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COUNTRY STRATEGY OUTLINES

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COUNTRY STRATEGY OUTLINE— GUINEA

ABSTRACT

Guinea belongs to the category of least developed and low-income, food-deficit countries (LDC/LIFDC). It ranks 167th out of 175 on the 1997 UNDP Human Development Index scale. In 1995, the country's per capita gross national product (GNP) stood at 550 dollars (World Bank). From 1991 to 1995, the growth rate oscillated between 2.4 and 4.7 percent. The infant mortality rate is 134 per 1,000 live births and life expectancy is estimated at 47, compared to 52 for sub-Saharan Africa. The gross enrolment rate in primary education is estimated at 47 percent (31 percent for girls). The FAO aggregate household food security index is 78.7 (1996). Daily wages for unskilled labour vary between 1,000 and 1,700 Guinean francs (0.83 to 1.4 dollars). Food aid flows decreased progressively in recent years from 80,000 tons in 1993 to 42,000 tons in 1997. Guinea hosts one of the largest refugee populations (531,700) in Africa.

The proposed WFP interventions are linked with those of other multilateral and bilateral agencies in co-financing, partnership or collaborative arrangements. To ensure consistency with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) process and the programming cycles of UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA, the country strategy will cover a period of three years (1999–2001), during which WFP's cooperation with Guinea will continue on a project-by-project basis. The Country Programme will be submitted in 2001 and will cover the period 2002–2006, coinciding with the next programming cycles of other United Nations agencies.

The Country Strategy Outline (CSO) includes important changes in strategy for WFP in Guinea. WFP's development assistance will be more focused and targeted to the poorest and most food-insecure areas and population. In the rural areas of Middle and Upper Guinea, WFP assistance will be targeted during the lean season when food is scarce and prices are high. The CSO endeavours to formulate and implement projects through community participation, strengthened partnerships with other agencies, involvement of NGOs in project implementation, and enhanced monitoring and evaluation.

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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.

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INTRODUCTION

1. Although endowed with abundant natural resources (minerals, land and water) Guinea is considered one of the poorest countries in Africa. In recent years, the country has been ranked at or near the bottom of the UNDP list of countries surveyed for the Human Development Index. The per capita GNP is estimated at 550 dollars.¹
2. The development of the country since its independence in 1958 can be split into two periods, coinciding with two major successive political regimes. For the period 1958 to 1984, the country was under a rigid state-controlled economic system. This period was characterized by a declining or stagnating economy and dismal social conditions.
3. In 1984, a new regime took power and embarked upon policy reforms, leading to the liberalization of the economy and disengagement of the State. Undoubtedly, the country has since made strides in political, economic and social spheres with the establishment of democratic institutions and some improvement in economic and social indicators. However, enormous challenges lie ahead in maintaining political stability, reforming existing weak institutions, improving the level of accountability of public servants and consolidating the private sector.
4. Life expectancy at birth is estimated at 47, compared to 52 for sub-Saharan Africa. The rate of infant mortality is 134 per 1,000 live births, and maternal mortality is around 800 per 100,000 deliveries. The adult literacy rate of 24 percent is among the lowest in sub-Saharan Africa. The gross enrolment rate in primary education is estimated at 47 percent (31 percent for girls).
5. Guinea hosts one of the largest refugee populations in Africa. They are currently estimated at 531,700 (192,600 Liberians and 339,100 Sierra Leoneans). Most of the refugees are in the Forest region, where, in some areas, they outnumber the local population.

FOOD INSECURITY AND THE HUNGRY POOR

Food insecurity at the national level

6. Agriculture contributes 24 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) and 70 percent of the labour force. Although Guinea offers vast arable lands, a wide geographic and ecological diversity and abundant rains, its agricultural potential is largely unexploited and farm productivity is very low. Decades of rigid state control and economic mismanagement led to a gradual decline in agricultural production. Starting in the late sixties Guinea shifted from the status of a major exporter of agricultural products prior to independence to that of net food importer.
7. Since the advent of the Second Republic in 1984, significant progress has been made to eradicate state controls and monopolies in the agricultural sector. Prices are now determined by market mechanisms, and imports and exports are largely unrestricted. The

¹ All monetary values are expressed in United States dollars, unless otherwise stated. One United States dollar equalled 1,200 Guinean francs in May 1998.



agricultural sector responded positively to these policy changes and agricultural output grew at an annual rate of nearly four percent. The increased agricultural output is partially attributed to a shift from subsistence farming to marketing made possible by the liberalization of trade. Nonetheless, overall performance of the agricultural sector remains poor due to a limited flow of private investments.

