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Agenda item 3

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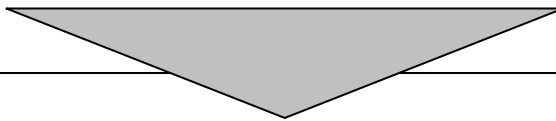
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PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES

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Note to the Executive Board



This document is submitted for information 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 points indicated below, preferably well in advance of the Board's meeting.

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Executive Summary



The issue of people's participation has gained considerable momentum among governments, donor agencies and international organizations, and was strongly reaffirmed in the World Food Summit's Plan of Action (FAO, 1996). Experience has shown that the inclusion of civil society through participatory approaches is a prerequisite for poor people to contribute their knowledge, skills and resources to processes that influence their lives.

However, despite significant efforts by agencies and governments alike, there are various factors that impede the adoption of participatory approaches at both the national and local levels. These include the absence of a national policy; legal frameworks to guard against discrimination; number of trained staff; time and financial constraints; and insecurity.

WFP's Mission Statement stipulates that the Programme will "ensure that its assistance programmes are designed and implemented on the basis of broad-based participation".

The following are key principles in WFP's participatory approaches:

- Participation is a complex process and there are few universal principles, approaches or methods. WFP recognizes the importance of flexibility and developing programmes suited to local situations and capacities.
- WFP aims to work with communities to bring the poorest and the marginalized into its assistance programmes and strengthen their representation in community structures. WFP will advocate the right for people's voices to be heard.
- Participation in WFP programmes empowers women. WFP's programmes seek to overcome gender inequalities by creating opportunities for women's voices to be heard.
- WFP endeavours to enhance participation in emergency operations, moving beyond information sharing. Experience shows that from this starting point participants should be increasingly involved in the decisions affecting them as the situation permits.
- Participation should not be confined to working at the community level. WFP works with counterpart agencies to build effective partnerships, for example in the areas of data sharing and analysis, achieving consensus on the use of targeting criteria, and monitoring conditions of physical security and food security.

This document provides information on how WFP operationalizes these principles in its programmes.

Draft Decision



The Board takes note of the information contained in the document (WFP/EB.3/2000/3-D).



INTRODUCTION

1. In 1979, the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (WCARRD) highlighted the importance of community-based participation in human development. It affirmed that “participation by the people in the institutions and systems which govern their lives is a basic human right and also essential for the realignment of political power in favour of disadvantaged groups and for social and economic development.”¹ The issue of people’s participation has gained considerable momentum among governments, donor agencies and international organizations, and was strongly reaffirmed in the World Food Summit’s Plan of Action (FAO, 1996).
2. More recently, experience has shown that the inclusion of civil society through participatory approaches is a prerequisite for poor people to contribute their knowledge, skills and resources to processes that influence their lives. Depending on how these processes are structured, the poorest can be included and benefit, or excluded, marginalized and even harmed by development processes. This is especially true for women.
3. Despite significant efforts, agencies and governments alike are still seeking effective and practical participatory approaches for relief, rehabilitation and development. A number of factors can impede the adoption of participatory approaches at both the national and local levels. These include the absence of a national policy; legal frameworks to guard against discrimination; number of trained staff; time and financial constraints; and insecurity.
4. This document provides information on how WFP uses participatory approaches in its different programme categories.

WFP AND PARTICIPATION—AN UPDATE

A Common Understanding of Participation

5. Authors and agencies use the terms “participation” and “participant” in very different ways. For WFP, the term participants refers to people or groups who influence and/or share control over food-assisted activities. Depending on the context, this can include beneficiaries, national and local governments, NGOs and other partners. The extent to which people participate, influence and make decisions and the processes by which people participate are situation-specific. WFP works to ensure that the process is inclusive, actively involves representative community structures, and does not discriminate against marginalized groups and women.

¹ FAO. 1992. People’s participation in rural development. The FAO Plan of Action. FAO. Rome.



