and 20 percent of boys, have never been to school. Major impediments to girls' education are the limited number of segregated schools and classrooms, the lack of female teachers, the lack of sanitation facilities and long distances. Access to education is further limited by poverty.
15. The maternal mortality rate is 1,400 per 100,000—one of the highest in the world. It is higher than the average rate for LDCs of 1,100 per 100,000. Yemeni women face a one in eight chance of dying from pregnancy-related causes. An extremely high fertility rate of 7.6 children per woman further exacerbates the conditions of women and children.
16. Female participation in decision-making in Yemen is extremely limited. Out of 301 members of parliament only two are women. Women are involved in nearly all agricultural activities, providing an estimated 60 percent of agricultural labour, but cultural traditions keep them at a lower status and prevent them from gaining control over important household resources. Women have limited access to extension services, and in particular, to sources of credit. Their productivity is further constrained by the lack of education, high fertility and poor health conditions.
17. Targeting women means assistance to prevent the inter-generational transfer of food insecurity and poverty. Children born to food-insecure poor women are invariably malnourished and are unable to achieve their growth potential. They grow to be adults with underdeveloped mental and physical capacity, thus assuring for their children continued



poverty and food insecurity. This is a vicious cycle, which only deliberate interventions can break.

## GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES AND POLICIES ADDRESSING POVERTY AND FOOD INSECURITY

### Overall Policies

18. The Government of Yemen is committed to addressing the underlying causes of poverty through accelerated economic growth, the enhancement of human resources and the assurance of adequate food supplies at the national level. The Government policy continues a programme of liberalizing the economy, with reliance on the private sector for increased output and employment. It has undertaken public expenditure reforms to increase the efficiency of the public sector.
19. The First Five-Year Development Plan (1996–2000), the sector reform programmes and the recently adopted "Food Security Strategy" aim at alleviating the fundamental causes of poverty and food insecurity. The Plan recognizes poverty eradication as a development objective. However, because of the slow growth of the economy, insufficient employment opportunities and the reduction of subsidies, poverty is affecting a larger proportion of the population than it did in 1992 (19 percent in 1992 compared with 31.5 percent in 1998). With UNDP assistance, efforts are under way to consolidate all poverty alleviation activities into a National Action Plan for Poverty Eradication (NAPPE), with explicit objectives, policies, resource requirements and implementation modalities.
20. Part of the work of addressing poverty is the preparation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy for the country, which is being supported by the World Bank, in the context of lending operations of the Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Although the process is at an initial stage, a number of key strategic elements are emerging to form the future strategy for poverty alleviation. They include a policy framework, enabling the Government to secure sound social safety nets and increase employment opportunities, and access to human and physical assets for the poor. The creation of an efficient civil service and an effective and fair system of justice is considered a prerequisite for creating a conducive environment for private investment. Other key elements include: strengthening the existing social safety nets, particularly the Social Development Fund which provides financial support to undertake community infrastructure and micro-credit facilities; the Social Welfare Fund which gives cash assistance to the very poor and those who are unable to engage in productive activities; and the Public Works Programme.
21. Education and health are essential for accelerated development and a pre-requisite for poverty eradication. In education, priority continues to be given to primary education, and in particular to girls' education. The expansion of basic education is pursued by constructing of additional school facilities, improving the quality of the learning environment, and enhancing the performance of teachers. In health, the Government has embarked on a comprehensive programme of reforms, which focuses on improving efficiency, equity, accountability and sustainability.

### Food Security Policies at the National and Household Levels

22. Within the next 20 years, the rural population will increase by 8 million. Already 32.8 percent of the rural population is poor and food-insecure. Unless ways to absorb the growing labour force into the rural economy and higher rural incomes can be found, rural





poverty is likely to increase. The Government has therefore embarked on a programme of reforms aimed at creating conditions for faster, sustainable and equitable growth of agricultural incomes based on the development of rain-fed agriculture.

23. The strategy to increase incomes from rain-fed agriculture include: (i) halting the degradation of natural resources with particular regard to combating desertification and sand-dune encroachment on agricultural land (5 percent annual loss of agricultural land), deforestation, and erosion of the highland terrace system; (ii) increasing crop yields through the adoption of available and new technologies; (iii) removing disincentives to grain production; (iv) improving research and farmer education; and (v) increasing community participation in the management of natural resources.
24. In irrigated agriculture, the strategy is to maximize productivity from the limited water to ensure long-term sustainability. This will be pursued through the removal of subsidies, which so far have encouraged excessive pumping and the inefficient use of groundwater.
25. It is expected that, as a result of these measures, the country will be able to maintain the current proportion of local production in food availability, while promoting production and the export of fruit and vegetables for which Yemen has a comparative advantage. This would also improve long-term prospects for earning foreign exchange and providing a valuable source of increased food security.
26. While emphasizing production, the Government will also implement measures to improve the purchasing power of the poor households. Direct government interventions will continue to target populations considered at risk, through the development of income-generating activities and cash-based transfers.