8. Rice is by far the most important staple, representing 45 percent of total caloric intake of vegetable origin; of this, 25 percent is covered by locally produced rice and 20 percent by imported rice. Other minor crops are fonio, maize and tubers. The food security ratio (production versus consumption requirement) has remained stable in recent years at around 65 percent. Guinea has structural deficits in rice, wheat, vegetable oil and sugar. The annual consumption requirement of rice is estimated at 635,000 tons, of which 365,000 (or 57 percent) is covered by domestic production. The remainder is covered by imports. The consumption of vegetable oil is estimated at 21,000 tons, of which 8,000 (or 38 percent) is covered by local production and the remainder by imports. The annual consumption of wheat and sugar is estimated at 75,000 tons and 50,000 tons, respectively, and is covered entirely by imports.
9. Almost 90 percent of rice consumption in Conakry is covered by imported rice, as compared to 33 percent in the rest of the country. The annual per capita consumption of rice varies from 126 kilograms in Conakry to 105 kilograms in Forest Guinea, 100 in Coastal Guinea, 69 in Upper Guinea and 52 in Middle Guinea. In the latter two regions, cereal consumption is more diversified, with maize and fonio offering a complement to the basic rice ration.
10. Food aid flows have decreased progressively in recent years, from 80,000 tons in 1993 to 42,000 in 1997. Although the volume of emergency food aid has increased during this period with the massive influxes of refugees from neighbouring countries, the overall reduction of food aid is the result of reduced programme food aid and, to a lesser extent, project food aid.

Poverty profile and the hungry poor

11. The main source of information to assess the extent of poverty in Guinea is the 1994/95 integrated household survey, financed jointly by the World Bank, African Development Bank (ADB) and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). This study uses two lines of poverty. The absolute poverty line was defined as an annual per capita expenditure of 293,714 Guinean francs (which at the time was equivalent to 300 dollars). The extreme poverty line was defined as an annual per capita expenditure of 172,284 Guinean francs (equivalent to 176 dollars). These values are based on the estimated cost of acquiring enough food to ensure a minimum daily requirement of 2,000 kilocalories per person. Accordingly, about 40 percent of the entire population fall below the absolute poverty line and 13 percent below the extreme poverty line.
12. Poverty in Guinea remains predominantly a rural phenomenon, with over 50 percent of the rural population living in absolute poverty and 18 percent in extreme poverty, as compared to 24 percent and six percent in urban areas.
13. Poverty levels are higher in Upper Guinea (with absolute and extreme poverty ratios of 59 and 41 percent, respectively) and Middle Guinea (with absolute and extreme poverty ratios of 52 and 34 percent). Differences in poverty are obviously more pronounced at the district prefecture level. The aforementioned household survey indicated that within the four natural regions of Guinea, the poorest areas are as follows:



Natural region	Poorest areas
Coastal Guinea	Télimélé, Northern Boffa, Northern Kindia
Middle Guinea	Eastern Koundara, Western Mali, Lélouma, Northern Labé, Pita, Southern and Eastern Dalaba, North-eastern Mamou, Tougué, Northern Koubia
Upper Guinea	Southern Dabola, Northern Dinguiraye Southern Kouroussa, Siguiri, North-west Mandiana, Northern Faranah, Kissidougou, South-west and South-east Kankan, Kéouané
Forest Guinea	North and South Beyla, Macenta, Yomou, Lola, Guéckédou

14. The poor households spend 61 percent of their income on food, against 47 percent for the non-poor. Cereals represent 37 percent of food expenditure of the poor households, followed by fish/meat (14 percent), cooking oil (11 percent) and vegetables/fruit (10 percent). Rice alone represents 24 percent of food consumption (or 69 percent of cereal consumption) for the poor, compared to 17 percent of food consumption (or 64 percent of cereal consumption) for the non-poor.
15. The poor derive 67 percent of their income from agriculture, compared to 36 percent for the non-poor. Among the poor, the groups considered to be most vulnerable are small farmers, rural women, homeless children (particularly in urban areas), some castes in rural areas, the urban unemployed, employees of some micro-enterprises in the informal sector and the vast majority of refugees. Most farmers in Upper and Middle Guinea are obliged to borrow money at high interest rates to purchase food during the lean season when food prices are high. They reimburse their loans by selling a large share of their crops at harvest time when food prices are relatively low. A significant part of the rural population suffers from malnutrition during the lean season. According to the 1994/95 survey, 29.1 percent of children under five suffer from chronic malnutrition and 12.1 percent from severe malnutrition.
16. The urban population has grown from 1.3 million in 1984 to 2.2 million in 1996, and is projected to reach 4.5 million (37 percent of the total) by 2010. Sustained migration from rural areas, uncontrolled urban growth and lack of access to regularly developed sites force many households to crowd or haphazardly occupy urban areas which are already underserved and overdensified. About 65 percent of the urban population are concentrated in Conakry—the capital city, major port, and main economic and commercial centre. Almost half of the active population of Conakry is either underemployed or unemployed.

