

برنامج
الأغذية
العالمي



Programme
Alimentaire
Mondial

World
Food
Programme

Programa
Mundial
de Alimentos

**Executive Board
Third Regular Session**

Rome, 20 - 23 October 1997

COUNTRY STRATEGY OUTLINES

Agenda item 6



Distribution: GENERAL
WFP/EB.3/97/6/Add.2

25 August 1997
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

MALI

ABSTRACT

In recent years the WFP programme in Mali has been based on food-for-work (FFW) activities through its multipurpose project, and more recently through the Mali regional protracted relief and displaced person project (PRO) 5804.00, which was approved by the Executive Board at its Second Regular Session of 1997, to assist the repatriation of refugees, including the provision of assistance to people affected by the unrest but who stayed behind. The measures supported by WFP lie north of the 14th parallel. In future, WFP suggests better geographical targeting in the four regions in the North: Timbuktu, Kidal, Gao and Mopti, which are structurally food-deficit regions, with a hostile environment and the most pronounced poverty indices. The role of women as direct and indirect beneficiaries will be strengthened.

The WFP programme comprises two components:

1. an annual contribution under the Cereal Market Restructuring Programme (CMRP) to address the problems of temporary food insecurity; and
2. a programme to reduce poverty and food insecurity for the target population in the North: i) a FFW (development and environment) programme to help the population cope with unpredictable climatic conditions; ii) assistance for school canteens in the North, and iii) a nutrition and health programme. The possibilities of providing aid for these two latter activities are now being jointly examined with the Government and donors.

The Country Strategy Outline (CSO) will form the basis of the future Country Programme, 1999-2002, to be submitted to the Executive Board for approval in October 1998. The total volume of the programme is estimated at 44,000 tons over a four-year period.

This document is produced in a limited number of copies. Delegates and observers are kindly requested to bring it to the meetings and to refrain from asking for additional copies.

NOTE TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

This document is submitted for consideration to the Executive Board.

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

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

The WFP focal points for this document are:

Regional Director: M. Zejjari tel.: 6513-2201

Programme Coordinator: L. Bjorkman tel.: 6513-2244

Should you have any questions regarding matters of dispatch of documentation for the Executive Board, please contact the Documentation and Meetings Clerk (tel.: 6513-2641).



INTRODUCTION

1. Mali is a huge land-locked country in sub-Saharan Africa, with a population of 9.2 million in 1996 and a population density of 7.3 per square kilometer. There are three major regions: the desert region in the north (66 percent of the total national area, with 13 percent of the population), the Sahelian region to the east and centre (16 percent of the country area and 39 percent of the population) and the Sudanian region in the west and south (18 percent of the area and 48 percent of the population).
2. Mali is a least developed country (LDC) and one of the poorest countries in the world, ranking 171 out of 174 according to the Sustainable Human Development Index (0.223) drawn up by UNDP for 1996. The average per capita income in 1994 was estimated at 125,000 CFAF equivalent to 250 dollars.¹ The economy has been recovering since 1994 with an average annual growth rate in the gross domestic product (GDP) of around five percent.
3. Agriculture employs 80 percent of the population, which is comparatively young (50 percent aged under 15 years) and growing steeply (3.7 percent a year), largely illiterate (77 percent), with a primary school attendance rate among the lowest in the world (42 percent) and with a huge gap between boys' (50 percent) and girls' (39 percent) attendance.

FOOD INSECURITY, POVERTY AND THE HUNGRY POOR

Food insecurity nationwide

4. Despite its enormous agricultural potential (eight million hectares of arable land, of which 560,000 irrigable) and livestock potential, most of the people suffer from food insecurity. The arid and semi-arid zones have a structural rainfall deficit, aggravated by intermittent droughts and the constant threat of desertification.
5. Cereal production is strongly influenced by an unpredictable climate, which varies depending upon the extent of the rainfall and distribution in time and space, in addition to the real risks of a natural disaster (drought, locusts, flooding) to which the country is prone. However, the last five agricultural seasons have been good or average, and have contributed to establishing an overall surplus, which conceals substantial regional discrepancies between the north, which suffers from a structural food deficit, and the south. Even in good years, there still remain pockets of famine. The cereal balances reveal a generalized structural deficit which is quite considerable in the regions of Kidal, Timbuktu, Gao and, although to a lesser degree, Mopti.
6. The country has a deficit in rice and above all wheat, which make up the bulk of commercial imports and food aid. The volume of commercial imports fell from 185,000 tons in 1990-91 to 100,000 tons in 1995-96.

¹ All monetary values are expressed in United States dollars, unless otherwise stated. One United States dollar equalled 621 CFA francs in August 1997.



7. For Mali, the long-term food security challenge is to double food production by the year 2010. According to the FAO study "World Agriculture: Horizon 2010", national cereal production should be around 3.4 million tons in 2010 - one and a half times the average of the nineties. Another challenge is the permanent and very real threat of a major food crisis caused by a great national disaster (particularly drought).

