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Programme
Alimentaire
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Programa
Mundial
de Alimentos

Executive Board
Third Regular Session

Rome, 19 - 22 October 1999

STRATEGY OUTLINES

Agenda item 5

For consideration



Distribution: GENERAL
WFP/EB.3/99/5/1
9 September 1999
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COUNTRY STRATEGY OUTLINE— PAKISTAN

ABSTRACT

Pakistan is a low-income, food-deficit country with a per capita income of US\$460 a year. The country imports about 15 percent of its basic staple, wheat. Pakistan faces enormous political, economic and social challenges. The World Bank estimates that in 1998 some 30 million people, or 23 percent of the population, lived in “consumption poverty” (a measure of the minimum acceptable standard of private consumption). The poor in Pakistan are disproportionately rural and female. Some 52 percent of Pakistani women suffer from “poverty of opportunity” (an index combining health, education and income) compared with only 37 percent of Pakistani men. Consumption poverty prevents the hungry poor from overcoming poverty of opportunity. WFP's new Country Strategy in Pakistan will therefore concentrate on the needs of food-insecure women and their children in ways that enable them to take advantage of development opportunities.

WFP will reshape its programming in Pakistan to bring it in line with the Executive Board's decisions on Food Aid and Development. The existing focus on women and girls remains central. The emphasis on the social sectors will therefore be retained. WFP's support to girls' education will be sharpened. Its support to health needs to be changed fundamentally, and will be re-formulated. And WFP's present support to natural resources management will be replaced by a new set of activities, creating assets for rural women.

WFP must ensure that food aid reaches those most in need. It will use vulnerability analysis and mapping to strengthen geographic targeting, and within geographic areas, targeting to the most food-insecure women and children. Partnerships are crucial to development. WFP will use participatory approaches to identify the special needs of beneficiaries, and it will work with the Government and other development partners to ensure that the food aid it provides enables those beneficiaries to take advantage of development opportunities. This approach will entail widening the present circle of partners to more actively engage local government authorities, NGOs and community-based organizations.

The proposed approach is in line with the strategic vision of the Government of Pakistan, and with its national policies and priorities. It also builds directly on WFP's involvement in the Common Country Assessment. WFP will structure the Country Programme within the context of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, which will be finalized over the next several months.

NOTE TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

This document is submitted for consideration to the Executive Board.

The Secretariat invites members of the Board who may have questions of a technical nature with regard to this document, to contact the WFP staff focal points indicated below, preferably well in advance of the Board's meeting.

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ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

AsDB	Asian Development Bank
AKRSP	Aga Khan Rural Support Programme
BHU	Basic health unit
CCA	Common Country Assessment
GDP	Gross domestic product
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LHV	Lady health visitors
LHW	Lady health workers
LIFDC	Low-income food-deficit country
MCH	Mother and child health
NPA	National Plan of Action
NWFP	North West Frontier Province
SAP	Social Action Programme
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
VAM	Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping



INTRODUCTION

1. In Pakistan the development odds are heavily against poor women and their children, particularly girls. They are many times more likely to be hungry and malnourished, a burden they will carry all their lives; and they are many times less likely to have access to primary education and basic health care, essential prerequisites for overcoming poverty. By any measure they constitute the most vulnerable groups in the society. Today, women in Pakistan are poorer, less healthy and less educated relative to men than they were in 1975. Some 30 million people suffer consumption poverty. And more than 60 million suffer poverty of opportunity. Its victims are disproportionately rural and female. This second-generation Country Strategy Outline (CSO) takes the feminization of poverty as its starting point and seeks to address the most pressing problems of women and girls, particularly their education and health needs. It also proposes a new programme to create assets for rural women, using participatory approaches, and opens the door for consideration of pilot food assistance activities in urban areas, a looming problem in the country. This means far-reaching changes to the present WFP assistance strategy for Pakistan and for the next Country Programme.