### National Policies for the Advancement of Women

27. Although there is no formal national gender policy, the Government is taking steps to adopt instruments for promoting women's empowerment and participation. A Women's National Committee has been established by a Prime Minister's decree with a mandate to act as the national mechanism for the advancement of women. It still requires adequate strengthening to make it effective. Following the Fourth Women's World Conference in Beijing in 1995, the Committee has adopted a strategy that reaffirmed the cultural values and beliefs of the society, based on Islamic laws. The main focus is on strengthening the role of women in the economy, and improving women's health and access to education. The accessibility of legal protection for women is also considered in need of improvement. Priority problems identified for urgent action include: poverty alleviation, reproductive health, illiteracy, lack of participation in decision-making, and weak organization. Lack of gender awareness and expertise in gender issues form additional constraints.
28. The Government is reviewing sectoral policies and strategies to make them reflect better the gender dimension. Within the framework of the Agricultural Development Policy, a gender food security policy has been adopted with the objective of facilitating the development of female farmers as economic producers and agents for social change, and to make women equal partners in the development process.

### Food Aid Policies

29. Although food aid to Yemen represents only a small portion of the food supply (4 percent), the Government is interested in continuing to benefit from bilateral programme food aid, and attaches high value to project food aid as a development resource. In 1999, food aid assistance to Yemen remained relatively limited: 128,625 metric tons were contributed mainly by the United States (100,000 tons). Other bilateral donors are France



and Italy. In 2000, the United States continued the food aid programme with a further contribution of 197,000 metric tons of mainly wheat flour. The food aid under these bilateral programmes is monetized at market prices and generated funds are used by the Government to finance mutually agreed upon projects, particularly those intended to mitigate the impact of the structural adjustment programme, including the replenishment of the Social Development Fund. In 1999, WFP provided 19,783 tons of commodities, of which 83 percent was for development projects.

## ASSESSMENT OF WFP'S PERFORMANCE TO DATE

### Achievements, Strengths and Weaknesses

30. WFP assistance to Yemen, which began in 1967, and continues today (valued at US\$355.3 million) has provided support to a number of sectors. It includes support, not only to public works, assistance to refugees and emergency operations, but also to health, education and agriculture.
31. The ongoing Country Programme (1998–2001) approved by the Board at its Third Regular Session of 1997, includes four basic activities: “Support to Education”; “Assistance to Primary Health Care Centres”; “Local Initiatives in Support of Household Food Security”; and “Women’s Health and Micronutrient Facility”. In addition, food assistance is provided under protracted relief and recovery operations (PRROs) for refugees in Yemen. The first two activities, which command the bulk of resources, have been operational since the commencement of the CP. The third activity, planned as a pilot activity, had serious implementation problems that delayed its commencement. The fourth activity was not implemented, mainly due to practical constraints associated with the capacity for local food fortification and a lack of funding availability.
32. During March 2000, with the assistance of UNESCO and WHO, WFP undertook a management review of the CP activities. In April, the Office of Evaluation conducted a mid-term evaluation of the Yemen Country Programme. Both teams observed that the CP was well integrated into the government policies; that its policies were in line with addressing the fundamental causes of poverty and food insecurity, and gave high priority to basic education, primary health care and agricultural development.
33. WFP assistance, by focusing on the rural female and child population, addressed the critical needs of vulnerable population groups. It helped alleviate existing key constraints to human development and build human capacities on a sustainable basis by acting as an incentive for girls and women to attend education and health services. It directly contributed to improving their livelihoods, by acting as an in-kind income transfer to poor rural households.
34. Regarding education, both the management review and the CP evaluation have concluded that, despite problems of implementation and management, WFP assistance has contributed to increasing access to primary education, and reducing drop-out rates and absenteeism among the beneficiary girls in those schools that had received assistance for two consecutive years. The envisaged 10 percent increase in the enrolment of girls has proven to be the completely under-estimated. Compared with non-assisted schools, where the enrolment of girls has increased by 12 percent, there has been a dramatic increase in enrolment rates in WFP-supported schools, ranging from 26 to 100 percent. The activity has enhanced the demand for education in a context where the priority for female education remains extremely low.