Gender issues

17. Women represent 51 percent of the entire population. They have less access to economic and social benefits than their male counterparts because of the low level of education and structural discrimination. The female adult literacy rate is only 19 percent. Despite improvement in recent years, the gross primary school enrolment for girls is only 31 percent. Only about two percent of rural women in Middle and Upper Guinea have a level of primary education.
18. Women continue to be confronted with numerous difficulties such as limited access to jobs, land and agricultural credit, and heavy domestic chores. A gender gap in employment arises because of differential parental investment in boys' and girls' education. In the private



formal sector, there is a traditional reluctance of employers to hire women on the basis of perceived costs associated with maternity and child-rearing. Female graduates of vocational training have difficulties finding jobs in their fields.

19. Traditional land tenure systems in Guinea involve a severe gender bias. Women may only borrow land through a male. It is a male's responsibility to distribute land among members of his family. Even when women succeed in borrowing land, by tradition they are allowed to use only less fertile and smaller fields.
20. Most poor households in the cities, notably in Conakry, derive the bulk of their income from independent micro-enterprises involving commercial activities in the informal sector. Most of these micro-enterprises are run by women. The discrimination that women generally face in the credit market, and the low level of education, make it hard for them to start such small businesses.
21. Despite these difficulties, Guinean women play an essential role in national food security, contributing about 80 percent of domestic food production. They are also active in other diverse activities such as small-scale processing units and handicrafts.
22. There are some 380 registered women's associations in the project area, carrying out diverse income-generating activities. In the Fouta-Jallon areas, women are emerging as a dynamic force within the society. Over 20 percent of households are headed by women. Households headed by women tend to be better off and less poor than those headed by men due mainly to the fact that the average size of households headed by women is smaller.

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES AND POLICIES ADDRESSING POVERTY AND FOOD INSECURITY

Overall policies

23. The Government's medium- and long-term policy, defined in the strategy document *Guinea vision 2010*, is to achieve an "accelerated, sustainable and equitable growth" aiming at improving the living standards of the population. This strategy will be pursued essentially through the private sector; it will prioritize rural and mining development, and the provision of social services to the population. The role of the public sector is that of developing human resources and ensuring good governance. The strategy also emphasizes the improvement of the status of women, the protection of vulnerable groups and the preservation of the environment in order to "guarantee a decent future to the next generations".
24. Consistent with its long-term strategy, the Government embarked on a national human development programme (1997–2001) whose major objectives are to achieve good governance and poverty alleviation. The first objective (governance) would be pursued through the improvement of macro-economic management capacity, strengthening of the capacities of civil society, and decentralization. The second objective (poverty alleviation) would be attained by improving access to basic social services, strengthening the productive capacities in rural areas and improving the living conditions of the most vulnerable population in urban areas.



Food security policies at the national, regional and household levels

25. The Government's agricultural and food security policies are defined in a strategy document entitled the *Lettre de politique de développement agricole*, (Policy Letter on Agricultural Development-LPDA). Among the stated objectives are promoting food security and agricultural exports providing essential services to farmers, and ensuring a rational management of natural resources (land, forests and water).
26. With regard to food security, the LPDA pursues a policy of self-sufficiency in rice production by 2005, applying progressive tariffs to curtail the importation of rice. The aim is to encourage increased domestic production of rice through an expansion of area cultivated under rice from 460,000 hectares in 1996 to 714,000 hectares in 2005, as well as an increase in rice yields from 1.47 tons per hectare in 1996 to 1.79 in 2005. This is equivalent to an annual growth rate in rice production of 7.3 percent. However, this policy has not yet been put in place. The fixed tariff on rice imports of 24 percent on a c.i.f. price base of 240 dollars a ton established in 1992 is still in effect.
27. Considering the relatively high costs of transporting food, particularly on rural roads, the Government plans to improve the marketing of local rice through the rehabilitation of 3,300 kilometres of feeder roads between 1997 and 2001. The Government also plans to reclaim a sizeable area of rice land. The programme of land reclamation from 1998 onwards would average 5,000 hectares a year, or a total of 40,000 hectares of reclaimed land by 2005. This programme would be supported by intensified agricultural research and development, and improved delivery of extension services.
28. The availability of unrestricted imported rice has strengthened food security in Conakry. It has had beneficial effects on all consumers in the capital as a result of lower rice prices. The benefits have been greater for the low-income groups (i.e., the unemployed and low-wage workers in the informal sector). The price of imported rice has been more stable than that of local rice, thus playing a stabilizing role on seasonal fluctuations of the prices of rice to consumers. Prices of imported rice tend to be higher the more distant the market is from Conakry. They therefore have no significant impact on the major producing area of Forest Guinea and on the distant areas of Upper and Middle Guinea.
29. A shift in consumption from imported to local rice is likely to result in higher prices with a negative effect on the welfare of the population. Consumers may also shift towards food commodities other than rice, notably wheat products (bread), a commodity which is entirely imported. Some degree of protection of local rice is provided already by the high in-country transport costs, particularly on the secondary roads (whose costs are more than double than those on the major roads). Meaningful investments in rural infrastructure, research and extension work are more efficient in improving the productivity and income of local producers than import restrictions.
30. The Government's policy on food crops other than rice (fonio, maize, tubers and plantain) is to strengthen national food security, diversifying food crops and providing alternative sources of caloric supply. The immediate objective is to improve knowledge about the production and marketing of these crops. Only about 15 percent of the total maize production is marketed. The medium- to long-term objective is to support the development of these crops in the regions and areas in which they have a comparative advantage, i. e., fonio and maize in Upper and Middle Guinea, and plantain and tubers in Upper Guinea, Coastal Guinea and Middle Guinea.