Poverty and the incidence of food insecurity

8. According to the Malian Survey on the Economical and Social Situation (EMCES) carried out in 1994, and taking 154 dollars a year as the poverty threshold, 69 percent of the Malian population is poor, compared with 41 percent in 1989, indicating an overall increase of 28 percent, at an average annual rate of four percent. The poor population is divided equally between the poor and the very poor. The latter number about 3.1 million. The impoverishment of the Malian population is reflected in the percentage of average household food expenditure, which rose from 54 percent in 1988-89 to 77 percent in 1994. The average food budget as a percentage of the total expenditure is 83.5 percent among the poor and 86 percent among the very poor. Half the poor population are classified as very poor.
9. An analysis of poverty shows that poverty is essentially a rural phenomenon. Nine percent of the poor population live in the towns and 91 percent in the country, where 96 percent of the very poor are concentrated. The rural population can be divided into five socio-economic classes, each with its own food security features. They are: farmers living along the river banks, farmers in the arid zones, farmers-herders, nomadic herders, and fishermen.
10. According to the 1995-96 population and health census, infant mortality (1991-95) was 123 per 1,000 live births while infant/juvenile mortality was 38 per 1,000 live births. The latter is 1.5 times higher in rural areas than in urban ones. Malnutrition is one of the causes of this high mortality: 23 percent of Malian children aged under three suffer from acute malnutrition, and one child in two (47 percent) of the same age suffers from chronic malnutrition. According to figures for 1994, health care coverage (less than 15 kilometres away) exists for 39 percent of the population, while fresh water is accessible to less than 45 percent of the total population.
11. Illiteracy is still very high (77 percent), particularly among women (90 percent). The gross school attendance rate is very low, despite signs of progress: 39 percent in 1994/95 and 42 percent in 1995/96, with a sharp difference between school attendance by boys (50 percent) and by girls (34 percent). The gross school attendance rate is three times higher in urban than in rural areas. The lowest rates are found in Mopti, Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu.
12. It is the highest food-deficit zones which, before the end of 1997, will have to take in the 150,000 refugees who will have been displaced as a result of internal strife.

The status of women

13. Women account for over half the total poor, and the social and economic indicators relating to them are very unfavourable. They suffer from a particularly high illiteracy rate, a lack of training and information, precarious health, difficulties in having access to inputs (land, technology) and to institutional support (credit, technical and administrative services) and they are subject to various socio-cultural constraints. They account for over 46 percent of



the active population and are engaged mainly in three areas: agriculture (71 percent), manufacturing (12 percent) and trade (nine percent).

14. Women contribute a great deal to the food security of their households. While they are often released from land preparation work (ploughing, clearing), they nevertheless undertake all the other agricultural duties (sowing, weeding, harvesting, storing and conserving harvests), and looking after the herds (watering, milking, feeding).
15. Apart from those mentioned above, women are also involved in other economic activities, such as fruit-picking, handicrafts, small-scale trading, and vegetable and fruit growing. There is now a tendency to give women greater responsibilities in the sharing of tasks and productive activities.
16. About 10 percent of the households are headed by women. This percentage varies considerably from one region to another, depending upon the socio-economic features. Moreover, women in the food-deficit regions have increased responsibilities when they become heads of household because of the migration of the men during the off-season or at times of shortages. Two thirds of the women heads of household live in the country, and over 94 percent of the 10 percent of the poorest women household heads live in rural areas. Furthermore, there is a predominance of widows among the women heads of household (48 percent).
17. Half the annual average income of women heads of household is off-farm; 16 percent comes from wages, 15 percent from transfers from other households or migrants' remittances. Only eight percent comes from agriculture, whereas 36 percent of the women heads of households work in agriculture. This demonstrates their low remuneration from agriculture, whereas the households headed by men earn about one third of their income from agriculture.

Conclusion

18. The poorest people are in the area above the 14th parallel, particularly in the regions of Kidal, Timbuktu, Gao and Mopti, whose social indicators are also very low, with sharp discrepancies between the sexes. These are regions with a difficult environment, vulnerable to drought and desertification, and characterized by a seasonal or permanent migration of the labour force. Successive droughts have left their mark, the rainfall is still unpredictable, and the level of the River Niger, which is essential for flood recession cropping and irrigation, continues to fall. Droughts and desertification have decimated most of the livestock which is essential for the food security in the northern regions of the country, because of the effect on the vegetation cover, aggravated by the lack of security in the region during the period 1990-94. According to estimates made by the Famine Early Warning System (FEWS) the rural population exposed to food insecurity and famine was 600,000 in 1995 and 1.4 million in 1996, of whom 46 percent to a very high or extreme degree.

