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# EVALUATION AND TERMINAL REPORTS

Agenda item 5



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## COVERING PAPER

### Report of the Executive Director

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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, 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:

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## BACKGROUND

1. The Programme attaches high priority to providing relief assistance and strengthening its assistance to Africa. The work being undertaken by the Office of Evaluation reflects this priority. Of the five summary reports presented, three are devoted to evaluations of emergency operations (EMOPS) and protracted relief and displaced person projects (PROs). The remaining two cover ongoing development projects, both of which are being implemented in Africa.
2. The Executive Director is submitting for consideration by the Executive Board:
  - a) A programme policy evaluation summary report on the WFP-assisted refugee and displaced person projects in Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Sierra Leone – document EB.3/96/5-A/Add.3.
  - b) An interim evaluation summary report on a protracted refugee and displaced person project, namely Afghanistan PRO 5086 – “Relief and rehabilitation in Afghanistan”, document EB.3/96/5-A/Add.1.
  - c) A special desk evaluation of the Rwanda-Burundi emergency operation – document EB.3/96/5-A/Add.2.
  - d) A thematic evaluation summary report on WFP-assisted development projects for the urban poor in Eastern Africa, covering three operational projects in Madagascar, Mozambique and Zambia – document EB.3/96/5-B.
  - e) An evaluation summary report on an operational development project, namely Madagascar 3936 – “Support to primary education”, document EB.3/96/5-C.

### Overall assessment, crucial issues and lessons learned

3. The evaluation missions were favourably impressed by the impact that the WFP-supported activities had had on the well-being of the beneficiaries. Many lives have been saved through the EMOP and the PROs. Important progress is being made in many areas of rehabilitation, and significant numbers of people are being supported in their efforts to return to normal civilian life. The Programme's support to development programmes remains an important tool for reaching the most vulnerable sections of society and improving the self-sufficiency of the poorest people. However, notwithstanding this sound record of achievement, there are a few areas of concern to which evaluators have drawn special attention. WFP staff is involved in a thorough analysis of the evaluation findings and has begun to introduce appropriate adjustments. This summary focuses on some of these areas.

### Concept, design and formulation of projects and operations

4. The evaluations of the EMOP and the two PROs recognize the time pressure and fluidity of conflict situations. They nevertheless stress that, also in the case of emergency operations, the objectives of the various activities need to be clearly defined and brought into a form that is easily communicable. While it might not be feasible to come up with detailed objectives and planning steps at the beginning of an emergency, it should be possible to progressively introduce a more structured approach.



5. The evaluators state that such an approach would improve problem analysis, and planning and implementation. It would have a favourable impact on the effectiveness of the operation, on collaboration with implementing partners, and on the efficiency of monitoring and evaluation.
6. The thematic evaluation of WFP-assisted projects for the urban poor in Eastern Africa note some design issues common to the three projects, specifically that they were all defined in terms of support to government programmes and that they were not designed to address any of the root causes of urban poverty. Furthermore, it was noted that urban projects of this kind cannot easily achieve the ultimate objective of food aid: removing the need for it.
7. In the case of the school feeding project in Madagascar (which was planned before the implementation of the new school feeding guidelines), the evaluators found the objectives to be overly ambitious. Objectives, such as improvement of scholastic performance, are known to be dependent upon many factors, one of which may be the provision of school meals (see “Operational guidelines for WFP assistance to education”, document CFA 40/SCP 15/INF/3). It seems that the limitations of food aid were not recognized at the time of project design.

### **Linking relief and development**

8. The extent to which development or rehabilitation activities had been incorporated into the three ongoing operations was, of course, found to be closely correlated to levels of stability. Some general findings, however, did emerge. Positive examples of the useful role of food aid in rehabilitation activities were noted in all three operations. However, the risk of undermining local initiatives was also mentioned and a consistent emphasis on community participation was recommended. Better analyses, in particular of the dynamics of the long-standing emergencies and transition phases, are required to facilitate the planning and implementation of longer-term rehabilitation strategies.
9. In refugee situations, rehabilitation activities should be planned and implemented in the host countries as well as in the countries of origin, and should take place in parallel to the relief effort. The evaluations stressed the crucial importance of the institutional and implementation capacity of local or international NGOs, and of other United Nations agencies. WFP needs to ensure that its own capacity in terms of effective analytical and planning skills is also sufficient.
10. A significant issue raised by the evaluations is the critical importance of non-food items, including materials and technical assistance, and their funding. For rehabilitation activities to be properly planned and implemented, an acceptable balance of food and non-food resources needs to be made available at the earliest possible stage of the operations.