Food aid policies

31. The Government's food aid policies are formulated by the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation and by the Ministry of Agriculture. These policies aim at closely linking food aid with national food security objectives. One of the Government's priorities in this respect is the resumption of programme food aid, as Guinea continues to face structural deficits in cereals, (particularly rice and wheat), vegetable oils, sugar and milk products. The Government also aims at associating food aid with its poverty alleviation programme in support of the poor and food-insecure segments of the population. Priorities for project food aid are food for work in support of community rural development (swamp rice development, reforestation and maintenance of feeder roads), feeding of primary schoolchildren with priority for girls, and urban environmental protection through sanitation projects.
32. The Government also seeks international support (including food aid) to its recovery programmes in areas of high refugee concentration, particularly after the return of the refugees to their countries of origin, as planned. This might include food aid interventions to restore the environment (reforestation and soil conservation), and to maintain infrastructure and services established under the refugee assistance projects (irrigation schemes, rural roads, school canteens, and other facilities).

ASSESSMENT OF WFP'S PERFORMANCE TO DATE

33. WFP assistance to Guinea started in 1964 under a feeding scheme in technical schools. Between 1964 and 1996, the total value of WFP assistance amounted to 54.7 million dollars. Currently, there are two operational protracted relief operations (PROs) at a total commitment of 17.6 million dollars. In addition, there are four development projects (No. 2469.02—"Rehabilitation and maintenance of the national transport network"; 2674.01—"Multipurpose rural development"; 4195—"Rehabilitation and development of forest resources"; and 4014—"Assistance to educational and social programmes") which were concluded at the end of December 1996, but there is still about 20,000 dollars from generated funds still to be programmed. Three out of these four development projects (2674.01, 4195 and 2469.02) have been extensively reviewed. The fourth project (4014) was found to be unsuitable for further assistance.

Food-for-work projects (2674.01, 4195 and 2469.02)

34. The overall results of these three projects are mixed. It was found that WFP food aid in support of these projects was not adequately targeted. Doubts were expressed on the appropriateness of using food aid as part-payment of wages to government employees who hardly fall within the population defined as poor, except in case of a very large family with only one member employed. It was also found that food aid for development was used largely in "prestigious" projects as a means of overcoming the Government's budgetary restrictions. It was difficult to assess the impact of WFP's contribution to such projects, particularly project No. 2469.02.
35. WFP food aid was often leaked to individuals and groups not intended or foreseen in the plans of operations. The level of diversion of food was significant and was largely unaccounted for. It was noted that such leakage was partly due to the inadequate executing mechanism put in place, as well as to insufficient monitoring and supervision by the Government and WFP.



36. On the other hand, drawing on the experience gained and the lessons learned during the execution of projects 2674.01 and 4195, it was found that food aid was an appropriate incentive to mobilize the active participation of the rural population in communal development works. The rural engineering and forest departments of the Ministry of Agriculture had adequate capacities for technical supervision of activities implemented by rural communities.
37. Food aid can play a useful role in the rural development of Guinea. Several rural development schemes require food aid in order to mobilize and motivate community participation. Food aid is much appreciated by the villagers, particularly those in remote areas, who often prefer to be paid in food rather than cash. Food aid clearly has a comparative advantage during the lean season (June to September), when availability of food to the rural population is scarce and prices are high. This period also coincides with the reforestation campaign. In Middle and Upper Guinea, there is a strong tradition of communal participation in seasonal work campaigns during which collective meals (*repas collectifs*) are offered to the participants. WFP assistance is expected to reinforce this tradition of communal participation, particularly during the lean season.
38. Women's potential to contribute to rural development is largely under-utilized. This constitutes a loss of opportunity. WFP assistance is particularly suited to supporting the initiatives of groups of village dwellers (*groupements villageois*) to rehabilitate rural infrastructure, establish village woodlots, protect the environment and carry out a variety of income-generating activities (artisanal production, vegetable gardening and petty trade). The participants in these activities are largely women. The remarkable achievements of Yimbéring women's groups (in Middle Guinea) in successfully establishing a vast range of income-generating activities (cotton production and marketing, weaving, dyeing, dress-making, shoe-making and soap-making) is an example of the impact of WFP assistance under project 2674.01. Such success stories are replicable in other areas of the country.