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES AND POLICIES

General policy

19. The main thrusts of the Government's general policy may be summarized as follows:
 - a) accelerating economic growth as a result of the structural macroeconomic reforms;



- b) pursuing and enhancing democratization;
 - c) improving the well-being of the people by reducing poverty and fostering sustainable human development;
 - d) protecting the environment;
 - e) developing and promoting human resources in general; and
 - f) mainstreaming of women and young people.
20. To attain these development objectives, the Government will implement what it calls "transversal" strategies, namely:
- a) decentralization as one of the main ways of enabling the country to strengthen democracy and promote development based upon the concerns of the local, urban and rural communities, taking account of their own assets;
 - b) phasing out Government involvement in the private sector, and promoting the private sector and associations;
 - c) strengthening women's participation in the economic and social development process;
 - d) rational management of natural resources, and improvement of the people's living standards.
21. As far as the priorities identified by the Government and the United Nations system are concerned, the Country Strategy Note (CSN), 1998-2002, emphasizes rural development and the environment, human resources, infrastructure, strengthening institutional capacities, the Gender Action Plan and the consolidation of peace.
22. WFP's strategy forms part of this framework and will be strengthened once the decentralization process is completed, which has already led to the establishment of 682 communities, as the grass-roots structures responsible for economic, social and cultural development. WFP will act in the areas of rural development and human resources, in order to enhance the status of women and consolidate peace.

Rural development - environment

23. The objectives and strategies for the 10-year period 1995-2005 have been defined in the rural development master plan, and their implementation is set out in the Plan of Action of the Ministry of Rural Development and the Environment, to which the National Directorate of WFP Projects (DNPP), which is better known under the French name "PAM National" reports.
24. In Mali, which is an agro-silvo-pastoralist country, food security is one of the main government concerns, and the overall objective of rural development is to raise incomes and improve living standards in order to contribute to sustainable and equitable human development. The strategies that are particularly relevant to WFP relate to water management, rural infrastructure, freeing the land-locked or inaccessible rural zones, and environmental protection.

Human resources

25. The enhancement of human resources requires the development of basic education, vocational training and literacy, primary health care, and the control of population growth by implementing a national policy on population.



- 26. Education.** The Government and all its partners (including WFP), headed by the World Bank, are currently drafting a 10-year Programme (PRODEC), whose essential objective is to provide high-quality basic education for all children, particularly girls. It aims to raise the gross school attendance rate from 40 to 75 percent by the year 2008, and the school attendance rate of girls from 34 to 68 percent. The Government attributes great importance to schooling for girls. It is for this reason that, coupled with a national awareness-building campaign, a special unit has been set up at the Ministry of Basic Education, and a Plan of Action for the schooling of girls has been drawn up and will be incorporated into PRODEC. Every party involved unanimously recognizes that without school canteens in some regions, and particularly in the north, these objectives can never be achieved.
- 27. Health and nutrition.** The Government and its partners are preparing a 10-year programme also in this area, but work is less advanced on this. As this programme takes shape, WFP will decide what specific role it will play to complement what is being done by other partners.

Gender Action Plan of Women

- 28.** The Government is particularly aware of the role that women play in the social and economic life of the country, but also of the fact that there are a number of socio-cultural and economic factors which reduce their productivity. It is to overcome these obstacles that the Gender Action Plan, 1996-2001, was drafted in 1996. The Plan sets out six priority areas: education, health, women's rights, economic advancement, participation in public life, and the environment. In May 1993 the Government set up a Commissariat for the Advancement of Women, with regional structures. It is headed by a woman with ministerial rank.
- 29.** These initiatives form a solid strategic basis for directing WFP's work on behalf of women more effectively, taking account of the cultural reality of the country.

Food security policies

- 30.** In order to deal with the structural and cyclical food insecurity, the Government and donors set up a common coordination body in 1982 hinging around the Cereals Market Restructuring Programme (PRMC), which is a unique programme of which WFP acts as the Permanent Secretariat. The PRMC was set up at the height of the food crisis and was financed by counterpart programme relief funds with the main purpose of improving food security for the people, mainly aiming at the liberalization of the cereals markets and the positive effect of this on food production.
- 31.** At the same time, the PRMC has facilitated the establishment of a food security system which comprises the following procedures: the Early Warning System (Système d'alerte précoce - SAP), the Market Information System (Système d'information sur les marchés - SIM), the restructuring of the Office of Malian Agricultural Produce (Office des produits agricoles du Mali - OPAM), and of the National Security Stock (Stock national de sécurité - SNS) which is managed by OPAM.
- 32.** The PMRC, whose Plan of Action for phase five (1997-99) has just been approved by the Government and the donors, has now withdrawn from the market reform in order to concentrate on strengthening food security. Furthermore, the future continuation of the programme will be guaranteed by the gradual takeover by the Government of the costs of operating programme structures.



Food aid policies

33. The Government's food aid policies will also form part of the PRMC. OPAM manages the SNS financed by the PRMC donors, which was reduced from 58,500 to 35,000 tons (millet/sorghum) in 1995. OPAM operates through free food distribution, subsidized sales, and sales by tender on the basis of recommendations supplied from reliable sources (PAS, SIM, SAP, Permanent Watch of the Intergovernmental Commission for Combatting Drought in the Sahel—Diagnostic permanent du Comité Inter-Etats de lutte contre la sécheresse dans le Sahel (DIAPER), etc.). As far as project food aid is concerned, WFP mainly provides this under project Mali 2231. The permanent coordination system hinging around PRMC provides coordination and guarantees that the project and programme aid granted by different partners is consistent with the Government's policy. Local procurement occupies an important part in such aid.
34. The volume of SNS enables the country to deal with temporary and localized food crises, and in the event of a major crisis it allows for an initial response while awaiting massive food imports.
35. Project Mali 2231 "Rural development" is a food-for-work project which the Ministry of Rural Development has been executing for many years. It has become part of the operations of this Ministry, thus reflecting the importance which the Government attributes to this project.