6. Four levels of participation, as identified below, are key stages in a participatory process.
 - information sharing in a one-way flow;
 - consultation in at least a two-way flow of information;
 - collaboration with shared control over decision-making; and
 - empowerment with the transfer of control over decisions and resources.
7. The level of participation varies according to the situation: at the lowest level, information is provided, for example on the timing and delivery of services, but people have minimal influence over the design and implementation of the programme. More often, programmes are designed and implemented by consultation: agencies share possible programme options with participants using a variety of participatory approaches. Participants in turn convey their views and priorities, for example dietary preferences or security concerns, which become crucial elements in programme design. In Angola, WFP and its partners discussed security concerns with IDPs in order to ensure the safe delivery of food aid. At the highest level of influence, participants contribute resources, for example their experience, knowledge and labour, and assume a high level of decision-making, directing their programme plan.
8. The level of participation tends to increase as situations stabilize. In the acute emergency stage, discussions with beneficiaries and information sharing may be all that is feasible given time and security constraints, and the fact that saving lives is the priority. However, even in the early stages of an emergency, asking a few, simple questions and listening to the answers can have marked effects on the success of the programmes. For example, in Afghanistan, emergency food needs assessments were conducted using participatory rural appraisal (PRA) tools. One unexpected piece of information gained through focus group discussions was that, in winter, the water mills used in the area froze over, and villagers found it difficult to mill large quantities of grain. In response, WFP replaced a proportion of the unground cereal it had planned to distribute with other food items, which could be more easily prepared for consumption.
9. As the emergency stabilizes, it may be easier to increase the involvement of people and there are usually more opportunities to work with and strengthen representative community organizations. Increased stability offers the opportunity for community participation to become an integral part of the rehabilitation process, helping communities to rebuild and to strengthen communal cohesion and individual confidence. Stability eventually allows participants to become empowered decision-makers, actively influencing the choice of activities and services, benefiting from higher returns and assuming greater risks. The challenge is to increase participation over time, with participants increasingly making decisions and controlling the use of resources. The objective is for people to have control over decisions that affect their lives.



TAKING STOCK: WFP AND PARTICIPATION

WFP's Commitment to Participation

10. WFP's stance on participation is clear. Its Mission Statement stipulates that WFP will "ensure that its assistance programmes are designed and implemented on the basis of broad-based participation" and work with all concerned groups in food-assisted activities. The WFP Commitments to Women further affirm WFP's dedication to work with governments, partners and communities to meet the food needs of poor and hungry people.² The first strategic objective of the Commitments to Women moves WFP beyond most agencies' objectives for participation in programme implementation, and opens all areas of programming to greater participation by women. Under this commitment, WFP works to ensure that: i) women are included in needs assessments, targeting, activity identification and implementation; ii) gender and participation are institutionalized in staff appointment and assessment policies; and iii) WFP works with NGO partners to adopt gender specific planning, targeting and food distribution mechanisms.
11. The endorsement of participatory approaches in the Mission Statement and in the Commitments to Women is further elaborated in various policy documents and guidelines related to WFP's programmes in relief, rehabilitation and development. Relevant documents include: the policies—Enabling Development (1999), From Crisis to Recovery (1998), and Partnership with NGOs (1999); and the guidelines—WFP in Emergencies: Framework, Preparedness and Response Strategy (1996). These documents and their application at the field level encourage participation from a broad range of actors, stressing the importance of relating the degree of participation to the context. In particular, the Enabling Development policy places emphasis on encouraging the participation of women and other marginalized groups through an understanding of their priorities, capacities and problems.

Participation, Food Security and Self-reliance

- Participation enables WFP programmes to meet food security objectives more successfully through improved design and implementation. On the basis of a sound understanding of participants' needs, food-for-work (FFW) activities can improve food security by increasing food production and creating long-term employment opportunities. For example, in Nepal FFW activities such as the construction of fishponds, mule trails and a mill were identified by Village Development Committees and User Groups, some of which were comprised entirely of women.
- Through participation, individuals can acquire skills and the confidence necessary to improve their social and economic status. In Bangladesh, the participation of poor women in the Income Generation for Vulnerable Group Development Programme (IGVGDP) led to an "increase in women's mobility, access to the public sphere, personal and social awareness".³

² By taking "measures to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision making" (Strategic Objective g.1, WFP Commitments to Women). WFP. Rome. 1996.

³ Mancusi-Materi, E. 2000. "Food aid for Social Development in Post-Conflict Situations" *Development* 43:3 Society for International Development. Rome.