FOOD INSECURITY AND THE HUNGRY POOR

2. Pakistan is a low-income, food-deficit country (LIFDC) with a gross domestic product (GDP) per capita of US\$460. Two thirds of the population is rural and 46 percent depend on agriculture. There is also the added burden of Afghan refugees, who strain already weakened social support structures.
3. Pakistan faces enormous economic, political and social challenges. It has made some advances: for example, the percentage of people with inadequate food consumption declined from around 27 percent in 1987 to about 21 percent in 1995. Even so, the Government's *Pakistan 2010 Programme* document observes that in spite of 50 years of independence, "The society is still mired in ignorance, disease, poverty, intolerance, corruption, injustice, and backwardness."¹

Economic Outlook

4. All indicators point to a general slowdown of the economy, with a GDP growth rate of about 4 percent in 1998–99 compared to almost 5.5 percent in 1997–98. In the first seven months of 1999, foreign private investment fell by 57 percent. Foreign exchange reserves also declined over the past three years. The current severe economic crisis is likely to limit the Government's ability to import food commodities even further as it implements the economic stabilization programme negotiated with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The Social Policy and Development Centre estimates that the incidence of poverty is likely to be higher in 1998–99, with an additional 1.5 percent of the population, or almost 2 million more people, likely to fall below the poverty line.

¹ *Pakistan 2010 Programme*, 1998: Government of Pakistan, Ministry of Planning and Development.



Food Situation

5. In Pakistan the chronic food problem is lack of access by the poor. The country produces most of its basic staple, wheat, and imports the rest (about 15 percent) to meet market demand at reasonable prices. The marketing network is good, with more than 99 percent of people having physical access to food year-round. (A few people in remote northern areas are snowbound in winter.) The population is so poor, however, that more than 50 percent spend half or more of their incomes on food, and many have difficulty buying sufficient food. Natural disasters are infrequent, with floods, drought and earthquakes collectively affecting less than 1.5 percent of the population each year.
6. Pakistan produces some 16–17 million tons of wheat per year, and has in recent years imported an average of 2–3 million tons per year. Pakistan's import requirements are projected in the range of 3–4 million tons for the coming year because of an anticipated shortfall in wheat production.

Poverty in Pakistan

Nearly half of the population suffers from poverty of opportunities—inability to take advantage of development possibilities due to illiteracy, poor health, malnutrition and poverty.

- 42 million people (30 percent) are income-poor
- 47 million adults (62 percent) cannot read or write
- 29 million of these (76 percent) are women
- 8 million children are out of school
- 61 million people (45 percent) have no access to safe drinking water
- 54 million people (40 percent) have access to health services
- 9 million children under the age of 5 (38 percent of the under-5 population) are malnourished

Social Indicators

7. The slow pace of human resource development adversely affects the country's growth prospects, as low levels of education and poor health thwart increases in productivity. Only 40.9 percent of the population is literate (25.4 percent for women) compared with 84.4 percent in South East Asia and the Pacific; the literacy rate for rural women is a mere 8 percent.¹ Primary school enrolment is 70 percent, with girls representing only 62 percent against 80 percent for boys.²
8. The infant mortality rate (105 per 1,000 births) is very high compared with the averages of 6 per 1,000 in industrialized countries and 66 per 1,000 in developing countries. Under 5 mortality rates are unacceptably high³ (700,000 young children die each year and in 54 percent of these deaths malnutrition is a contributing factor).

¹ National Education Policy 1998-2010, Government of Pakistan, p.19.

² Pakistan Economic Report, World Bank, 7 April, 1999.

³ *Social Sector Issues in Pakistan: An Overview*, Asian Development Bank (AsDB), 1997, p.22.



Measures of Poverty

9. Pakistan's social indicators are among the worst in the developing world. These deprivations are the real cause of human poverty in Pakistan.

MEASURES OF POVERTY IN PAKISTAN (percentage of the population below the poverty threshold)	
Consumption poverty	23
Basic needs	29
Income poverty	30
Poverty of opportunity	44
Human Poverty Index	46