ASSESSMENT OF WFP'S PERFORMANCE TO DATE

36. Since 1964, 28 projects have been approved for a total value of 189 million dollars of which 15 percent (28 million dollars) for emergency operations, 78 percent (147 million dollars) for development projects and seven percent (14 million dollars) for a regional protracted refugee and displaced person project (PRO) that has been implemented since mid-1997 to support the return and settlement of refugees and displaced persons, and to help a part of the population that has remained behind in the northern part of the country. This latter project (Regional PRO Mali 5804) and two others (Mali 2628 (PRMC) and 2231) have delivered WFP's aid over the past 10 years.

Project Mali 2628 - Food security, price stabilization and restructuring of cereal marketing

37. The project, jointly executed by the Government and a number of donors (WFP, USAID, European Union, Canada, France, the Netherlands, Germany, Belgium, United Kingdom) was set up in 1982 against the background of a cereal deficit, in order to rationalize the whole system of food aid within the framework of the social and economic development of Mali, while at the same time dealing with emergency situations.
38. Phase one (1982-87) helped to gradually liberalize the cereal trade thanks to accompanying measures and the rationalization of government agencies. Phase two (1988-90) was designed to strengthen non-public marketing capacities (associations and private sector) and to establish structures such as the SAP and the SIM while consolidating all the elements of the last phase.
39. Phase three (1991-93) hinged around the promotion of storage by associations and the private sector, using and enhancing local foodstuffs, developing tripartite operations, and studying specific commodities. Phase four (1994-96) was linked to the modernization of



the cereal market and made it possible to begin transferring responsibilities and tasks undertaken by the informal PRMC donors' structure to Malian partners. The present three-year phase emphasizes the strengthening of the food security system, developing specific commodity areas and rationalizing the operation of the structures.

40. WFP is playing an essential role in PRMC, both as a donor (CFAF 4.75 billion paid until 1989, namely 15 percent of the total donors' contribution) and as the leader of the concerted efforts made by donors and the co-manager of generated funds. PRMC has shown its worth both as a coordination body for food aid and for addressing the crucial problems of marketing in order to raise the level of food security. It is often held up as a model and is well known by the donors that continue to support it. The originality and effectiveness of PRMC are based on the following: monetization of food aid compatibly with utilization of the local cereal output; the availability of substantial, programmable and readily usable resources to accompany agreed adjustment measures and decisions; the regular coordination of donors under the aegis of WFP which is responsible for the Permanent Secretariat; a continuing dialogue with the Government and control of data on the agricultural and food supply situation.

Project Mali 2231 - Rural development

41. This project, which began in 1976, has now reached its fourth expansion. The breakdown of the costs per expansion is as follows:
- Mali 2231 (1976-80): 10.866 million dollars; Mali 2231.01 (1980-83): 24.198 million dollars; Mali 2231.02 (1984-88): 39.375 million dollars; Mali 2231.03 (1989-93): 35.626 million dollars; Mali 2231.04 (1994-97): 14.102 million dollars.
42. All the phases in the project involved several components which have changed in time, depending upon the priorities, specific situations, technical appraisals and the evaluation or pre-appraisal missions.
43. Expansion three supported the Government's development programme for the rehabilitation and development of peasant communities mainly through the following sub-projects: vocational training, communication infrastructure, consolidating agricultural production, improving the living standards in rural areas, and forest protection and regeneration. The implementation of this phase was affected by the civil unrest in the northern Malian regions between 1990 and 1994. During this phase of the project, the counterpart funds, which included resources from partial monetization, financed about 50 projects initiated by grass-roots organizations. These projects were mainly in the sixth and seventh regions (Timbuktu and Gao). The overall volume of loans reached CFAF 677 million, the bulk of which was allocated to the regions that suffered from the unrest, with the associated population shifts and material destruction.
44. The fourth expansion was based on the mobilization of rural populations to carry out their own development initiatives. The long-term objectives are to gradually reach sustainable food self-sufficiency and raise the incomes and living standards of the target populations likely to be destabilized by the structural constraints caused by climate irregularities and environmental degradation. It covers seven regions and 130 districts considered to be risk-prone. The project comprises four components, for which the resources are broken down as follows: 53.8 percent for agricultural production, 33.2 percent for environment, nine percent for social infrastructure and four percent for vocational training.



Outputs

45. The outputs of phase three were examined in April 1992 by a management review mission, which also undertook a pre-appraisal of phase four. The mission found that the objectives of the project that related to the achievement of self-sufficiency remained sound. The emphasis on water management fully met the demands of agricultural production. Where these actions had been undertaken, the project was found to have had a very positive demonstrative effect; the mission felt that this was one of the project's strongest features. However, it noticed that there was a disparity between the targets set for food distribution and actual achievements.
46. Phase four of the project was supposed to cover four years, with a total distribution of 30,115 tons of cereals, making approximately 7,500 tons a year. Over the first three years the actual distribution was 5,000 tons a year (see Annex II). This can be explained mainly by the events that took place outside the project; these include the unrest and insecurity in the north which prevented the national supervisors and WFP officials from visiting the area; delays in local procurement for a period after the devaluation of the CFA franc warranted by an increase in prices due to transport costs; constraints linked to communications (for example river transport in the dry season) and the agricultural calendar; and insufficient resources available to WFP, which has led to a general reduction in its development projects.