- Strengthening civil society at the local level creates trust among different groups. Research suggests that where civil society is strong, the level of incomes, and therefore in most cases of food security, is higher.⁴
- The strengthening of civil society at the local level contributes to good and representative governance of society at a national level. There is a strong correlation between representative government and food security.⁵

Increasing Participation

12. A desk review of EMOP, PRRO and Development programmes indicated that since 1995, about 80 percent of the documents specified the planned use of participatory approaches. WFP has integrated elements of participation in all phases of the programme cycle: needs assessments, targeting, activity identification and implementation, and monitoring. The review also found that participatory approaches have been used widely in diverse contexts and over the years, there has been an increasing trend towards using participatory approaches, especially in the distribution and implementation phase. An approach which is being increasingly used involves entrusting local committees with the targeting and distribution of food aid and the identification of asset-building activities.
13. All the development programmes reviewed mentioned some use of participatory techniques in design or implementation. In EMOPs and PRROs, participatory techniques were used predominantly in distribution and monitoring but less in needs assessment and targeting. In conclusion, the review showed that WFP is beginning to apply participatory approaches more systematically, albeit with a limited scope. The challenge now is to intensify and expand the use of these approaches in relief, rehabilitation and development.

Participation in Development

14. The participation of stakeholders in the design and implementation of programmes can bridge traditional top-down and bottom-up rural development strategies, neither of which has demonstrated unqualified success in the eradication of poverty. Lacking organizational structures which articulate their needs, the poorest have tended to be isolated and often poorly served under a top-down planning process.⁶ The result can be activities that are irrelevant to poor people and ignore their capacities and skills.
15. On the other hand, a purely bottom-up approach is rarely able to meet the priorities of the poorest. Without some degree of centralization it is hard to achieve economies of scale conversely, a purely bottom-up approach generally does not enable the poor to gain access to the support mechanisms required for sustainable development.
16. A third approach links top-down and bottom-up planning by actively involving communities with other stakeholders who influence processes that affect poor people's lives. In general, the regional and national programmes that have benefited the poor have

⁴ Narayan, D. and Pritchett, L. 1997. *Cents and Sociability: household income and social capital in rural Tanzania*. The World Bank, Mimeo. Washington, D.C. Knack, S. and Keefer, P. 1997 "Does social capital have an economic pay-off? A Cross-country investigation." *Quarterly Journal of Economics*. November 1997.

⁵ Dreze, J. and Sen, A. 1989. *Hunger and Public Action*. OUP. New York. Smith, L. and Haddad, L. 2000. *Overcoming Child Malnutrition in Developing Countries, Past Achievements and Future Choices*. Food Agriculture and the Environment—Discussion Paper 30. IFPRI. Washington, D.C.

⁶ WFP. 1998. *Participation: An Approach to Reach the Poor. Time for Change: Food Aid and Development*. WFP. Rome.



been concurrent endeavours from above and below.⁷ This emphasis on broad-based participation moves decision-making closer to poor women and men, through decentralization of power and support to representative civil society organizations. The emphasis on listening to and empowering marginalized people requires a significant change in thinking, considering that it is these very groups who are generally excluded from most development processes.

17. Broad-based participation ensures that the assets created using food aid are relevant and desired by food insecure and marginalized people, and allows WFP to benefit from indigenous resources and skills in programme design and implementation. Activities that address the real concerns of poor people are more likely to create assets that will be maintained. Through participation in food-for-work committees, women have a voice in identifying and building assets which will benefit them directly. In brief, broad-based participation is the key to effective and sustainable development.
18. When designing a development programme, an assessment of the capacities of participants is as important as looking at needs. These assessments communicate respect for people's competence, experience and skills, and can lessen requirements for imported supplies and management structures. Recognizing and building upon existing decision-making, management, distributional and productive capacities can help communities make the transition from aid dependency to self-reliance. In a number of countries, as the India example given below illustrates, participation in WFP-supported activities has been a route for marginalized people to acquire skills that allow them to establish new livelihoods.

In its tribal development activities in India, WFP promotes the participation of tribal communities through the micro-planning process. Participants select culturally compatible and productive activities to diversify their livelihoods, for example the training of women in bee keeping and fish farming. Also, participation of the local-level *Panchayati Raj* structures in food-assisted activities has helped increase their design and implementation capacities.