### **Food security: role and appropriateness of food aid**

11. The role of food aid in the first stages of the three emergency operations is almost self-evident. Human suffering was reduced through the delivery of huge amounts of food, under very difficult physical and security situations. In addition, as discussed above, food aid can play a crucial complementary role in the transition from relief to rehabilitation, when it is well planned and integrated with other inputs and when local conditions permit such a transition. Food aid was found to have been particularly valuable in Afghanistan at the early stage of resettlement of people, when their coping mechanisms were at their weakest.



12. In the three urban projects, food aid was found to act as a powerful incentive to workers, in particular to women, who form the greatest part of the workforces. Food was found to have several advantages over cash, including its dominance in the household budget and its relatively stable value in times of high inflation.
13. The evaluation of the school feeding project in Madagascar found evidence suggesting that attendance was considerably higher at the schools which were providing meals. It was considered that the school meals had improved the short-term attention of the pupils and increased their nutritional well-being; furthermore, the value of the meals represented a useful income transfer for the parents.

## Monitoring

14. WFP's response to both the crisis in the Liberia region and that in the Rwanda-Burundi region was quick and efficient. Huge amounts of food were delivered rapidly and in both cases the regional approach worked well. However, the evaluations found that too few resources were available for monitoring. The food logistics information and reporting system established in Nairobi—covering the Rwanda-Burundi operation—is now quite satisfactory, although it is regretted that it took over a year to put in place.
15. Targeting scarce food aid to the most needy has not been easy in the Liberia regional operation, in part because of the paucity of socio-economic-nutritional assessment data and a lack of monitoring of the affected populations. Similarly in Afghanistan, targeting of rehabilitation assistance to the more needy requires improved assessment data on household food security.
16. In all three urban projects, the monitoring activities were found to have focused mainly on food management and logistics. Performance and effects monitoring was found to be very limited. Monitoring of the Madagascar school feeding project was weak, although-based on the recent interventions by WFP—measures to improve the collection of information are now in place.

## Coordination with other agencies

17. The Liberia regional and Rwanda-Burundi emergency operations are, of course, jointly managed with UNHCR. However, the two evaluations confirmed the importance of the ongoing review of the WFP/UNHCR Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), intended to clarify responsibilities further, and of the current plans for ensuring that field staff are thoroughly briefed.
18. In Afghanistan, there are two major United Nations coordinating bodies: UNDP and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan (UNOCHA), whose mandates overlap in the grey area between relief and development. Prior to 1990, there was a limited presence of NGOs in Afghanistan; those that have come into existence since then lack experience and capacity. The evaluation recommended that WFP, with other United Nations agencies and NGOs, examine the current options for enhancing civil society in Afghanistan, paying particular attention to linkages with local implementing partners and institutions.



19. The evaluation of the urban projects found that the existing weakness of local governments required that WFP seek additional implementing partners. The NGOs in Zambia and Mozambique were found to be satisfactory. The evaluation concluded, however, that if such projects were to be expected to go beyond the limited objective of providing temporary, short-term employment, food for work should be integrated into a multi-faceted programme. Such assistance would require WFP to identify suitable collaborating partners.

## Conclusions

20. The issues raised by the evaluators are both timely and relevant. Where quick remedial action was possible, the Programme has acted. More complex problems are subject to continued review and elaboration of appropriate mechanisms to deal with them. The above discussion suggests that WFP's record in the emergency operations evaluated is excellent in terms of quick response and delivery of food aid. Similarly, in the development projects, the food aid used has provided valuable benefits and has led to improved food security for the recipients of the food aid.