10. Lack of income and basic needs are the results of human deprivations. It is the poverty of opportunity that is most often the cause. Nearly one half of Pakistanis suffer from poverty of opportunity,¹—inability to take advantage of development possibilities due to illiteracy, poor health, malnutrition and poverty. For a large segment of the population there is a coexistence of inadequate food consumption and poor social indicators.
11. Given the limited availability of data in Pakistan, the best proxy indicator for food insecurity may be consumption poverty²—a limiting factor for overcoming poverty of opportunity. This is defined by the World Bank as “the extent to which actual levels of private consumption of households or individuals fall below a ‘poverty line’ that society believes represents a minimum acceptable standard of private consumption.” The Bank’s definition excludes basic items such as health and education, which are considered parts of a broader measure of “human development”. What remains is primarily the ability to purchase food.
12. Based on the 1995 World Bank report, *Pakistan Poverty Assessment*, it is possible to estimate that 23 percent of Pakistan’s population, or roughly 30 million people, lived in a state of consumption poverty in 1998.³ They are disproportionately rural and female, have larger families than average, and less education.
13. About 70 to 80 million people are deprived of education and health services. The connection between the 30 million people who suffer from inadequate food consumption and the much larger number deprived of development opportunities provides a natural niche for WFP to work. Of these people, women and children are WFP’s most compelling concern.

¹ Human Development in South Asia, Mahbub Ul Haq, 1998, p.17.

² World Bank Development Report 1995 “Pakistan Poverty Assessment”.

³ *ibid.*



The Situation of Women

14. Girls and women are the poorest group in Pakistani society. More than half the women in Pakistan suffer poverty of opportunity, compared with one third of the men. As regards education, described in *Human Development in South Asia* as “the most debilitating deprivation”, the gap widens to 72 percent of women compared to 47 percent of men.¹ The severity of the problem can also be seen in comparisons with other countries. According to the UNDP Human Development Report for 1998, Pakistan ranks 131st out of 163 countries measured by a Gender-related Development Index, which includes health, education and income variables. In a separate Gender Empowerment Measure, which measures such factors as seats in parliament and female administrators and managers, Pakistan ranks 100th of 102 countries classified.

Poverty has a ‘woman’s face’

- Today women in Pakistan are poorer, less healthy and less educated relative to men than they were in 1975;
- More than 50 percent of expectant mothers are anaemic;
- Many more women than men are not expected to live to age 40, a sign of neglect and oppression;
- Approximately 29 percent of women are deprived of health care;
- Women’s economic activity rate (age 15) is not higher than 14 percent.

15. The Government of Pakistan’s report to the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995) notes that women’s “autonomy and development has, over the past two decades, gradually come to be acknowledged as one of the core issues facing the nation”. It also points out that “it is increasingly evident that women and girls in poor households bear a disproportionately high share of the burden of poverty” and suffer from “oppressive patriarchal structures, rigid orthodox norms, and stifling socio-cultural customs and traditions”.²

16. Household consumption and income measures do not fully reveal gender differences within households, missing, for example the fact that female children are given lower-quality food than male children,³ or that women contribute little to household decisions. The gender ratio and the life expectancy of females in Pakistan do not reflect the biological advantage females have in other parts of the world: the ratio of 93 women per 100 men in Pakistan compares unfavourably with a global ratio of 106 females to 100 males.

¹ Human Development in South Asia, Mahbub Ul Haq, 1998.

² Pakistan National Report, Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, Government of Pakistan, Ministry of Women’s Development and Youth Affairs, September 1995, pp.1 and 9.

³ Malik, Aftab and Sultana, 1994, quoted in CCA.



GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES AND POLICIES

17. The new Government, elected in February 1997, outlined a series of reforms aimed at strengthening the economy and combating corruption and tax evasion by cuts in taxes and customs duties as well as large-scale privatization in the banking and energy sectors. In 1998, the Government published its ambitious *Pakistan 2010 Programme* whose stated objective is to achieve a “knowledge-led, just, tolerant, enterprising and prosperous society” by the year 2010. Within this broader context, the Government prepared its Ninth Five-Year Plan (1998–2003), along with major policy documents to assist the health and education sectors.
18. The *Pakistan 2010 Programme* sets a number of social sector targets aimed at reducing the incidence of poverty. These include reducing the percentage of those whose basic needs are not met from 46 percent in 1997–98 to 25 percent in 2002–03 and to 15 percent by 2010; increasing primary school enrolment from 15 million in 1997–98 to 20 million in 2002–03 and to 25.9 million by 2010, although significant gender imbalances would remain at the end of the period; increasing the number of children immunized from 16 million in 1997–98 to 20 million by 2002–03 and 22 million by 2010; and decreasing infant mortality to 80 per 1,000 births by 2002–03 and to 60 per 1,000 births by 2010.
19. The emphasis of the Government and donors is increasingly on what the United Nations agencies operating in Pakistan have called “placing people at the centre”: addressing the specific needs of women and children, in part by involving people directly in the design and implementation of decentralized development programmes.
20. There are entitlement schemes, including a subsidy on the staple food. The Government’s major intervention involves purchasing locally produced wheat at fixed support prices, importing additional wheat to ensure that market needs are met, and setting a guaranteed retail price for wheat flour. To keep retail prices at reasonable levels, the Government is subsidizing both the acquisition and retail price of wheat. A governmental welfare scheme designed to provide supplementary cash to needy groups is unfortunately chronically underfunded, thus assisting only a relatively small portion of the population.