Participation in Emergencies

19. WFP's experience has shown that participatory approaches are as relevant in emergencies as they are in development. However, the constraints that are characteristic of emergency situations can be very different from those in development. In general, participation in emergencies tends to concentrate on consulting beneficiaries about their needs, rather than entrusting beneficiaries with control over the programme. A major evaluation of the response to the 1998 famine in southern Sudan suggests that it is crucial that the community participates and contributes their ideas at every stage of the (relief) process.⁸ WFP and other agencies have found that even relatively low levels of beneficiary participation in emergencies can improve targeting, ensure that real needs are met, minimize waste and leakage of resources, decrease security risks, and reduce operational

⁷ Uphoff, N. 1986. "Assisted Self-Reliance: Working with, rather than for, the Poor" from Lewis, J.P. (ed.) *Strengthening the Poor: What have we learned*. Overseas Development Council. Washington D.C.

⁸ Joint SPLM/SRRA-OLS Targeting and Vulnerabilities Task Force, quoted in Ntatta, P. 1999. Participation by the Affected Population in Relief Operations: A Review of the Experience of DEC Agencies during the Response to the 1998 Famine in Southern Sudan. ALNAP. London.



costs. Community participation reduces dependency, and is the key to overcoming traumatic experiences and rebuilding self-esteem.⁹

In Burundi's volatile security situation, it became increasingly difficult for women to secure food for their households, to the extent that 70 percent of women were identified as vulnerable. WFP helped set up 250 women's associations and supported them through training in productive activities and numerical skills as well as mediation when conflicts arose within the associations. The associations selected activities and submitted proposals to WFP for productive, agricultural, educational and environmental activities according to a simplified format. Once these were approved, an agreement was signed with the association. This approach allowed women to use their knowledge of the local economy to select and manage viable activities. In addition to acquiring skills, women gained confidence and awareness of the important leadership roles they play within the household and the community.

20. A 1997 meeting of WFP field staff in the Horn of Africa affirmed the importance and relevance of participation in emergency food aid. There was general agreement that consultation with women and men about their priorities and capacities is possible in most complex emergencies. It was also agreed that in emergencies participation should be introduced in an incremental manner, starting with dialogue and discussion in the initial phases.
21. Table 1, based on WFP's experience in southern Sudan, shows how participation increased over the life of the operation, and how increased participation can lay the foundations for rehabilitation and development.

⁹ Apthorpe, A. & Atkinson, P. 1999. Towards shared social learning for humanitarian programmes. ALNAP. London.



| TABLE 1: PARTICIPATION AND THE TRANSITION FROM RELIEF TO DEVELOPMENT | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|---|
| Stage | Acute Emergency | Transition 1 | Transition 2 | Development |
| Beneficiary Groups | ➤ crisis-affected | ➤ crisis-affected | ➤ crisis-affected ➤ chronically food insecure | ➤ chronically food insecure people/areas ➤ high-risk groups |
| Activities | ➤ general food distribution | ➤ targeted food distributions ➤ activities to secure basic needs: food, shelter and water | ➤ targeted food distributions ➤ food for training ➤ food for work ➤ low input activities: grain/seed banks ➤ primary health care | ➤ food for training ➤ community asset creation in support of longer-term food security ➤ land protection ➤ disaster mitigation ➤ school feeding |
| Techniques of Beneficiary Participation | ➤ listening to beneficiaries ➤ ensuring people understand the food-assisted programme | ➤ information sharing ➤ committees participation in assessment and targeting ➤ limited decision-making and accountability | ➤ strengthening of participatory processes ➤ contributions by participants ➤ increased technical advice ➤ increased decision-making and accountability | ➤ greater contribution and participation from community ➤ partner contribution ➤ decision-making ➤ transfer of control |
| Standards Achieved | ➤ logistics efficiency ➤ reaching those in need | ➤ reaching target groups ➤ understanding priorities and capacities | ➤ representative community structures ➤ capacity-building ➤ increased technical standards | ➤ representative community structures ➤ maintenance of assets ➤ cost recovery ➤ empowerment |

Training and Tools

22. WFP employs a number of participatory approaches and has developed a series of training programmes which introduce and strengthen the use of participatory techniques. considerable progress has been made in the context of gender and participation. since last year, 120 field staff and partners have been trained in gender analysis, participatory techniques and the monitoring of participation, using the guidelines on “gender sensitive monitoring and evaluation using PRA”. Table 2 summarizes a number of tools currently in use within WFP.