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E)

47. Many requests have been submitted and examined in the framework of this project. One third of them were approved (2,000 out of 6,000, see Annex III). This reflects the project's successes as well as its weaknesses. For it is not easy to set up a system that is capable not only of monitoring foodstuff movements and collecting other basic data, but also of providing answers to questions linked to socio-economic targeting, the indirect benefits, the working standards in each region, while at the same time making it possible to adjust the selection criteria for a project which supports 2,000 activities broken down into 24 sub-headings.
48. The Government and WFP have invested in setting up an M&E system, but not to the extent envisaged in the plan of operations. An M&E division has been set up within DNPP; staff have been seconded to the Management and to the regional coordinating bodies. Quarterly and six-monthly reports have been duly completed and regularly submitted. But there has not been time to analyze these basic data, once consolidated. The work has begun and since 1996 the office's capacity has been enhanced. However, additional efforts and training are crucially important in order to better understand the direct and above all indirect effects, in order to improve project performance.

Targeting

49. The data on the distribution by activity component and sub-heading show that the agricultural production component is the largest, with 62 percent of the food distributed (compared with 54 percent planned), followed by environmental aid (20 percent as opposed to 33 percent planned). In geographic terms, the project has covered eight regions, including the recently created Kidal region. This, plus the large number of comparatively small projects, has certainly contributed to scattering resources (in four regions in the north, which are the most vulnerable to food insecurity). By the end of 1996 only 60 percent of the food had been received.



50. The project is based on the principle that the communities must make requests. Under these conditions, if it is not possible to systematically check the socio-economic status of the members of the groups that have submitted a specific request, it is necessary to rely on the judgement of the project officials. Geographic targeting is therefore more relevant than targeting within a particular village. However, all the information shows that the recipients are following the region's traditional practice of sharing all the food received with the poorest people, who do not or cannot take part in the activities.

Beneficiaries

51. At the end of 1996, about 7.6 million rations had been distributed, of which 96 percent in the form of food for work. Each household ration represents one day's work. Even though the M&E system does not provide exact figures regarding the duration of a particular activity or of the employment created, generally speaking it can be said that an activity on average procures work and food for about 25 days. This means that the project has provided 25 days' work for a total of 304,000 people, that is to say, about 100,000 people a year for the first three years. Assuming that a ration is shared among five people, the number of beneficiaries may be put at about 500,000 a year. It is more difficult to estimate the number of indirect beneficiaries, but these certainly vastly outnumber the direct beneficiaries.

The role of women

52. Available data suggest that about 30 percent of the beneficiaries are women. This rate can be explained above all by the type of activities envisaged by the project. For example, in agricultural production, which accounts for the bulk of the resources, it is mainly soil preparation activities (exclusively male) which are crucial for survival in a situation in which flood recession cropping no longer meets needs. Furthermore, it is comparatively recent that women own plots of land in a small-scale irrigation scheme.
53. However, women play a major role as workers, beneficiaries or farm heads in activities such as truck gardening, dune fixation and training. Through the training component, WFP is supporting a women's literacy project, attended by 4,000 people a year.
54. The direct participation of women in work is still small because of the breakdown of tasks between men and women. Nevertheless, women benefit from a substantial share of the long-term and indirect advantages of the activities undertaken. In order to enhance the role of women in any future programme, a number of elements of the present project need to be developed further, but above all other projects must be launched.

Rehabilitation/development continuum

55. In 1995 the refugees and displaced persons began to return home. Project Mali 2231.04 was able to absorb them by approving a certain number of applications (about one third for 1996) which made it possible to help the returnees. Furthermore and while awaiting the PRO to be implemented as from July 1997, the project has been adapted in order to encourage the repatriation of refugees and to meet the short-term food requirements of the returnees during the resettlement phase.

Strengths and weaknesses of the project

56. The strength of this FFW project is certainly the physical achievements it has produced by changing both the landscape and the living standards of a large section of the population in



a context in which the transformation of the cropping systems has been necessary. As far as food security is concerned, the impact is mainly a long-term affair. Food aid has been a major means of enabling the population to complete their work in time, particularly in the structurally food-deficit regions. Local procurement in other regions of the country has been effective. Project Mali 2231, which is fully institutionalized in the country by now, is unique in the sense that it has not been able to absorb all the many requests that have been made.

57. The vast number of small projects has also been one of the strengths as well as its main weakness. Despite the presence of WFP sub-offices and the government counterpart in the regions where the project was operational, and despite great effort, resources were inevitably scattered (over seven regions, with 24 sub-headings, and a rather limiting plan of operations), has allowed uncertainty to persist, but this should eventually be dispelled. The technical supervision leaves much to be desired, and sometimes it has been the administrators in the WFP country office, who generally have a technical background, that have provided this supervision. With regard to the integration of women into the project, the present project has certain limitations, particularly if the role of women has to be broadened.