35. The implementation of the health activity has resulted in the number of beneficiaries at the health centres being significantly below the planned figures. This was mainly due to the restrictive selection criteria recommended at the appraisal stage, with a low cut-off weight for expectant mothers, and limiting the selection of children to those under 3 years of age. Although the planned targets were not fully met, the activity was successful in increasing the attendance of expectant and nursing mothers and malnourished children by 52 percent at the WFP-assisted health centres. A review of the criteria carried out with the assistance of WHO has resulted in a revised set of criteria, which would contribute significantly to the success of the future activity. Tuberculosis and leprosy patients have been more responsive to treatment. The evaluation of the CP has confirmed these results and has fully supported further expansion of WFP assistance in this sector.
36. Regarding the Pilot Initiative in Support of Household Food Security, the CP evaluation confirmed that the very complex and ambitious project design, coupled with an unrealistic time frame, were the major factors which contributed to the delay in implementation. The evaluation made the following recommendations: (i) phasing out any form of monetization of food; (ii) continuing pilot activities only in one governorate out of four; and (iii) focusing on simple community projects, while intensifying monitoring with a view to drawing lessons to be used in considering expansion into new areas. The project concept also needed to be streamlined and refocused. This was essential to ensure that benefits accruing from WFP assistance concentrated on WFP direct target groups and was not diluted to benefit community members at large.
37. In terms of the overall management of resources, despite considerable efforts to build project management capacities, serious shortcomings have been identified. This is particularly noteworthy within the education support activity, involving unauthorized distributions to project staff and districts not covered by activity agreements, and a lack of accountability in governorate-level transport contracting and final destination deliveries. This led to a pause in education project implementation in 2000, and a complete review and re-design of the logistics management structure and system. The new system is being implemented with the full involvement and support of specialized WFP staff within an enhanced partnership arrangement with the government departments concerned.

### Effectiveness of Targeting

38. Both education and health activities within the WFP Country Programme for Yemen are concentrated in ten governorates. Although during the appraisal the targeting criteria were identified for each of the CP activities, there have been inconsistencies in their application during implementation. These were most pronounced in the education activity where frequent and arbitrary changes of selected beneficiary schools occurred. In the health activity, mother and child health (MCH) centres were selected mainly on the basis of their technical capacity to provide an acceptable level of MCH services. MCH staff make the selection of beneficiaries on the basis of criteria jointly specified by WFP and WHO/Ministry of Public Health (MOPH). Except in a few cases, the implementing staff complied with the set criteria. In Local Initiatives in Support of Household Food Security, all members of selected communities benefit from WFP food assistance, thus making the project non-compliant with the Enabling Development targeting principles and criteria. This anomaly is being addressed through the reorientation of the activity in new sites.

### Protracted Relief and Recovery Operations

39. In collaboration with UNHCR and the Government, WFP has provided emergency food assistance for the refugees in Yemen since 1992, amounting to 21,086 metric tons of food



commodities valued at US\$8.2 million. As of December 1999, the refugee population registered in the camps totalled 12,673, 56 percent of whom were women and children under 5. There is virtually no scope for camp resident refugees to become self-reliant. The current camp location has neither sufficient water and suitable land for agriculture, nor any significant income-earning opportunities. They remain fully dependent on external assistance. While WFP is responsible for the provision of food through a protracted relief and recovery operation, UNHCR provides water and cooking fuel on a regular basis, as well as support to health and education programmes.

40. Missions to assess the refugee food needs have noted that the nutrition and health situation of the refugees compared favourably with that of the local Yemeni population. UNHCR and the Government of Yemen are implementing plans to relocate the refugees to a new site which would provide better opportunities for achieving higher levels of self-reliance. The site is close to the sea, has ground water and suitable land for agriculture, and offers possibilities for fishing that would improve the livelihoods of refugees.

## Conclusions

41. WFP assistance to date has supported the Government's efforts to reduce poverty, specifically by increasing basic education for girls and reducing the level of malnutrition among children under 3, and expectant and nursing mothers. Despite a number of weaknesses, the results achieved so far in education and health confirm that WFP assistance in those two sectors was fully justified and has achieved significant results in addressing the long-term causes of poverty. It conformed to WFP's Mission Statement and the Enabling Development policy. However, there is still ample scope for improving targeting mechanisms and programme design, especially in instituting adequate monitoring systems and results measurement and reporting. The main challenge ahead for WFP in Yemen will be to establish and support the Government's capacity to implement the agreed programme activities.

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## FUTURE ORIENTATION OF WFP ASSISTANCE

42. The proposed country strategy for the period 2002–2006 has a strong gender focus. It seeks to address the problem of household food insecurity through the support of activities aimed at creating human and physical assets, particularly for women and children. Programme activities will have an overriding focus on the economic empowerment of women. The strategy reinforces the Government's commitment to gender equity and girls' education as a major policy element to reduce poverty and improve the nutritional and health status of women and children.
43. All development partners see the empowerment of women as a fundamental approach to reducing poverty and improving food security in a sustainable manner. The ongoing Country Programme has a similar thrust, but the new strategy emphasizes more effective targeting, an increased participation of beneficiaries and communities, especially women's associations, advocacy and partnerships. To this end, WFP assistance will be programmed in a way that is compatible with the National Five-Year Development Plan 2001–2005 and in line with the Government's Poverty Reduction Strategy.
44. The strategy will focus primarily on three of the five strategic focus areas of the Enabling Development policy:
- Enable young children and expectant and nursing mothers to meet their special nutritional and nutrition-related health needs.



- Enable poor households to invest in human capital through education and training.
- Make it possible for poor families to gain and preserve assets.