| TABLE 2: PARTICIPATORY TOOLS AND METHODS USED IN WFP PROGRAMMES | |
|---|---|
| Tool | Definition |
| <i>Appreciative Inquiry</i> | A method of structuring discussions to allow participants to consider the strengths of their current situation, and create a strategy for building on these strengths to reach communal goals. |
| <i>Community Mapping</i> | Asking people, as groups or individuals, to draw maps of an area. In addition to transferring knowledge about geographical layout, resource distribution, topography and infrastructure, community mapping allows people to show which elements of their environment are important to them, and how they see the relationships between these elements. |
| <i>Force Field Analysis</i> | A tool for examining the constraints and resources available to create individual or social change. Force field analysis asks the participant to create two contrasting pictures, one of the present and one of an ideal future. Using these pictures as a basis, the participant is encouraged to consider how they differ, the constraints that prevent the situation from becoming ideal, and the resources or actions required to overcome these constraints. |
| <i>Household Food Economy Approach</i> | An approach to food needs assessment and targeting developed by Save the Children (UK) and WFP that is based on understanding the activities and strategies which poor people use to obtain food and money. Participatory tools and methods such as proportional piling and semi-structured interviews are used to understand local definitions of poverty, and quantify how much food and income come from different sources. |
| <i>Participatory Rural Appraisal</i> | A label given to a growing family of participatory approaches and methods that emphasize local knowledge and enable local people to make their own appraisals, analyses and plans. PRA uses group animation and exercises to facilitate information sharing, analysis, and action among stakeholders. |
| <i>Participatory Poverty Assessments</i> | The use of specific qualitative research techniques to discern the perceptions and attitudes of the poor. They contribute to an understanding of the overall poverty situation by complementing, informing or validating the results of more conventional analyses based on household survey data and government statistics. |
| <i>Proportional piling</i> | A simple technique which allows non-numerate people to explain and discuss relative socio-economic situations, for example: the proportion of poor households in an area or the income they receive from wage labour. |
| <i>Semi-structured interviews</i> | Conducting interviews around a general topic in such a way as to allow for a two-way flow of information and opinions. Questions are not normally pre-formulated, but are generated from the discussion. They are also open-ended, allowing the respondent to explain their answers. Semi-structured interviews are particularly good ways to find out about people's opinions and attitudes. |
| <i>Stakeholder analysis</i> | A technique which uses a variety of PRA tools to identify different groups of people, their differing priorities and attitudes, and "common ground" on which all the different groups can collaborate. |
| <i>Twenty-four-hour clock</i> | A way to visually represent how people use their time. As with mapping, 24 hour clocks can be very useful when they are compared: to see the difference in time availability between women and men when planning a time-intensive activity, or to monitor the impact activities have had on workloads and time availability. |

BALANCING BENEFITS AND COSTS

23. The evidence to date suggests that more often, the benefits of participation outweigh the costs. participation improves targeting, activity selection and monitoring, makes activities and outputs more sustainable, supports skills transfer and strengthens civil society.



although comparative studies indicate such benefits, as well as a number of costs (increased time, higher number of staff, training of staff and counterparts) or risks, there are few studies that have tried to quantitatively examine the benefits and costs of participation.

24. When calculating the benefits and costs, it is important to consider the following:
 - proportionally higher sunk costs at the beginning, for example for training;
 - the intertemporal dimension of benefit realization - many of the benefits extend far into the future; and
 - difficulty in quantifying a number of the benefits, for example increased self-reliance, community cohesiveness and stability, and economic welfare of the poorest. this renders traditional project and investment analysis inappropriate for evaluating some of the benefits of participation.
25. While it can be expensive to adopt participatory approaches, particularly in small programmes, economies of scale tend to work in WFP's favour since most of its programmes cover a number of communities in selected districts, people living in camps or conflict-affected communities which tend to be localized within a country. thus, trained local field staff working with local promoters can cover a number of communities.
26. The time required and the costs associated with a participatory approach are often grossly over-estimated and not based on empirical evidence. The costs of using participatory tools and methods as part of a targeting process, for example a participatory poverty assessment, is comparable to those involved for an average-sized (three to four people) WFP appraisal mission with international consultants. the WFP-assisted Local-Level Participatory Planning Approach in Ethiopia is estimated to have cost US\$6.5 per household per year. these figures cover the costs of conducting training and inception workshops, locally recruited field workers, training for participants and staff as well as participatory research and monitoring. In Nepal, WFP applied an intensive participatory approach using local technical experts and monitors. the cost of developing this participatory approach for the life of the programme is about US\$ 3.20 per household.
27. When compared with the average cost of a food ration allocated for one year, US\$100-200, the additional cost of US\$ 3-7 incurred on participatory approaches are justifiable to ensure that food effectively reaches those in need. Furthermore, the additional costs are likely to be lower in many programmes. While asset-creation activities such as the Ethiopia soil and water conservation programme require greater involvement if people are to take ownership over the assets created, other activities, for example school feeding and mother and child health (MCH), would require less intensive participatory approaches.