Assistance to social and educational sectors (Project No. 4014)

39. The role of WFP assistance in project No. 4014 was to provide a budgetary support to the Government by supplying food to universities, technical boarding-schools, day-care centres and hospitals, thus enabling budgetary savings to be used for expanding and improving facilities at these institutions.
40. Owing to institutional problems and the slow process of recovery of funds, only 38 percent of the expected amount is reported to have been generated. The funds have been, and are being, used for improving facilities at the universities of Kankan and Conakry, and for the provision of computer equipment to vocational training centres and the University of Conakry.
41. WFP food assistance to this project was terminated at the end of December 1996. The project's concept, scope, objectives, institutional arrangements and areas of intervention had since been reviewed and found unsuitable for further WFP assistance.

PROs (LIB 4604.06 and SIL 5802)

42. Following the recommendations of the inter-agency (WFP/UNHCR/European Union/USAID) assessment mission of July 1996, the general food distribution to the refugees has been phased out and replaced since January 1997 by a targeted food distribution. The latter consisted of three components:



- a) **feeding of vulnerable groups** such as malnourished children, the aged, handicapped, the blind and orphans;
 - b) **emergency school feeding** for refugee children and a limited number of Guinean children living in the refugee areas; and
 - c) **food-for-work** activities, including agricultural activities, rehabilitation of feeder roads and other income-generating micro-projects.
43. This new food aid strategy disqualified about 300,000 refugees who received food rations until 1996. However, the census conducted by UNHCR in June 1997 confirmed that overall refugee figures were overestimated.

Vulnerable group feeding

44. The actual number of persons belonging to vulnerable groups ranged between 28 and 37 percent of the total refugee population, depending on the situation in each distribution zone. Overall, this component is being successfully implemented with the involvement of NGOs. The International Federation of the Red Cross handles food distribution in the N'Zerekore area. The Protestant Church/Cama Service is responsible for food distribution to vulnerable groups in the Guéckedou and Forecariah areas. In addition, this component is supported by nutritional surveys and therapeutic feeding conducted by Médecins sans Frontière (Belgium) in the N'Zerekore area, Action contre la faim (Guéckédou area) and German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) in the Forecariah area. The sound implementation of vulnerable group feeding is confirmed by the low levels of malnutrition recorded throughout this operation (around 5.3 percent moderate malnutrition and 0.7 percent severe malnutrition).

Food for work

45. A food-for-work component is being implemented for able-bodied refugees willing to participate in self-help development activities with a view to helping them become self-reliant. Food is being distributed in compensation for defined tasks to be carried out by the beneficiaries within the context of specific projects supported financially by UNHCR and technically by the Government through its agricultural services. The activities include swamp land reclamation, feeder road rehabilitation and maintenance, reforestation, building of facilities such as school canteens and improvement of urban sanitation. However, this component suffered from a lack of a systematic definition and planning of tasks, limited financial support, poor investment in non-food items, limited technical support, and poor supervision.
46. A number of income-generating or social-sector activities initiated by the refugees themselves, particularly women's groups, were more successful. This is the case of vegetable gardening in the Forecariah area and improvement of sanitation in the town of N'Zerekore. The experience gained and the lessons learned suggest that the planning and execution of this component should have been entrusted to a qualified NGO.

Emergency school feeding

47. This appears to be the most successful component of the targeted food distribution programme. It was entrusted to GTZ as regards the organization of school canteens and the food distribution, and to ICRC for the education programme. The number of schools covered was increased from 50 in 1996 to 150 in 1997. GTZ completed the construction of new school canteen facilities according to plans by June 1997. In 1997, WFP assigned a United States Crisis Corps (former Peace Corps) volunteer to monitor school feeding



activities, with very satisfactory results. The school feeding programme is run very smoothly and is much appreciated by the students, the Guinean authorities and the education partner. An added benefit of this component is the provision of food for work to refugees involved in the construction and maintenance of canteens facilities, in cooking and other related services.