## Targeting

### 📌 *Stage 1: Geographic Targeting*

45. The first stage of the CSO targeting review identified the geographic pattern of vulnerability to food insecurity, assessed other factors to be considered for geographical targeting, and attempted to link the characteristics of vulnerable populations to food aid programming opportunities specific to Yemen's context.
46. Based on both food security and sector-specific indicators<sup>1</sup> at the district and sub-district levels (involving gender-disaggregated data), WFP prepared a vulnerability and programming suitability map of the country (Annex II). Groups of priority areas or "clusters" were subsequently identified. While clusters of focus areas were scattered throughout the country, priority areas were densest in the western highlands and Tihama region. Populations in some of the more peripheral areas (Northern Hadhramout) and of the more northern governorates of Sa'ada, and Amran as well as a small part of Hajja also contained initial focus areas. These latter areas were categorized as lower priority in the short run, due to a variety of factors including transport feasibility, extremely low population densities, fewer adjacent clusters, and security considerations.
47. The reorientation in geographic targeting is also shown in Annex II. WFP's strategy consists in a progressive phasing-in of some of the more peripheral areas of northern Hadramout and some districts of Sa'ada and Amran governorates. The coastal areas in the southern governorates of Lahejj, Abyan and Shabwa have relatively good access by sea and by road, as well as relatively better health and education indicators. In these areas, a phase-out is foreseen within the terms of the current CP, enabling consolidation and focusing of the next CP based on the clustering approach identified in the VAM exercise.
48. In preparing the new CP, the selection of areas of concentration will prioritize the convergence of all programme activities to facilitate their delivery as a package and will aim at maximising synergies among WFP interventions and those of other development partners. This would help consolidate operations and make a more focused and effective programme.
49. In implementing the above strategy, two factors will need to be considered:
  - **Programme delivery cost-effectiveness:** The Enabling Development policy mandates WFP to work in the most food-insecure areas. In Yemen, some of these more remote eastern areas (i.e. in northern Hadhramout) are likely to have populations equally vulnerable to food insecurity, as compared with those in the Western highlands and Tihama. However, the absence of roads in remote areas makes near term programming a difficult prospect.
  - **Partnerships and government implementation capacity:** WFP's Enabling Development policy places emphasis on partnerships with those who can provide complementary technical and financial assistance. Although WFP will continue its efforts to attract partners for the most vulnerable areas, some targeting compromises may need to be made, especially where government implementation capacity is limited and potential partners do not exist

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<sup>1</sup> Specific indicators related to education, health and agriculture were used in the VAM analysis.



## 📌 **Stage 2: Targeting of Programme Participants**

50. Targeting of participants will be defined according to the objectives of each activity:
- A participatory method for identifying the most food-insecure communities within each focus area/target districts will be developed as the WFP country office moves closer to CP implementation.
  - Regarding assistance to girls' education, resource allocation, within selected districts, will be driven by the location of schools and the objective of stimulating the participation of girls. At present, other than location within a vulnerable focus area/district, no household income threshold or other means test is planned to refine targeting.
  - The MCH activity will be designed to address the needs of expectant and nursing mothers and children under 5. All individuals who meet the agreed selection criteria will be eligible for benefits through health centres and outreach clinics within the target focus areas/districts.
  - Socio-economic criteria will be developed in consultation with local communities for the selection of poor women for participation in training and income-generating activities.

## Key Areas for Assistance

51. The following three areas for development assistance are identified:

### 📌 **Nutrition Support to Malnourished Women and Children**

This will meet priority 1 of the Enabling Development policy (Enable young children and expectant and nursing mothers to meet their special nutritional and nutrition-related health needs).

52. There is ample justification to continue allocating WFP resources to this area of development assistance. Both the mid-term evaluation of the Country Programme and the mid-term review of the on-going activity stressed the positive contribution WFP has been making in the field of health and nutrition with a particular focus on expectant/nursing and malnourished children. It has clearly demonstrated that food constituted a powerful incentive for pregnant women and nursing mothers to visit the health centres. WFP assistance is provided in the context of providing MCH services, which gives malnourished mothers and children a chance to receive a package of services including health and nutrition education, advice and care, vaccinations, counselling on family planning and growth monitoring of children.
53. The high demand for the expansion of the activity will be considered in relation to the area targeting approach to be adopted in the new Country Programme and the implementing capacity of the partners. The criteria for selection and appropriate indicators to be used will be based on the recommendations by the mid-term management review and the evaluation of the CP and the commonly agreed indicators in the Common Country Assessment (CCA).
54. WFP food assistance provided to tuberculosis and leprosy patients has been successful in achieving its objectives. Although nutritional support will continue to focus on children and pregnant/nursing mothers, assistance will also continue to be given to both women and men being treated for leprosy and tuberculosis.



55. On average, 87,000 expectant and nursing mothers and malnourished children as well as 4,800 leprosy and tuberculosis patients will be assisted each year.