KEY ELEMENTS IN WFP'S PARTICIPATORY APPROACH

Principles

28. For WFP the concept of participation may best be summarized as:
- A people-centred approach has the highest probability of success because it offers the potential to strengthen the voice of the most vulnerable. Participation involves women and men, allowing them to influence their food security through processes of empowerment. These processes increase knowledge and skills, and thus self-reliance. At a minimum, this implies consultation, knowledge exchange and equitable arrangements for the sharing of benefits.
29. WFP's experience of and commitment to participation is outlined in the following principles:
- Participation is a complex process and there are few universal principles, approaches or methods. WFP recognizes the importance of flexibility and developing programmes suited to local situations and capacities.
 - A conscious effort should be made to ensure that the use of participatory approaches does not build up expectations that cannot be met.
 - WFP aims to work with communities to bring the poorest and the marginalized into its assistance programmes and strengthen their representation in community structures. WFP will advocate the right for people's voices to be heard.
 - WFP views participation as both a means for reaching marginalized groups with appropriate types and levels of assistance, and as an end with the aim of building self-reliance and empowering women and men. WFP's programmes use participatory techniques for data collection and consensus building to allow the poorest to determine a course of action.
 - Participation in WFP programmes empowers women. WFP's programmes seek to overcome gender inequalities by creating opportunities for women's voices to be heard.
 - Participation is a process that should be an integral part of the programme and increase as the situation permits. While WFP does not prescribe to a standard set of stages or actions, country offices are encouraged to plan strategically to enhance participation at different stages during the life of a programme.
 - WFP endeavours to enhance participation in emergency operations, moving beyond information sharing. Experience shows that from this starting point participants should be increasingly involved in the decisions affecting them as the situation permits.
 - Participation should not be confined to working at the community level. WFP works with counterpart agencies to build effective partnerships, for example in the areas of data sharing and analysis, achieving consensus on the use of targeting criteria, and monitoring conditions of physical security and food security.
30. WFP will take the measures necessary to operationalize these principles by providing field-based learning opportunities, allocating resources for participatory tool development and training. WFP will specifically concentrate on the elements outlined below.



📌 **Needs Assessment**

31. Needs assessment—assessing the scale and causes of food insecurity—is an important base for WFP programmes. Needs assessments are becoming more participatory with the use of PRA tools or focus group interviews with key informants. Greater participation in needs assessments requires striking a balance between local responsibility and central control. It also means expanding the range of participatory tools and techniques used.
32. A good example is the Participatory Poverty Assessment (PPA) that supplements conventional poverty assessments (see Table 2). Broadly, these assessments rely on the involvement of key groups of vulnerable people to reflect the concerns of a wide range of people living in conditions of poverty and food insecurity. Central data collection and dialogue with central governments remain essential elements of the approach, but participatory approaches allow the poor to be heard.
33. In needs assessment, participatory tools are already applied by many NGOs working in relief, such as Save the Children (SC) UK, OXFAM or Action Against Hunger (ACF). In Liberia, WFP has conducted PRAs in combination with semi-structured interviews and nutrition surveys (anthropometric screening) to determine the level of food insecurity. They compensated for the lack of baseline data.
34. While such participatory work will generally require a longer lead-time, in most cases it is a matter of starting earlier and sequencing design activities so that preparatory work takes place before commodity arrivals. For example, in most country programmes, there is a gap between approval and the first food distributions, allowing time to complete participatory assessments.
35. In emergencies, additional staff is often hired on short notice and on a short-term basis. Often this staff lacks knowledge about the context of the emergency, the affected population, and participatory tools. Ongoing and proposed training will help overcome some of these constraints. Reliable information is also difficult to obtain with problems of subjectivity intensified in conflicts, and in other situations where people are too preoccupied with immediate survival to participate. Such factors will determine the extent to which participatory approaches can be introduced during needs assessment processes. WFP is working to address these factors more systematically and to use participatory tools in emergency situations. For example, participatory tools will be an important element in the forthcoming revised Emergency Needs Assessment Guidelines.

