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Programme
Alimentaire
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World
Food
Programme

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Mundial
de Alimentos

**Executive Board
Second Regular Session**

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REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ON OPERATIONAL MATTERS

Agenda item 6



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BASIC ACTIVITY WITHIN A COUNTRY PROGRAMME APPROVED BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (1 JULY–31 DECEMBER 1998)— YEMEN 4695.01

Support to education

Number of beneficiaries	75,000 children per year (average)
Duration of project	Three years (September 1998– August 2001)

Cost (United States dollars)

Total cost to WFP	13,698,664
Total food cost	6,493,940

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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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1. Yemen is classified as a least developed and food-deficit country, with an estimated per capita Gross National Product (GNP) of 280 dollars in 1997. Around 20 percent of the population live in poverty, mostly in rural areas. Access to education is limited, with 88 percent of women and 36 percent of men illiterate.
2. Illiteracy rates remain high: the most recent census (1994) showed illiteracy to average 56 percent. The social implications of the aggregate national illiteracy rate are rendered even more disturbing when gender and rural-urban statistical data are disaggregated. A report on the situation of women in Yemen (National Women's Committee, 1996) shows that 45.9 percent of urban females aged ten and above are illiterate, compared to 16.3 percent for males. For rural areas the corresponding figures are 84.6 percent and 35.4 percent.
3. The Government of Yemen recognizes the essential role of education for promoting social and economic development. In the past two years government spending on education accounted for 20 percent of the public budget, or about 5.5 percent of GNP. International support to education has also increased substantially since the mid-nineties. The Ministry of Education has attempted to expand services but is unable to support education to the level required to ensure equitable access for girls and boys, particularly in rural areas. Enrolments are not only very low, but distinctively unequal. Only half of all Yemeni children are enrolled in primary schools. By the age of ten more than half of girls and one fifth of boys have never been to school.
4. The strategic focus of the activity is to reduce the gender gap in education by providing incentives for girls to attend school regularly, concurrently targeting food to the poorest groups through the selection of schools in the poorest regions of the country. WFP's target group averages 75,000 direct beneficiaries per year: 63,000 family take-home rations through girls' day schools and 12,000 through boys' secondary boarding schools. Schools are selected in economically depressed areas where educational standards are below the national average, or in poor districts of remote areas with low school enrolment.
5. Food aid in the form of take-home family rations distributed quarterly acts as an incentive for families to send their daughters to day schools. The food constitutes an income transfer and supplements the daily food intake of vulnerable families with a balanced set of commodities. For boarders, WFP food complements government contributions for the provision of nutritious meals.
6. WFP will provide to the Government an internal transport, storage and handling (ITSH) subsidy to cover transport, handling and storage.