### ✦ *Promoting Access to Primary Education for Girls from the Poorest Households*

This will meet priority 2 of the Enabling Development policy (Enable poor households to invest in human capital through education and training).

56. The gender gap in education found in Yemen is one of the highest in the world, and has resulted in high rates of illiteracy among women. The lack of education and other interrelated factors such as the lack of control over fertility, limited access to opportunities for participation in decision-making, together have prevented women from moving away from poverty and food insecurity. Educating women is also a key to achieving sustainable reductions in the rate of population growth. WFP assistance will continue to focus on increasing enrolment, attendance and retention of girls in primary schools.
57. Targeting will be sharpened to focus on the most vulnerable areas with low rates of girls' enrolment. Within the selected areas, the strategy will be to cover the highest possible number of schools to avoid the migration of students from non-assisted to WFP supported schools. WFP assistance will complement the efforts being carried out by the Government and other donors to improve the curriculum, the quality of education, sanitary conditions in schools and physical infrastructure.
58. All selected schools will be required to have Parent-Teacher Associations, and a mechanism for encouraging the participation of mothers will be identified. These associations will be involved in the implementation of the food assistance at the school level. The proposed strategy also allows for a food for work component to be implemented with community involvement in activities intended to further remove school related environmental constraints to girls' enrolment. In addition, WFP will play a catalytic role in mobilizing other donors, NGOs and civil society to expand and rehabilitate school premises that will also be required to accommodate the increased number of girls. Similarly, UNICEF and UNFPA will be solicited to provide elementary education on health and sanitation, which given at an early age can have a lasting impact on the children.
59. Food assistance will be targeted to an average of 133,000 female students a year. Within the areas selected for WFP interventions, all female students in selected schools will receive food incentives for the period of their attendance.

### ✦ *Supporting the Economic Empowerment of Women*

This will meet Priority 3 of the Enabling Development policy (Make it possible for poor families to gain and preserve assets).

60. Food insecurity, long hours in search of water, fuel wood and fodder inevitably result in women and girls being deprived of education, skills development and training, and of taking advantage of development opportunities. Food aid can be effective in providing more free time for women to learn new skills, acquire basic literacy and gain access to other development activities.
61. The strategy for women's economic advancement will be two-pronged: On the one hand, WFP will implement with partners a programme of activities for training and skills development and the actual initiation of trained women into income generating activities. Credit is crucial for promoting self-reliant growth. WFP will play an active advocacy role to ensure that opportunities are given for women to participate in credit programmes. To be effective, these programmes need to be accompanied by appropriate



training and skills development. WFP food assistance will act as an incentive for women to take part in training and skills development programmes to be followed by practical undertaking of income-generating activities. WFP will provide assistance during the period between the setting up of new activities and the actual take-off of income-generation for women.

62. On the other hand, WFP will support the implementation of relatively simple community-based food-for-work projects that lead to time saving on water, fuel and fodder gathering. These may include development or rehabilitation of small-scale/village-level water harvesting and conservation structures, shrubs and tree cultivation. The experience gained in the on-going pilot project in agriculture will help the formulation of activities that lend themselves to management by women. Mainly through women's associations, women will participate in the decision-making process regarding the assets to be created and will decide on activities to be implemented.
63. About 5,600 families or some 28,000 individuals per year will receive WFP assistance. These will be selected among those who are least able to meet their basic needs, are facing acute shortages of water and/or fuelwood and have limited access to development opportunities.

### Assistance to Refugees

64. In addition to the above development assistance areas, WFP will continue to support a programme of assistance to refugees in Yemen. It is estimated that about 20,000 refugees will need food assistance. Although repatriation efforts have been undertaken since 1993, the conditions in Somalia have so far prevented any mass voluntary repatriation. Most of the refugees living in the camps are from southern Somalia, which remains too insecure for safe return, and hence the potential for large-scale voluntary repatriation in the near future is limited.

### Advocacy

65. The future CP activities will be supported by increased emphasis on advocacy. The ongoing assessments and mapping work, supported by the regional VAM unit, to identify the most vulnerable people and areas, the determinants of their vulnerability and potential actions that may be taken to help them, will provide a strong basis to advocate for greater allocation of development resources to marginalized areas to bring in social infrastructure and services.
66. Women have limited involvement in the management of food and are practically not involved in resource management. WFP will continue to advocate for increased women's participation. Together with other United Nations agencies, bilateral donors, NGOs and women's associations, WFP will advocate for empowering women and establishing quantified targets to measure adequately the integration of women in the development process, including their participation as partners in the identification, design, planning, monitoring and evaluation of the various interventions.
67. Among development partners, WFP will also advocate for a national structure for the coordination of food security issues, periodic assessments of the food security situation, especially in consideration of seasonality issues and the need to explicitly include household food security in poverty alleviation strategies.





## Capacity-building

68. WFP will support the counterpart capacity to implement, monitor and report on WFP supported programmes. This will be achieved through training workshops, on the job training and by assigning WFP contracted personnel to work with government counterparts. On the logistics and food management side, Government staff will be seconded to work with WFP on all aspects of logistics and ITSH management; thus gaining on the job training. As part of this capacity building effort, WFP will be directly training the counterparts in commodity tracking, monitoring, reporting and evaluation. Awareness raising and transfers of non-food inputs will be part of this programme.

## Scope for Joint Programming and Partnerships

69. Effective implementation of the activities proposed in this CSO depends on the provision of complementary resources and capacities that the Government is unable to provide; hence, establishing partnerships with other agencies and institutions is imperative.
70. The Country Strategy Note for Yemen was completed in 1997 and continues to provide a platform for collaboration among United Nations agencies. Already programming cycles have been harmonized and the next cycle will cover the period 2002–2006 for WFP, UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA. The process to prepare the UNDAF framework is underway, and the CCA is expected to be completed by mid December 2000, while the UNDAF document is expected to be ready in February 2001.
71. The CSO for Yemen, which was originally planned to be presented to the Board at its Third Regular Session of 2000, was postponed for presentation to the First Regular Session of 2001 in order to benefit from a more advanced CCA/UNDAF process. Although the final document of the Yemen CCA is not yet ready, WFP had discussions with the major agencies (UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA), whose activities have close linkages with food security and poverty alleviation issues and have identified several areas suitable for joint interventions. However, the final UNDAF strategy may identify additional areas for collaboration and partnerships. This CSO contains a degree of flexibility to incorporate them in to the new Country Programme's areas of assistance.
72. Discussions with UNICEF are at an advanced stage whereby it is proposed for WFP to provide food assistance to UNICEF's planned initiative for the economic empowerment of women, a credit programme in support of income-generating activities. In its "outreach" programme, UNFPA plans to include marginalized areas where WFP is likely to have its activities. The UNFPA Programme focuses on training community midwives and raising community awareness on reproductive health issues. Within the framework of the Child Development project of UNICEF and the World Bank, WFP will provide food assistance in support of education objectives and nutrition supplementation. UNICEF interventions will include strengthening community participation, increasing access, and girl's enrolment and retention in basic education. In nutrition, assistance will include setting up nutrition surveillance, analysis and the provision of such inputs as growth monitoring equipment. All these inputs will also support WFP interventions.
73. There is scope for increased systematic cooperation with agencies such as GTZ and with the Netherlands Bilateral Cooperation Programme in the health, education and area-based field development activities. Partnerships with FAO and UNDP would be reinvigorated to implement jointly planned Community Food for Work activities in support of the economic empowerment of women. Collaboration with UNIFEM will be pursued in support of training for women in the basic management of income generating activities and micro-credit application. A strong emphasis will be placed on establishing partnerships with NGOs who



have a strong presence at the field level. WFP will involve these NGOs especially in the implementation of the proposed interventions for the economic empowerment of women.

## Operational Implications

### **➤ Promoting Community Participation to Improve Effectiveness and the Sustainability of Development Initiatives**

74. The mid-term evaluation of the Country Programme and the management review of its activities confirmed that opportunities exist for enhancing further community participation, involving the beneficiaries and communities in decision-making. By adopting a stronger participatory approach, it will be possible to ensure that beneficiaries contribute to planning and decision-making at the time the operational project documents are being designed and formulated. Regarding women's participation, feasible arrangements are being established to enable their participation in planning and to reflect their needs in community decisions. In making the CP activities more results oriented, it will be also necessary to use broad participatory approaches and beneficiary contact monitoring techniques for monitoring and evaluation. The participation of women's committees and parents associations will be pursued as a means to enhance the sustainability of WFP interventions.

### **➤ Improving Monitoring and Evaluation to Focus on Development Results and Assist Improved Activity Management**

75. It is imperative that the "Enabling Development" framework of food assistance produces positive development results. This strategy is geared towards meeting this imperative. Each of the activities proposed in the strategy has key results that can be monitored and assessed relatively easily. Monitoring and evaluation will be directed towards obtaining such results. In order to carry this out, the appropriate monitoring and evaluation methodologies and training will be needed.
76. To avoid weaknesses in monitoring, reporting and progress control systems as observed in the past, the country office will assume greater responsibilities for these functions. In particular, WFP will reinforce its management and monitoring capabilities by hiring additional international staff and a number of national staff at the central level; at the same time strengthening the sub-offices with adequate transport means and more strategically positioned food monitors. An increase of two international and fourteen national staff to augment logistics, monitoring and programming capacities is currently envisaged.
77. WFP will seek to ensure that the implementing units at the governorate/district levels are provided with the means to participate effectively in the implementation of activities and monitor their execution. This will be complemented with the further training of counterparts, particularly in commodity tracking, as well as basic achievement measurement indicators and periodic sensitization on project objectives.