📌 **Targeting the Poorest**

36. For WFP, targeting means selecting the areas, populations and households that will receive food assistance. Participatory targeting may involve allowing the community to influence the selection of targeting criteria, through their own descriptions of food insecurity and poverty, or it may involve handing over the responsibility for targeting to local community organizations within an area.
37. WFP is undertaking a number of initiatives to build participatory approaches into the design stage as early as possible. For example, in Nepal and Bangladesh, pilot initiatives are under way to develop a thorough understanding of community structures, vulnerability to food insecurity and capacity building requirements. There is a growing understanding that targeting the most food-insecure has to take into account community perceptions and criteria of vulnerability. The use of participatory approaches can highlight local perceptions of vulnerability; for example, using gender-disaggregated data to better understand gender relations in the context of local customs and culture. Tools like mapping and proportional piling (see Table 2) have been used to collect information for targeting,



for example the Household Food Economy Approach in post-war Rwanda. In Kenya, communities have conducted their own targeting exercises with WFP support.

38. The appropriateness of these tools depends on the situation, although they can be adapted to suit specific contexts. The main constraints in adapting these tools relate to the time required, the skill level of staff or partners, the need to ensure consistency of data within a programme and understanding the social dynamics within communities.

Activity Selection and Implementation

39. When food is used to support the creation of assets, a participatory approach requires that the community, and particularly marginalized groups within the community, are involved in deciding which assets will be most useful. In some cases, WFP or partner NGOs will consult with communities, using PRA tools, to decide which assets are appropriate, and will mediate between different groups. In others, WFP will design its programmes using a "micro-project" to allow community organizations to make their own plans, and establish local approval mechanisms.
40. Community-based involvement is crucial to meet the priorities elaborated in the Enabling Development policy – in particular, enabling poor households to invest in human capital through education and training, making it possible for poor families to gain and preserve assets, mitigating the effects of natural disasters and enabling households which depend on degraded natural resources for their food security to make a shift to more sustainable livelihoods.
41. The management and day-to-day implementation of WFP-assisted programmes may involve local government agencies, NGOs or community groups. In any of these situations country offices can use a number of techniques that allow a better understanding of what works and what does not, and beneficiaries' views on how to improve food distribution and activity design. These include "stakeholder analysis", and "force field analysis" (see Table 2).
42. It is important to note that a participatory approach does not mean that all the views of the people concerned can be acted upon and that participation in design does not guarantee participation during implementation. However, the exchange of views and discussion lead to a greater awareness of the issues at stake which should influence implementation and redesign. WFP realizes the importance of continuous feedback and is working to ensure that the priorities and views of participants and relevant stakeholders are heard and considered during implementation and in the design of future activities.

Monitoring

43. To complement more traditional quantitative monitoring methods, WFP has introduced different PRA and Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) approaches which involve WFP staff, government counterparts and beneficiaries in reflecting and analysing how a programme is progressing and reaching a consensus on what action should be taken. These gender-sensitive participatory approaches capture people's perceptions and opinions. They tend to be less extractive and if applied appropriately:
- capture the effectiveness of WFP's initiatives;
 - increase ownership and sustainability by involving a greater number of stakeholders in the monitoring process;
 - build local capacity to reflect, analyse and take corrective action; and
 - ensure women's participation.



44. In addition, it is important to monitor the effectiveness of participatory approaches in meeting the specific objectives of empowerment and inclusion. WFP uses a number of tools, for example 24-hour clocks and community mapping, (see Table 2) to involve a larger number of stakeholders in monitoring and to incorporate local knowledge and experiences in the ongoing design and phasing out. The Beneficiary Contact Monitoring (BCM) approach stresses the importance of understanding how beneficiaries view WFP programmes, how the activity affects them and, in particular, their views on activity selection and targeting. In Mozambique, WFP monitored the effects of food assistance during the acute phases of the disaster relying heavily on the perceptions and priorities of those affected by the floods. These, together with the more traditional quantitative methods, will provide a sound monitoring system to enhance programme management.