FUTURE ORIENTATION OF WFP ASSISTANCE

Proposed strategy

58. Despite the fact that for some years the output has been sufficient as a whole, food security in Mali is still very fragile because of the sensitivity of agricultural production to climatic vagaries and any large-scale natural disasters, the increase in poverty, increased malnutrition, particularly among the most vulnerable groups, the existence of zones with food insecurity or structural food deficits, and the return of displaced persons following the insecurity which had formerly reigned in the northern part of the country. WFP's food aid should contribute to strengthening food security in the short, medium and long term, to setting up a mechanism to enable the country to cope with a major food crisis, combatting poverty and ensuring sustainable human development.
59. This will involve strengthening, redirecting and rationalizing WFP's previous intervention with a programme comprising two components: a) supporting the strengthening of the food security system and preparing for emergencies through PRMC; and b) providing direct development aid for the target populations in the areas of the country with a structural food deficit and which are exposed to climatic irregularities. This programme will make it possible to:
- a) cover localized or general emergency food needs following natural disasters to which the country is prone;
 - b) strengthen the capacity of the people to cope with climatic irregularities, cushion the impact of disasters and survive in a difficult environment; and
 - c) develop human resources against the background of support for education, health and nutrition.
60. The strategy developed in this area will be used as the basis for drafting the country programme for the period 1999-2002, to be submitted to the Board in 1998.



Areas of future intervention

Strengthening the food security system and preparing for emergencies

61. The first component in which WFP will continue to play a major part refers to the PRMC, as a unique coordinating framework between the Government and donors on the main thrusts of Mali's food security policy. This instrument continues to support and strengthen the institutional capacity to enable Mali to address the problems of food insecurity in a Sahelian context.
62. Moreover, in order to make up for the shortcomings in the food security system which mainly relies on the PRMC, the Government and donors have agreed to set up national instruments to enable the country to handle a major cereals deficit or a major food crisis. These instruments are: the Food Security Fund (Fonds de sécurité alimentaire - FSA), the OPAM Surveillance Unit, and the emergency intervention plan which will establish the different degrees of the food crisis and share out responsibilities to combat it.
63. WFP will have to continue playing a major part in setting up these new instruments and in guaranteeing coordination between donors and the Government. It will also contribute to financing the Common Fund as a donor forming part of the international effort to provide Mali with food security.

Direct development assistance

64. WFP's direct assistance in the present situation already forms part of the emergency-development continuum thanks to the activities designed to encourage refugees to return, and for the integration and advancement of the repatriates and the populations that remained at home. In 1996 and 1997, project Mali 2231 has been able to provide concrete assistance to the repatriates. In the same spirit, the regional PRO is supporting development work in the areas in which the returnees settle.
65. The objective of the WFP programme will be to contribute to the sustainable development and advancement of the target populations by reducing poverty and structural food insecurity in regions with a structural food deficit.
66. The direct assistance programme will comprise three parts:
 - a) **Rural development and the environment.** This will take up about one half of the resources scheduled and will be based on grassroots initiatives drawn up by the communities themselves (in accordance with the Government's decentralization policy) using the "food for work" formula.
 - b) **Education and training** (women and girls). In view of the priority accorded by the Government and the international community in Mali to supporting education in the north of the country in school canteens, WFP will liaise with the Government and make its contribution in coordination with other donors and NGOs. WFP's support must be targeted to the initiatives taken to encourage girls' school attendance.
 - c) **Health and nutrition.** The Government and its partners are in the process of preparing a 10-year health care development programme. WFP will contribute to this sector with specific nutritional objectives and targets to reduce malnutrition, which mainly affects children and women.



Procedures for implementation

Geographic targeting

67. In accordance with the conclusions set out in the section on assessment of WFP's performance, and in order to increase the impact of aid while guaranteeing better monitoring, the programme will cover only the poorest regions with major structural cereal deficits, which also have the lowest human development indicators. These are the four regions of Mopti, Timbuktu, Gao and Kidal.

Food for work

68. The strategy still rests mainly on grass-roots initiatives supported by food for work. In comparison with the ongoing project Mali 2231.04, whose activities are scattered, decisions will be taken that will guarantee synergy between the various activities. A critical mass is needed in order to achieve a good impact. Priority activities will be drawn up for each of the regions and the administrative units will be decentralized, taking account of their new powers and responsibilities.

M&E

69. By narrowing the area of intervention and concentrating the efforts, monitoring will be improved, as will the collection and analysis of the data, which is essential for more effective management. For some time now procedures have been developed under which NGOs and bilateral and multilateral projects work as intermediaries between the grass-roots initiatives and WFP. The Government and WFP must pursue their efforts in order to advance the performance and effectiveness of the M&E system by strengthening its operational facilities and by running an intensive training programme. This amounts to pursuing what has already been initiated in the framework of the regional PRO.