### **➤ Logistics Arrangements**

78. The current arrangement, whereby WFP has taken responsibility of transportation from the port to central warehouses and extended delivery points (EDPs), has succeeded considerably in reducing food losses. However, it has not been sufficient to eliminate the possibilities of food mismanagement. In line with the systems review carried out in mid-2000, WFP will have a more active and operational role in transport and store management in partnership with the Government of Yemen through a joint unit managed



by WFP with Government staff seconded to it. The unit will be specifically responsible for the management of all logistics related matters, including ITSH, storage and handling of WFP commodities from the ports of entry to distribution sites. This will work with the objective of instituting sound and accountable systems and processes, and strengthening counterpart capacity through on the job training.

## RESOURCE ALLOCATION

79. The share of basic resources in the ongoing Country Programme is 47.8 percent for “Support to Education”, 34.6 percent for “Assistance to Primary Health Care Centres”, 15 percent for “Local Initiatives in Support of Household Food Security” and 2.6 percent for “Women’s Health and Micronutrient Facility”. This CSO envisages a shift in resource allocation in the new Country Programme. The share of education will increase to 60 percent to reflect its pivotal role in the new programme, while in line with the limited outreach capacity of the MOPH, the share of the primary health care component will be 25 percent of programme resources. This does not preclude the possibility of adjustment of the share in the event of a significant expansion of MCH facility coverage. Women’s empowerment will receive 15 percent of the overall resources.

## KEY ISSUES AND RISKS

80. There are a number of risks and issues that could affect the implementation of the proposed activities. They include:
- The limited institutional and financial capacities of national counterparts to implement the activities is a major issue. At least initially, significant WFP staff time and resources will be required for increased WFP involvement in logistics and transport, while intensifying training and the introduction of sound monitoring and reporting systems.
  - Yemen is one of the most conservative countries in the Region with cultural constraints and resistance to change. As WFP strategy is primarily about empowering women, its success depends largely on concerted efforts to promote change. This entails creating alliances and partnerships with other United Nations agencies, bilateral donors, NGOs, women’s associations and the civil society.
  - A major challenge will be the resistance at the national and local levels to shift resources from the geographical areas, included in the current CP, to more limited areas where food insecurity is high. This will help avoid spreading WFP assistance too thinly over large parts of the country.
  - Advocacy and ownership will be essential elements of the WFP strategy. Together with other partners, WFP will work towards changing attitudes towards girls’ education, women’s health, and women’s participation and empowerment. Yemen is among the least developed countries in the world and therefore phasing out WFP assistance from the health and education sectors is not envisaged in the medium term.
  - This CSO is about shifting assistance towards vulnerable groups in the most remote and marginal areas, where food insecurity and the incidence of malnutrition are significant, and where access to markets is very limited. Helping these people commands strong partnerships, active advocacy and commitment.