✧ *Capacity-building*

45. Capacity-building with beneficiaries, counterparts, partners and WFP staff is designed to increase awareness, develop understanding and strengthen staff skills. While such a process has started at WFP, more needs to be done if staff is to successfully design, implement and monitor participatory food-assisted activities. The process requires broad-based commitment in terms of resources and skills development. Attitudes that promote participation are an important first step.

46. WFP continues to create greater awareness of the benefits of adopting participatory approaches among government counterparts and to assist them in developing new training approaches. This is done through case studies and training in participatory tools and practices. For example, in India, WFP has trained counterparts in microplanning and PRA methods (see Table 2). WFP also continues to establish mechanisms to facilitate collaboration with NGOs and improve arrangements specified in formal agreements.

47. Training programmes in management and technical skills are carried out for leaders and members of people's organizations. WFP is also assisting governments in providing training to the staff of government organizations, partner NGOs and people's organizations.

✧ *Phasing out*

48. The difficulty in timing the reduction and phasing out of assistance can be eased through a process of listening to participants and other stakeholders' concerns and jointly planning future options. For example, the process developed by using tools such as appreciative inquiry (see Table 2) can determine the timing of withdrawal and safety net requirements, and lay the foundations for a stronger civil society. Activities that build the capacity of marginalized people can also reduce the need for WFP's involvement over time, and lead to more successful phasing-out strategies. For instance, in Guyana community-based land improvement activities and the rehabilitation of productive infrastructure increased agricultural productivity over the life of the programme, improving the food security of poor farmers. Training and income-generating activities for community self-help groups and unskilled workers enabled the gradual reduction and phasing out of WFP assistance.

✧ *Partnership*

49. WFP continues to further its people-centred programming in partnership with Governments, United Nations and NGO partners, civil society organizations and the people most in need of food. In accordance with the Common Country Assessment (CCA) and United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) guidelines, WFP fully



supports close consultations with civil society¹⁰ and lays special emphasis on listening to organizations that represent the interests of marginalized groups at the national level. Working with local NGOs and community-based organizations facilitates access to the poor and these partners help WFP bridge the gap between national-level planning and community-implemented activities.

50. WFP is also part of the Inter-Agency Working Group on Participatory Approaches and works closely with FAO and IFAD. The three Rome-based agencies also collaborate with UNDP and the Department for International Development (DFID) on furthering livelihoods approaches. Through these processes, WFP contributes to collective experience and to the joint development of participatory approaches and analytical tools. Country-level partnerships with UNDP, the World Bank, IFAD and FAO, bilateral donors, and NGOs will continue to facilitate WFP's use of participatory approaches.
51. As a member of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), WFP follows the Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP) guidelines. Their emphasis on collaboration with local partners reinforces WFP's commitment to listening to affected populations in emergencies, and to working with and through representative structures. With regard to the protection of IDPs, WFP supports the inter-agency approach embodied in the IASC policy paper on "Protection of Internally Displaced Persons" (December 1999) and the "Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement", both of which stress the importance of participation by the displaced.

NEXT STEPS

52. WFP has recently initiated a number of activities to allow the Programme to more systematically apply the participation principles outlined in this document. Of particular importance is the preparation and field-testing of a participatory toolkit, which will include the training of focal points and other key staff in selected country offices. The toolkit will draw upon WFP's most recent experience to provide practical guidance on the use of participatory tools in all WFP programmes – EMOPs, PRROs, Country Programmes, and Development Projects. WFP will also draw on tools from a number of other agencies and adapt them to WFP's capacities and those of its partners.
53. In addition, WFP plans to augment its ongoing training programmes in participatory approaches. Twenty-five trainers in all regions of WFP programmes will be trained in the use of the participatory toolkit. They, in turn, will train field staff and provide regional and country-level support. The Programme Quality Improvement Facility Impact Grant will fund the preparation of the toolkit and the initial training. WFP staff will also receive training through modules in the Enabling Development and Emergency Response Training courses to be held in late 2000 and early 2001.
54. WFP will ensure that its work in participation is incorporated into, and developed in conjunction with, other WFP initiatives including the Emergency Needs Assessment Guidelines, Vulnerability Assessment Guidelines and Monitoring Guidelines. WFP will also benefit from its planned activities with FAO and IFAD in support of sustainable livelihood activities, in areas such as flexible programming and livelihoods assessment tools.

¹⁰ United Nations. 1999. *UNDAF Guidelines, CCA Guidelines*. United Nations. New York.