The target groups and women

70. The population in the four target regions is mainly made up of poor and very poor people, who fit in perfectly with the criteria set out in WFP's Mission Statement. This population comprises farmers, croppers-herders, nomadic herders and fishermen, most of whom have come back following the population shifts in 1991/92, even though they have not yet overcome the impact of the drought in the years 1984/85.
71. Particular care will be exercised in targeting the beneficiaries within the WFP intervention areas in order to get through to the poorest strata. The activities must therefore not be turned to the advantage of the villages, which have a tendency to form groups in order to request WFP aid.
72. The role of women in Sahelian society is developing as a result of social, economic, political and climatic factors that have marked the region over past decades, but also thanks to efforts in awareness-building, vocational training and education. WFP will endeavour to underpin this evolution in the framework of the Gender Action Plan, 1996-2000, and thanks to its strategy and activities, by contributing as far as possible to reducing constraints linked to the status of women.
73. In order to substantially raise the percentage of women directly benefiting from the project, the activities for which they are normally responsible, such as fruit and vegetable farming and watering in the framework of reforestation or dune fixation, will be selected as a matter of priority in cooperation with the technical ministries concerned, the women coordinators



of women's activities in the region and the implementation partners. Furthermore, the women's vocational training component will be strengthened.

Coordination and collaboration

74. In this strategy most of the aid (80 percent) should be channelled through projects supervised by NGOs and international and multilateral organizations. This will facilitate the management of the project, but it will also provide a framework for integrating food aid into other aid instruments such as awareness-building, technical supervision, financial support, credit, etc. As far as the targeted zones are concerned, WFP assistance is already integrated into projects being financed by IFAD, the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) and the European Development Fund (EDF), while cooperation is scheduled with the UNICEF Cooperation Programme and FAO's Special Programme which will be implemented shortly. Discussions have been held to study forms of more systematic cooperation with the micro-project funded by the EDF and with the World Bank-financed Grass-roots Initiative Support Project.
75. As far as supporting school canteens is concerned, this must evidently form part of an integrated approach like the 10-year Educational Development Programme (PRODEC) which is currently being established by the Government and the donors.
76. This coordination with bilateral and multilateral organizations could lead WFP to work outside the targeted zones mentioned earlier. These decisions will be taken on a case-by-case basis.

Rations and local procurement

77. For many years WFP has been providing a ration composed of cereals, canned fish and vegetable oil. Even though this ration is appreciated by the recipients, the cost-effectiveness of the oil and fish (alpha value) is low, particularly for the fish. A study will be carried out to determine whether this product can be replaced. With regard to the oil, increased local production means that in the medium term, and provided there are the financial resources available, the oil could perhaps at least partially be bought locally.
78. In the present situation it is obvious that cereal supplies must continue to be procured locally in the country's cereal surplus areas. The effectiveness of such transactions is obvious, particularly when they take place at the right moment. For WFP, effectiveness is gauged in terms of time-saving and lower delivery costs. For the country there are many advantages, particularly the following: the food is compatible with the local people's eating habits, local production and exports are encouraged (supplies to WFP programmes in neighbouring countries), the private sector develops thanks to the injection of substantial financial resources into the national economy which is shared out between the producers, the cereal traders, transporters, packaging companies, etc.

Capacity of the WFP country office

79. The WFP team was recently strengthened by recruiting two national women officials and an international official, the latter being appointed for the duration of the regional PRO. WFP will keep its personnel in the targeted regions. The team's capacity will be further strengthened by a training programme.



Development of a country programme

80. As far as the FFW project is concerned, specific studies will be undertaken to clarify the key issues of a technical nature (working and technical standards) relating to the present phase in order to rationalize this project. Pre-feasibility studies (for example, the possibilities opened up by expanding a fruit and vegetable farming component with a modification in the ration) are also planned. Currently under study is the possibility of providing specific assistance to the school canteens and in the health care and nutrition sector jointly with the Government and other donors.

Programming aid and required resources

81. The overall programme will require about 11,000 tons of food a year, broken down as follows:
- a) food security: 16,000 tons of cereals;
 - b) rural development and the environment: 5,600 tons (cereals, fish (possibly substituted), oil);
 - c) school canteens: 2,500 tons (cereals, fish (possibly substituted), oil, milk, sugar);
 - d) health and nutrition: 1,300 tons (cereals, fish (possibly substituted), oil, milk and micro-nutrients).

RISKS

82. Any prolonged drought could have a negative impact on the maintenance of the structures by the local people. If a major food crisis breaks out, massive and costly food aid would have to replace local procurement.
83. Phasing out of the education sector could be reconsidered if the conditions are not clearly spelled out at the beginning.
84. The conclusion of the decentralization process and the actual establishment of decentralized communities could have repercussions on the implementation modalities.