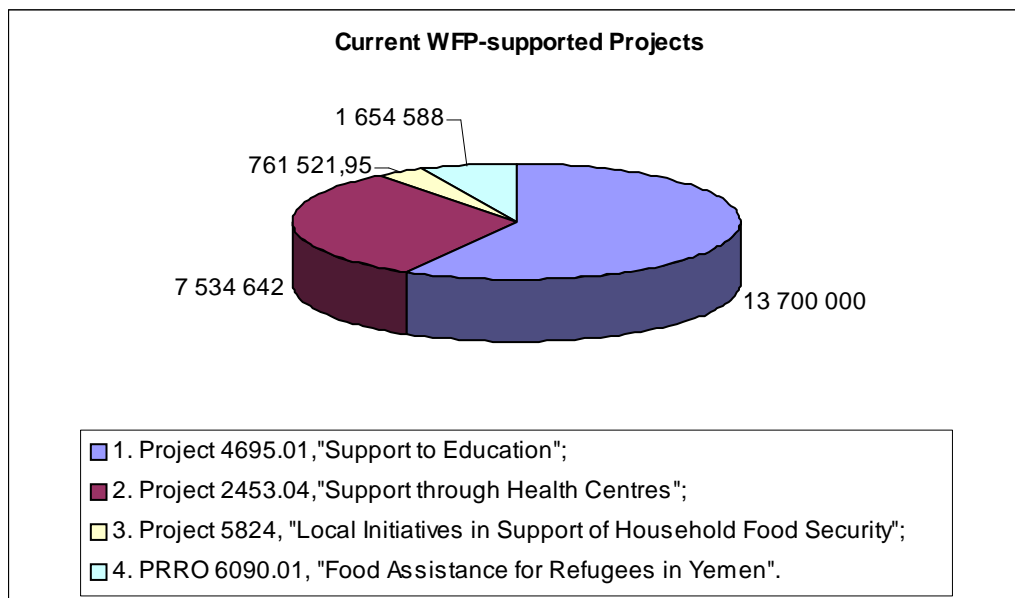




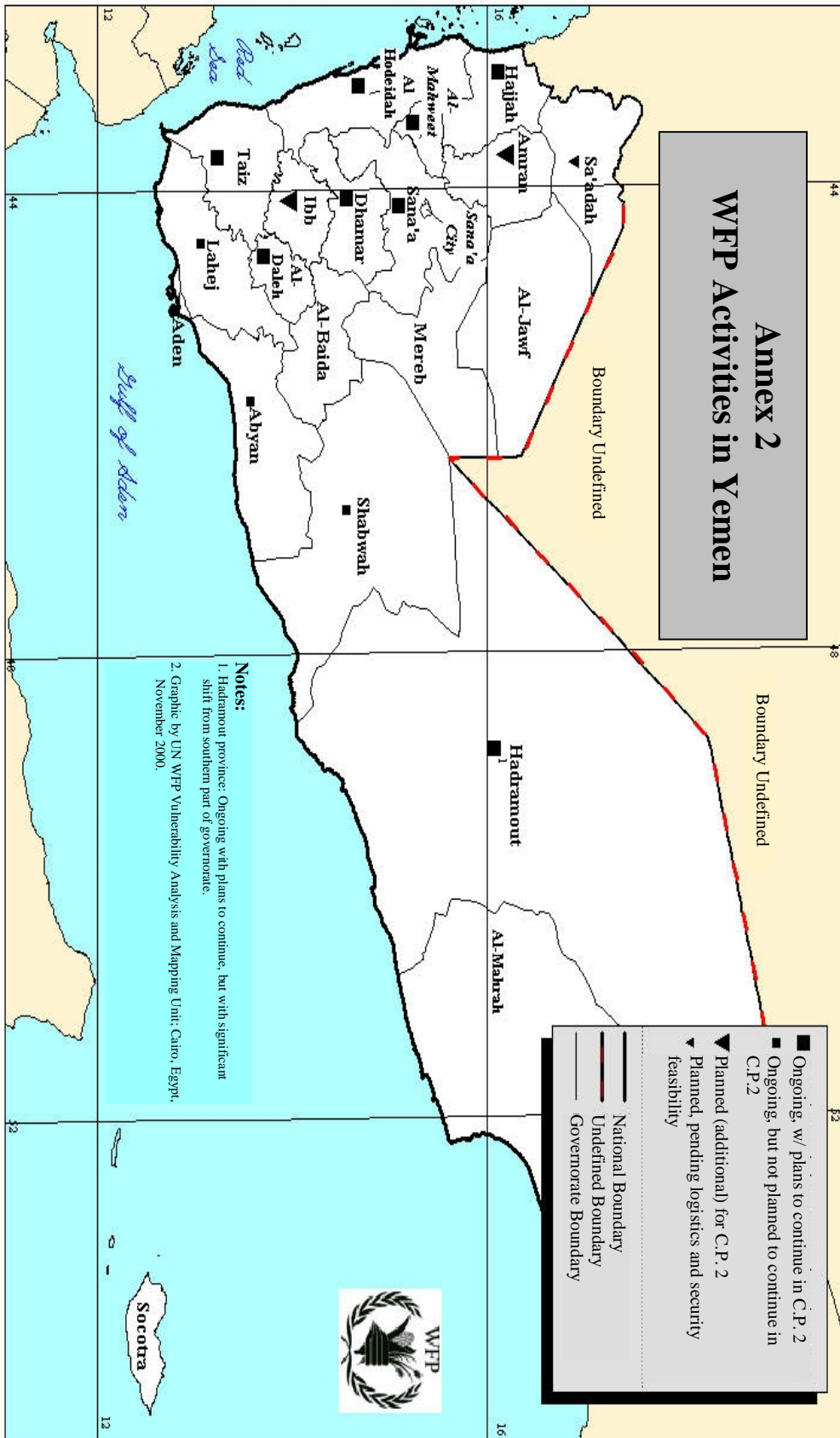
## ANNEX I

CURRENT WFP ASSISTANCE TO YEMEN WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK  
OF THE 1998-2001 COUNTRY PROGRAMME

Ongoing Country Programme Activities as of 01/10/2000	Value (in US\$)
Project 4695.01, "Support to Education"; duration 01/10/1998–30/6/2001	13 700 000
Project 2453.04, "Support through Health Centres"; duration: from 01/02/1999–31/01/2000	7 534 642
Project 5824, "Local Initiatives in Support of Household Food Security"; duration: from 01/12/2000–31/07/2001	761 522
PRRO 6090.01, "Food Assistance for Refugees in Yemen"; duration: 01/04/2000–31/03/2001	1 654 588



ANNEX II



The designations employed and the presentation of material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the World Food Programme (WFP) concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its frontiers or boundaries



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## ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

CP	Country Programme
CSO	Country Strategy Outline
CCA	Common Country Assessment
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GTZ	German Agency for Technical Cooperation
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HDI	Human Development Index
LIFDC	Low-Income, Food-Deficit Country
MCH	Mother and Child Health
MOPH	Ministry of Public Health
NAPPE	National Action Plan for Poverty Eradication
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VAM	Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping
WHO	World Health Organization