Other Partners in Development

21. The Government alone cannot reduce poverty by providing development opportunities to poor people. The reduction of poverty requires the participatory efforts of communities, the private sector, NGOs as well as by external assistance. One framework for this is the Social Action Programme (SAP), which has mobilized US\$8 billion in Government and donor funds to provide social services in a more cost-effective, participatory way. The SAP promotes better education opportunities and improved health care, both of which are needed to enhance the earning capacity and coping strategies of the poor, and are of special importance to women. The SAP provides an enabling policy environment, seeking to ensure gender equality and empowerment for women.
22. The Government of Pakistan meets approximately three quarters of the SAP costs, a concrete demonstration of its commitment. Other key financial donors are the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank (AsDB), the European Union, and the Governments of Canada, the Netherlands, Norway and the United Kingdom. WFP, along with several other United Nations agencies, is a member of the SAP Multi-Donor Support Consultative Group. The Government is committed to working with WFP in targeting food aid to those most in need and to using participatory approaches to assist in activity selection. The SAP



also shows the way in which the Government provides staff and resources in accordance with their agreed responsibilities for programme implementation.

Common Country Assessment (CCA)/United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)

23. In November 1998, WFP participated in a United Nations system sponsored conference on "The Future of the United Nations in Pakistan". This conference brought together the heads of various United Nations agencies; members of the bilateral and multilateral donor community, including the Bretton Woods institutions; federal and provincial officials of the Government of Pakistan; and representatives from civil society, including NGOs. The draft of the Common Country Assessment (CCA) was prepared in the first half of 1999. Since the composition of the United Nations Country Team is expected to change substantially with the departure and re-assignment of a number of key personnel in different agencies, the present United Nations Country Team, under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator, decided to leave the finalization of the CCA and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) to the incoming Team. Although this decision will result in some delays, it should ensure that the new Team has full ownership in the process.
24. WFP collaborated in the CCA exercise and will be fully engaged in the forthcoming UNDAF process. WFP's strategy for Pakistan builds directly on its engagement in these collaborative ventures. The draft CCA, for example, emphasizes the importance of widening access to primary education, particularly to girls, women and the rural poor, and looks to the measures needed to increase their participation. In the health sector, the CCA focuses on the poor health status of Pakistani women and seeks ways to ensure that primary health care coverage does not decrease in the current economic crisis. When considering issues of environmental sustainability, the CCA endeavours to support the creation of assets for rural women. The Country Programme, which will be presented to the Executive Board next year, will be structured within the context of the UNDAF, whose preparation will also provide the opportunity for increased programmatic collaboration. The time frame for the WFP Country Programme will be synchronized with that of other United Nations Development Group (UNDG) partners.

Follow-up to the Beijing Conference

25. The Government indicated its intention to follow up the Beijing Conference with a National Plan of Action (NPA) to be implemented by the Ministry of Women's Development. The NPA was the outcome of a lengthy participatory process, during which a series of regional and national meetings were held to gain consensus among Government departments, core groups, NGOs and experts. The Prime Minister endorsed the NPA in August 1998, and it was released the following month.
26. The main strategy of the NPA is to identify key areas of concern to women, recommend responses, and incorporate these in the work programmes of relevant line ministries. For example, the NPA identifies a series of strategic objectives to address poverty issues, including ways to cushion the effects of structural adjustment measures on women, increase women's access to productive assets, and include women at all levels in the planning and implementation of poverty programmes. The NPA allocates responsibility for these measures among agencies such as the Planning Commission, the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Ministry of Law, Justice and Human Rights.



27. The ability of the Government to move aggressively on the women's front is constrained, however, by cultural factors as well as by the overall economic situation. In the five years since WFP prepared its first CSO, Pakistan's economy has continued to face major difficulties, including slow growth, rapid inflation, declining foreign exchange reserves and large fiscal deficits. Political instability has delayed reforms and seriously affected public confidence and the investment climate.
28. The current crisis, for example, has led to increases in prices of food and cooking fuels. These price increases have hit poor people the hardest, resulting in nutritional losses for girls and expectant mothers. Decreasing public health budgets mean less health care for expectant mothers. During the next five years, Pakistan will experience an increased number of undernourished infants, pre-school and schoolchildren and mothers. This in turn will be reflected in higher rates of sickness and death, especially among impoverished girls and women.¹

THE CASE FOR FOOD AID

29. One fifth of Pakistan's population does not consume an adequate quantity of food. Poor households typically earn 40 percent less income than a non-poor household, they spend relatively more (54 percent) on food, and they still do not have enough to eat. Some 40 percent of children under 5 are malnourished.²
30. Thirty million people consume insufficient food to lead an active, healthy and productive life. In a food-deficit country with a weak capacity to import food, this burden is borne mostly by women and children in rural areas. In addition, some 50 million income poor are unable to express their need for food in terms of market demand. The resource they need the most is food for consumption, provided in ways that enable them to take advantage of opportunities for basic education, primary health care and improved nutrition. Such an investment in human capital will enable them to build the assets needed for more sustainable livelihoods.
31. Consider the situation in more human terms: this year women in Pakistan will give birth to about 2.5 million girls. At least 600,000 will be undernourished at birth, implying an increased risk of poor mental development and poor immunity to infection. For a typical malnourished girl in Pakistan, the journey through life can be painful and short. Compared with her brother, she will receive less affection, food, health care and education. One in every 40 women in Pakistan will die as a result of pregnancy or childbirth: Maternal mortality is one of the highest in the world, 50 times higher, for example, than in industrialized countries. Many women who do not die will have serious health problems. This large burden of death and diseases could be greatly reduced if undernourished women had just a little more of the right kind of food during pregnancy together with access to nutrition education and basic health services. Food aid, properly fortified with micronutrients where possible, would be an instrument of choice in any package designed to meet this need.

¹ Social Development—Pakistan—Annual Review 1999, p. 55.

² *A Profile of Poverty in Pakistan*, Mahbub ul Haq, Centre for Human Development, in collaboration with UNDP, February 1999.



ASSESSMENT OF WFP'S PERFORMANCE TO DATE

32. The previous CSO and Country Programme considered WFP assistance to be an incentive for increasing attendance at health and educational facilities and for increasing investment in resource conservation in fragile and marginal environments. The most cost-effective way to offer these incentives was by a) providing one high-value commodity instead of a package of commodities; and b) providing participants' entitlements in the form of food stamps. Several reviews and evaluations took place during the period of the Country Programme.
33. In 1998, the Evaluation Service conducted an End-of-Term Evaluation of the Pakistan Country Programme 1994–1998 (WFP/EB/.3/99/3/1). The Evaluation noted that this Country Programme was the first attempt by WFP to reformulate its operations into a programme, with existing projects being packaged together. It found the Country Programme to be well integrated into the Government's own development plans and to reflect the priorities of the donor community. The programme approach had enabled WFP to more efficiently adjust activities in response to an irregular supply of commodities. Other matters needed attention. The WFP-supported interventions should be considered in a broader context to ensure that they had the intended effect for the target population groups. This would require stronger linkages with the development programmes of other partners. The Evaluation also recommended a stronger focus on intervention design and partnerships; community participation; targeting; and monitoring and evaluation. Moreover, greater attention needed to be paid to WFP's operational relationships (and in this regard, the Evaluation included a proposal to change the counterpart Ministry at the national level) and to phase-out conditions.

Evaluation of the WFP-assisted Education Programme

34. Each year some 50,000 girls in 20 poor districts attended 900 primary schools, with support from WFP. WFP Pakistan conducted an in-depth study (1998) of its assistance to primary education, which indicated that school enrolments have increased.¹ Education, particularly of girls:
- a) reduces population growth and improves family health standards;
 - b) raises the self-confidence and assertiveness of girls and enables them to play a more active role in their communities and in society in general; this, in turn, contributes to overcoming traditional attitudes, behaviour and systems that prevent social and economic development (the fact that many of the traditional feudal leaders oppose education is a vivid testimony to the risk it poses to their value systems); and
 - c) increases the chances of girls finding employment or self-employment (this was clearly expressed by many parents as one of the key reasons for sending girls to school).
35. The End-of-Term Evaluation found that WFP assistance has contributed to increasing access to primary education for girls and to enhancing demand for education more generally, important achievements in a context where in many parts of the country female education is still at its very beginning. Food aid has also helped to increase the retention of girls at schools. These gains are in line with Government priorities for the education sector.

¹ World Food Programme Report, "Support to Social Action Programme Assessment—Promotion of Primary Education for Girls in Baluchistan and NWFP, Rashida Amir, December 1998, p.30.



36. At the same time, the Evaluation pointed to serious quality concerns at some WFP-supported schools. It considered that, at the very least, WFP should work with others to ensure that there are sufficient teachers and classrooms in WFP-assisted schools. Efforts to enhance community participation in the project, particularly that of women, should be a priority. Other important quality issues are teacher training, availability of educational materials and adaptation of school infrastructure to girls' needs (separation walls, latrines, potable water and basic furniture). All of these concerns figure prominently among the priority interventions to be carried out under the SAP. The Evaluation also urged WFP to become more involved in donor coordination mechanisms in the education sector, pointing out, for example, that WFP does not participate in the regular, multi-donor SAP review exercises.

Evaluation of the WFP-assisted Health Programme

37. Every year some 200,000 women, assisted by WFP, attend 980 basic health units (BHUs) in rural areas. In 1997, WFP undertook a thematic review in several countries of its activities in support of health programmes for women and children. Assessing the success of such activities in Pakistan, the review noted that the number of women reported to be attending centres during the first five months of pregnancy had increased by 50 percent since the commencement of food aid.¹ A national country office study carried out during 1998 corroborated these results, finding a mean increase of 60 percent in attendance of expectant mothers at the health centres surveyed after the incentive was introduced.²
38. Problems of implementation nonetheless existed, largely stemming from the erratic delivery of oil supplies at the WFP-assisted health centres. Peaks in attendance that follow the arrival of oil after periods without have overburdened the Lady Health Visitors (LHVs) and affected their delivery of health messages. There are also other implementation problems unrelated to oil supply, such as charges for WFP ration cards and inconsistent and weak health messages. Based on information from recent Social Policy and Development Centre rankings and vulnerability mapping, the selection of some assisted districts is questionable in terms of socio-economic levels and food insecurity.
39. The Evaluation found that improvements are needed in primary health care delivery at the health centres. All health staff need ongoing training and consistent supervision, for example, and more female health workers are needed in the BHUs. WFP does not have the expertise or mandate to support technical improvements to health care but could urge the Government, United Nations bodies or NGOs to provide supervision and technical training for staff from WFP-assisted centres. The recent (1996) addition of Lady Health Workers (LHWs) in communities has provided a vital communications link to women at home. In some centres, LHVs and LHWs have formed powerful alliances to promote mother and child health (MCH) services. This programme appears to have had an impact on women's attendance at health centres that is independent of the WFP oil distribution, and it shows promise of sustaining motivation and providing support to women so that they will continue to attend. It was noted, however, that the impact would have been better had efficient linkages with other development partners been forged. The Evaluation

¹ World Food Programme Report, Thematic Evaluation of Lessons Learned from Food Aid Contributions to MCH: How to Address the Critical Needs of Women and Children (WFP/EB.3/97/5/Add.4), p.5.

² Assessment of Primary Health Care: Draft report on overall findings - Punjab, Sindh, NWFP, and J & K, Mona Shaikh, November 1998, p.11.



recommended that WFP continue to promote the use of MCH services and consider using food aid to support nutritional objectives in conjunction with, or instead of, promotion of health care use, and that it consider how food aid could be used to enhance other Government, NGO or United Nations agencies projects that support health and nutrition.

40. While WFP should remain involved in the health sector, it needs to reassess its health interventions in terms of programme objectives, scope, content and operational modalities.

Evaluation of the WFP-assisted Natural Resource Management Programme

41. WFP in Pakistan has supported natural resource management in ecologically vulnerable areas for more than two decades. In mid-1996, the country office undertook a survey to determine the long-term impact of past activities in the natural resource sector. Later in the year, WFP's Office of Evaluation carried out a countrywide evaluation of natural resource projects. Both studies concluded that positive results were being achieved and that food aid was a useful incentive in such activities.¹ The country office survey noted that in the past larger landholders took advantage of project activities. In response to this finding, WFP shifted benefits towards small landholders, the landless and women. Indirect beneficiaries include the poor who have access to grass and firewood from planted areas, as well as landholders with harvesting rights to trees. The Office of Evaluation's findings support WFP's leading and catalysing role in promoting community involvement in the protection of zones against erosion. The mission also noted that the involvement of women in the project started only after the introduction of the social forestry concept.
42. A 1998 evaluation of a project in Malakand, jointly funded by WFP and the Government of the Netherlands, reaffirmed this new direction and advised that further attention should be given to ensuring that benefits are concentrated on WFP's target groups.² Evaluations of the food stamp system confirm that stamps are used by recipients for purchase of foodstuffs as intended.
43. WFP re-examined natural resource management activities in the course of the End-of-Term Evaluation of the Pakistan Country Programme. The Evaluation highlights that the rationale for WFP support to the natural resource management sector is weak and represents, to some extent, the weight of WFP's past association in this sector. Interventions have included the rehabilitation of physical infrastructure, in particular the protection of major watersheds and dams; the conservation of biodiversity and the production of fuelwood and grasses. The Evaluation noted that the focus on the poor was perceived as a vehicle towards environmental rehabilitation and not an end in itself. In terms of the programme's overall target orientation, impact and sustainability, it found that the results have been variable. Although the full impact of interventions in natural resource management will only become evident much later, even the short-term effects are not very clear. Despite some indications of increased availability of fuelwood, studies indicate that landowners have dominated. As a result, it is difficult to establish that benefits from the creation of common property assets accrue to, and will continue to benefit, the primary target group—the poor and landless.

¹ World Food Programme Report, Summary Evaluation Report on Sectorial Evaluation for Natural Resource Management in Pakistan (WFP/EB.2R/97/2/Add.3) 14 April 1997, p. 11.

² Joint WFP/Netherlands Evaluation Mission Report, Report of the ERP Evaluation Mission, Pieter van Ginneken Jane Brown and Faisul Bari, May 1998.



44. The strategy that follows accepts all but one of the six recommendations of the End-of-Term Evaluation. The Evaluation suggested that WFP's counterpart at the national/federal level should be the Economic Affairs Division of the Ministry of Finance or the Planning Commission. WFP has raised this issue with the Government and has received assurances from the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock that it will bring together the concerned line ministries at the federal level at appropriate times to ensure proper effective coordination.

FUTURE ORIENTATION OF WFP ASSISTANCE

45. Women and children will be the central focus of the new WFP Country Programme. Initiatives will build on and reinforce not only WFP's commitments to women, but also those of the Government in terms of both policies and allocation of resources. The most appropriate strategy for WFP is to concentrate on the gender imbalance because women are disproportionately unable to take advantage of development opportunities. The basic objective will be to address the immediate consumption needs of the food-insecure in ways that promote the creation of assets for women, both human capital (healthier and more educated women and girls) and physical assets, so that women's coping strategies will be strengthened. WFP programming in Pakistan will be reshaped to bring it in line with the Executive Board's decisions on Food Aid and Development.

Girls' Education

46. Female education may well have the highest returns of any investment available to Pakistan. According to the UNDP Human Development Report for 1998, the very absence of social and educational opportunities can be considered an intrinsic part of poverty. By concentrating on girls' education, WFP addresses a key issue in the Pakistan development context. Hunger prevents women and girls from taking advantage of the development opportunities that do exist. WFP will continue to concentrate on increasing enrolment, attendance and retention of girls in primary schools. