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BASIC ACTIVITY WITHIN APPROVED COUNTRY PROGRAMME—YEMEN 5824.00

Local initiatives in support of household food security (Basic Activity 3)

Total cost to WFP	1,947,929 dollars
WFP food cost	916,700 dollars
UNDP contribution (for technical support to be implemented by FAO)	250,000 dollars
Number of beneficiaries	30,240 individuals (4,320 families)
Duration	Eighteen months (May 1998–October 1999)

All monetary values are in United States dollars.

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NOTE TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

This document is submitted for information to the Executive Board.

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

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

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Should you have any questions regarding matters of dispatch of documentation for the Executive Board, please contact the Documentation and Meetings Clerk (tel.: 066513-2641).



1. Low agricultural productivity is a major factor contributing to poverty in Yemen. Over 80 percent of the population in poverty are in rural areas, having inadequate resources to meet basic food needs. Cropping has expanded onto very marginal land. Post-harvest losses of food crops are very high owing to a lack of preservation skills. Deforestation and the abandonment of terraces and traditional water harvesting systems have caused widespread soil erosion and encroachment.
2. The long-term objective of the activity is to improve the livelihoods of poor rural families, through greater self-reliance in food and water. The immediate objectives are to: a) increase the availability and diversity of food, through WFP rations and production and preservation of fruit and vegetables mainly for household consumption; b) secure water for drinking and food production; c) protect agricultural lands from environmental degradation; and d) develop extension capacity.
3. Food aid would function a) as an income substitute, allowing poor marginal farmers to improve the productivity of their land; b) for closed-circuit monetization to purchase essential inputs; and c) as compensation for work and time contributed by women and men extension contact farmers.
4. The Ministry of Planning will direct policy matters, while the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) will be the authority for implementation. Under WFP supervision, Community Management Committees will oversee food distributions, plan and monitor activities, ensuring a fair distribution of the benefits within the communities. Technical assistance will help to provide staff and government counterparts with the expertise required to organize village groups, select technically appropriate activities and deliver extension and non-food inputs. The activity will be implemented on a pilot basis for 18 months.
5. Selection criteria will target the poorest districts in rainfed agriculture areas, where women and children bear the main agricultural responsibilities. Within these criteria, the potential for sustainable development will be a factor in activity site selection. Target groups will include poor marginal land owners, landless sharecroppers and daily labourers, the majority of whom are poor households headed by women.
6. WFP assistance will support food production and diversifying cropping patterns, provide water through harvesting structures, provide assistance in food preservation, strengthen extension systems, and catalyze support for material inputs, technical assistance and training. The nutrition of participants will be improved through the WFP food commodities, the protection of cereal crops, production and preservation of vegetables and fruit, and improved cropping practices. Water for drinking and irrigating household plots will be secured. Land degradation will be mitigated through the stabilization of sand dunes and *wadis*.
7. Extension capacity in the selected communities will be strengthened through the identification and training of women contact extension farmers and women extension staff. MOA will provide technical backstopping of the activity and designated extension staff will monitor the activities in collaboration with WFP. Technical assistance will be financed by UNDP and implemented by FAO.