ANNEX I



ANNEX II



ANNEX III



ANNEX IV



SOCIO-ECONOMIC INDICATORS BY REGION

Region	Population 1996 ¹		School attendance 1995/96 ²			Infant/Juv. mortality ³	Malnutrition 0-3 years ⁴	Vulnerability to food insecurity in 1996 ⁵		Recommendations for free food aid 1988/95 ⁶
	<i>(in '000)</i>	%	Total %	Boys %	Girls %	%	%	Acute/serious %	Moderate %	<i>Kg/person</i>
Kayes	1 28	14	35	45	24	259	38	0	10	10
Bamako	810	9	131	135	127	149	29	0	0	0
Koulikoro	1 44	16	44	56	31	232	41	0	0	26
Sikasso	1 59	17	38	48	28	232	44	0	0	0
Segou	1 62	18	37	45	28	274	41	3	6	13
Mopti	1 48	16	23	28	18	325	41	10	23	38
Tombouctou	515	6	23	27	19	237	41	28	24	32
Gao	362	4	31	39	22	237	41	61	14	40
Kidal	70	0	19	25	13	237	41	83	17	79
Total	9 19	100	51	42	33	238	40	7	8	

Sources:

- (1) DNSI (Direction nationale de la statistique et de l'informatique) Commissariat au plan.
- (2) Report on the analysis of the situation in Mali. UNICEF 1996.
- (3) Demographic and health survey 1995/96.
- (4) Idem.
- (5) FEWS data for 1996.
- (6) Free food recommendations 1988/95. SAP.

QUANTITIES OF FOOD (CEREALS) DISTRIBUTED BY SEMESTER AND BY REGION (PROJECT MALI 2231.04)

Region	1st sem. 94	2nd sem. 94	1st sem. 95	2nd sem. 95	1st sem. 96	2nd sem. 96	Total	By region
	<i>(tons)</i>							<i>(%)</i>
Kayes	223	490	666	191	0	500	2 070	14
Koulikoro	318	331	513	292	84	377	1 915	13
Ségou	702	283	224	280	650	0	2 139	14
Mopti	565	509	431	486	84	696	2 771	18
Tombouctou	197	1 092	407	385	0	559	2 640	17
Gao	224	252	55	915	374	1 842	3 662	24
Total	2 229	2 957	2 296	2 549	1 192	3 974	15 197	100
By semester (%)	15	19	15	17	8	26	100	

Note: This table has been calculated on the basis of the distribution of cereals alone.

To calculate the total quantity of all the food in the ration that has been distributed, these figures should be increased by 20 percent.

NUMBER OF REQUESTS RECEIVED AND APPROVED, BY YEAR AND BY REGION (PROJET MALI 2231.04)

Region	1994			1995			1996			Total		
	Received	Approved		Received	Approved		Received	Approved		Received	Approved	
	(no.)	(no.)	(%)	(no.)	(no.)	(%)	(no.)	(no.)	(%)	(no.)	(no.)	(%)
Kayes	274	214	78	286	229	80	399	158	40	959	601	63
Koulikoro	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ségou	237	41	17	163	51	31	174	57	33	574	149	26
Mopti	283	185	65	426	183	43	879	201	23	1 58	569	36
Tombouctou	0	0	0	0	0	0	724	148	20	724	148	20
Gao	550	178	32	433	204	47	1 34	230	17	2 32	612	26
Total	1 34	618	46	1 308	667	51	3 52	794	23	6 17	2 079	34

USE OF FOOD (CEREALS) BY ACTIVITY AND BY REGION (PROJET MALI 2231.04)

Sub-project	Activity	Total quantity/activity		Kayes (%)	Koulikoro (%)	Ségou (%)	Mopti (%)	Tombouctou (%)	Gao/Kidal (%)
		(tons)	(%)						
Agricultural production	Total village irrigation schemes	2 192	14	2	4	22	36	32	3
	Partial village irrigation schemes	1 406	9	0	0	2	13	16	69
	Finished village irrigation schemes	249	2	0	20	0	0	21	59
	Dams	777	5	5	4	6	16	23	46
	Canals	550	4	1	3	26	33	22	15
	Market gardens	2 523	17	12	24	5	11	17	30
	Stone dams	970	6	23	45	6	5	6	15
	Basin digging	239	2	10	5	0	43	15	27
	Regeneration of submerged grazing areas	175	1	0	0	1	41	55	3
	Fish ponds	344	2	0	3	70	6	2	19
	Subtotal	9 425	62	7	13	12	19	20	28
Environment	Anti-erosion dikes	2 015	13	22	3	37	25	6	7
	Reforestation	990	7	29	10	2	9	42	10
	Subtotal	3 005	20	24	5	25	19	18	8
Social infrastructure	Warehouses	319	2	3	11	2	7	22	55
	Wells	774	5	9	5	4	21	7	53
	Vaccination posts	8	0	38	0	0	0	0	63
	Transhumancy tracks	78	0	0	0	25	0	0	75
	Rural tracks	442	3	43	16	21	15	0	5
	Training centres	617	4	58	20	8	4	2	7
	Subtotal	2 236	15	28	12	9	13	6	32
Training	Rural trainer support	302	2	19	56	0	1	13	11
	Management	23	0	0	0	0	0	31	69
	Agricultural techniques	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Agricultural upgrading	37	0	9	0	55	35	0	0
	Women rural trainers	3	0	0	0	0	100	0	0
	Multisectoral	151	0	2	36	11	52	0	0
	Subtotal	516	3	12	43	7	19	9	9
Grand total	15 181	100	14	13	14	18	17	24	