Repatriation programme

48. Based on the recommendations of the 1997 joint mission, an 18-month programme is being implemented for food assistance to the refugees in Guinea, starting January 1998, with a focus on voluntary repatriation. The programme also includes vulnerable group feeding, school feeding, and limited food for work and food for training.
49. A WFP food assistance package is planned during the promotion phase of the repatriation process. This is equivalent to food rations for 30 days for each refugee before departure and 30 days upon arrival in the country of origin.
50. Although UNHCR's assisted repatriation started somewhat late in March 1998, the Liberian refugees have been repatriating spontaneously since mid-1997 in response to the favourable political and security developments in Liberia. The exact number of spontaneous repatriees is not known. However, the level of absenteeism at the distribution sites (schools, food-for-work sites and, to a lesser extent, vulnerable group feeding sites) indicates that a significant spontaneous repatriation has occurred without UNHCR/WFP assistance. If this trend continues and if UNHCR's assisted repatriation gains momentum over the next months, it is likely that this activity will be implemented, according to plans, by mid-1999 as far as the Liberians are concerned.
51. The situation of the Sierra Leonian refugees is more difficult to predict. Currently, there are many more arrivals of new refugees (in the Guéckeu/Kissidougou/Faranah areas) than departures (Forecariah area). Despite the resumption of a democratically elected government in Sierra Leone with the intervention of Economic Community of West African States Mission Observers' Group (ECOMOG) forces, the situation in various parts of the interior is still insecure. The repatriation of Sierra Leonean refugees depends on the restoration of peace and security in Sierra Leone.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES IN IMPLEMENTATION

Development programme

52. The public sector's budgetary constraints and dwindling external financial aid make it increasingly difficult for the Government to meet its counterpart obligations. This is one of the most visible weaknesses in project implementation.
53. One of the past weaknesses in the projects was the heavy and cumbersome institutional arrangements for project implementation involving four layers of bureaucracy: the Directorate of International Cooperation as a recipient of WFP commodities and non-food inputs; a sectoral or technical Ministry as the second layer of supervision; a project director appointed by the Directorate of International Cooperation as the third layer; and a regional technical or sectoral department to oversee the project in the areas of implementation. The projects' objectives were not well served by the logistic arrangements for delivering commodities to the planning authorities upon discharge at Conakry port and transferring internal transport, storage and handling (ITSH) funds to these authorities for storage



management in Conakry, and for forwarding the commodities to the regional warehouses and then to the distribution areas. The poor monitoring of projects on the part of the Government and the WFP country office was also partly responsible for the leakage and loss of WFP commodities.

54. Strong points in project implementation include the Government's and local communities' receptiveness and positive attitude towards food aid. The contribution of food aid to strengthening women's associations, particularly in Middle Guinea, is another noticeable achievement. The technical knowledge, experience and strong implementation capacities of some government institutions, such as the Agricultural Engineering Department and the Forestry Department, are among the strong points of the project's implementation, particularly rural development projects.

Protracted relief operations (PROs)

55. The regional approach to the ongoing PROs, encompassing the two countries in crisis (Liberia and Sierra Leone) and the two asylum countries (Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire) has proved to be efficient and advantageous in that it has allowed the necessary flexibility in terms of pipeline management. This has enabled to adjust the WFP operations to the evolving and often unpredictable situations.
56. The logistics strategy in which WFP retains title and control of the commodities up to their distribution to the beneficiaries has also proved to be efficient and has contributed to minimizing commodity losses and diversion.
57. Two separate relief operations have been designed and approved for Liberia and Sierra Leone. The reason for this separation was to maximize mobilization of resources for each operation. It does not appear that this objective has been attained. While the Liberia operation has been adequately resourced, the Sierra Leonian one has been far below expectations. It is recommended that the two operations be consolidated into one carefully designed operation, as no distinction is made locally between Liberian and Sierra Leonian refugees.
58. NGOs played a prominent role in the implementation of the operations, notably in the components with which they were associated (vulnerable group feeding and school feeding), as well as in carrying out nutritional surveys and food basket monitoring. The participation of NGOs should be consolidated and strengthened, including the food-for-work component.

Cost-efficiency

59. All WFP-imported commodities maintain a relatively high comparative advantage. The alpha values of food aid (the ratio of the value of food to the beneficiaries over the WFP cost of food delivered to them) have been calculated at 1.2 for rice, 1.5 for canned fish, 1.3 for canned meat, 1.5 for vegetable oil, 1.4 for sugar, 1.3 for pulses, 1.4 for maize meal and 1.2 for maize. Consequently, local purchases of food for WFP-supported projects do not appear to be advantageous under the current market conditions. However, the possibility to arrange for local purchases will be considered when and if suitable opportunities arise.

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E)

60. There is scope for improvement in monitoring, reporting and evaluation. This objective is being pursued in the context of newly formulated projects (No. 5664 and 5994/Q) which both include a built-in M&E system to keep track of the flow of project inputs and to



monitor progress towards achieving project objectives and outputs. These M&E systems contain objective/output based indicators to monitor the progress of the project activities and components.

61. In view of the Government's limited monitoring capacity and considering the significant post-c.i.f. losses of WFP food in 1995 and 1996 under the terminated development projects, WFP will make available the services of United Nations Volunteers (UNVs) in the areas covered by newly formulated projects to monitor project activities and keep track of WFP inputs.
62. As far as relief operations are concerned, WFP retains ownership and control of commodities to their final distribution to beneficiaries and employs UNVs to monitor the movement of commodities in the distribution areas.

Impact on markets and domestic production

63. The annual WFP supply of cereals (maize meal, bulgur wheat and rice), pulses, vegetable oils, fish and meat products will represent an insignificant share of annual production and imports of these commodities. The WFP food baskets are targeted to refugees and local population groups falling below the poverty line whose households suffer from food insecurity and spend at least 70 percent of their income on food. It is therefore expected that the quantities of food supplied by WFP will lead to additional food consumption and, considering the relatively small quantities involved, no adverse effects on local production and trade are anticipated.

FUTURE ORIENTATION OF WFP ASSISTANCE

Proposed strategy

64. **Geographical targeting.** WFP assistance will be targeted to rural and urban areas as an integral part of the Government's poverty alleviation programme. In rural areas, WFP assistance will be targeted to the poorest natural regions of Middle and Upper Guinea, selected pockets of extreme poverty (see paragraph 13), and areas of high refugee concentration. The population concerned are most vulnerable to food insecurity, particularly during the lean, hungry season from June to September. In urban areas, WFP assistance will be targeted to the poorest and underserved neighbourhoods, particularly the slums of the capital city of Conakry. Overall, the areas selected for WFP's intervention correspond to those of high poverty concentration and at high risk of food insecurity.
65. **Priority sectors.** WFP assistance will focus on three key sectors, i.e., rural development, primary education and urban environmental protection, in line with the Government's food aid policies outlined in paragraphs 31 and 32.
66. Rural development activities stem from the experience gained and lessons learned in implementing three previous development projects and two PROs, as described in the previous section. The activities will include swamp rice development, rehabilitation of feeder roads, reforestation, soil conservation and other community initiatives.
67. WFP will support a primary school canteen programme in selected districts within the four natural regions of the country. The programme will be executed in partnership with the Agence Française de développement, (French Development Agency) UNDP, UNICEF and



the Canadian NGO “Centre d’études de coopération internationale” (Study Centre for International Cooperation—CECI).

68. WFP will support the Government’s transitional programme for the management of urban waste and other sanitation activities in Conakry and other urban centres, in partnership with the World Bank, other donors and NGOs. The Government’s sanitation programme will initially be supported under a quick-action project designed specifically for the city of Conakry. The project will serve as a pilot experience for WFP’s eventual participation in a nationwide urban sanitation programme.
69. **Target groups.** The main beneficiaries of rural development activities will be the villagers and women’s groups in Middle Guinea, Upper Guinea and Forest region facing food insecurity during the lean season. The school feeding programme will target primary schoolchildren selected in areas with a low rate of school attendance, particularly of girls, longer distance of schools from villages and higher rates of malnutrition. The sanitation project will target youth and women’s associations from the poor and underserved neighbourhoods, as well as voluntary workers from micro-enterprises engaged in the collection and disposal of solid waste.
70. **Modalities of WFP assistance.** The newly designed projects will be based on a participatory approach, the communities concerned being involved in the selection, planning and execution of activities. Within this approach, particular attention will be given to the participation of women, who constitute the majority of beneficiaries.
71. WFP will seek to maximize cooperation and partnerships with other multilateral and bilateral agencies willing to provide complementary support. A number of partners have been identified for the new projects: the World Bank, Agence française de développement, Japan, USAID and UNDP. Likewise, the country strategy and its core programme will be closely linked with the UNDAF initiative.
72. In view of the limited capacity of government institutions, the new projects will rely largely on international and local NGOs in the implementation of activities, based on the principle of delegated management from the Government. The logistics strategy retained in these projects is that WFP will retain the title and control of the commodities up to the final distribution points, using the landside transport, storage and handling (LTSH) subsidy, with a view to minimizing the risk of commodity losses and diversion.

PROPOSED INTERVENTIONS

73. A new project, GUI 5664.00 “Support to community-based rural development in Middle and Upper Guinea”, has been designed and submitted. The proposed project is a merger of the three terminated projects and includes those components and activities which were retained as being viable and satisfactory by a WFP pre-appraisal mission which visited Guinea in November/December 1995. The new project entailed changes in approach, role of food aid, geographical targeting, executing mechanism and implementation strategy. It is targeted to the two poorest regions of the country, and is entirely based on a participatory approach. The role of food aid has been shifted from part-payment of wages to Government employees and labourers to the provision of an incentive to mobilize the communities to participate in the project. The executing mechanism has been simplified; project implementation is entrusted to the village committees under the supervision of the technical



services of the Ministry of Agriculture in partnership with NGOs and WFP-appointed UNVs.

74. The new school feeding project, under preparation, will focus on primary school education for girls. The project will be targeted to the poorest districts within the four natural regions of Guinea identified by the recent national household survey. The aim is to reduce the drop-out rate of girls from primary school.
75. A new quick-action project, GUI 5994—"Community public works and sanitation", has been formulated and submitted to WFP headquarters for approval. Its aim is to support the Government's transitional programme for the management of urban waste and its associated sanitation activities. It will involve in the sanitation works micro-enterprises and urban community associations works under the direction of three NGOs designated by the Government as executing agencies. The project is targeted to the poorest neighbourhoods of the city of Conakry.

Emergency-development continuum

76. A new rehabilitation/development project was identified in the Forest region and Forecariah district as a follow-up to the current PROs after the departure of the refugees, in line with the expressed request of the Government of Guinea. One of the objectives of this project is to restore the environment in the overpopulated Gueckedou, Macenta, N'Zerekore and Forecariah areas, whose environment has deteriorated because of the refugees' presence since 1990.
77. The project will benefit the host population and will include activities such as swamp rice development, reforestation, rehabilitation and maintenance of feeder roads and school canteen programme. The activities of the proposed project will be integrated in the community rural development and school feeding projects outlined earlier, rather than treating them as a separate project.

Scope for joint programming with other agencies

78. The Country Strategy Note, prepared in 1996, provides a framework for cooperation between the Government and the United Nations system, as well as for harmonizing the programme cycles of the various United Nations agencies. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), which is expected to take shape during the next three years, will further provide an impetus to the joint programming of United Nations agencies within the agreed objectives and time horizon.
79. The programme cycles of UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA run from 1997 to 2001 and coincide with the Government's own cycle. In order to ensure consistency with the UNDAF process and the programming cycles of the Government and of other United Nations agencies, it is proposed that this country strategy cover a period of three years (1999–2001), during which WFP's cooperation with Guinea will continue to be on a project-by-project basis, within the broad objectives and strategies defined in this document. It is further proposed that the Country Programme be prepared and approved in the year 2001, and that it cover the period 2002–2006, to coincide with the next programme cycles of the other United Nations agencies.
80. The proposed WFP interventions in support of this country strategy are linked with those of several multilateral and bilateral agencies in co-financing, partnership or collaborative arrangements. UNDP's framework programme, entitled "Support to community-based initiatives", is expected to co-finance the proposed WFP "Community rural development



project”, as both projects are complementary. The World Bank, Japan, USAID and the Agence française de développement are co-financing the urban sanitation project. Likewise, the Agence française de développement is expected to co-finance the proposed school feeding project. Several international and local NGOs are associated with the WFP-supported projects in close partnership or as executing agencies (AFRICARE, CECI and others).

CORE PROGRAMME AND THE LEVEL OF RESOURCES

81. As outlined in paragraphs 73 to 76, the core WFP programme in Guinea for the period of this strategy (1999–2001) will consist of the following projects:
 - a) **Community-based rural development** for Upper Guinea, Middle Guinea, Forest region and the Forecariah district;
 - b) **Community public works and sanitation** for Conakry and other cities; and
 - c) **School feeding programme** for selected districts throughout the country.
82. The resource requirements of the proposed projects for three years (1999–2001) are estimated at 7.5 million dollars, in terms of WFP direct operational costs.
83. The two ongoing PROs (Liberia and Sierra Leone) which, *inter alia*, cover a large number of refugees in Guinea, may have to merged into one operation. As far as Guinea is concerned, the focus of the operation will be the repatriation of refugees to their countries of origin, particularly the Liberians. However, continuing unrest in Sierra Leone, and now in Guinea Bissau, may lead to a greater number of relief operations.
84. This strategy and its related core programme will be adjusted as necessary, taking into account the evolving situation in the country and the development of initiatives such as UNDAF, which is expected to take shape during the strategy period. WFP’s future Country Programme for the period 2002–2006 will be based on government priorities in favour of food insecure people, and the focus of the United Nations system’s assistance programme.

KEY ISSUES AND RISKS

Political instability in the sub-region

85. The sub-region has been unstable during most of this decade, with prolonged civil strife in Liberia and at least three military coups d’état and subsequent instability in Sierra Leone. More recent civil strife in Guinea Bissau may cause further instability in the area. A continued resurgence of civil war and insecurity in the sub-region may derail the proposed programme, and result in increased vulnerability and greater emphasis on humanitarian interventions.

Institutional weaknesses

86. The local administrative set-up, characterized by a weak implementation capacity, as in most other LDCs, may undermine the smooth running of the programme. This risk will be minimized by the changes in approach, geographical targeting, executing mechanisms and



logistics strategy, and a better monitoring system. A stronger monitoring capacity of the WFP country office is likely to reduce such a risk.





World Food Programme

GUINEA

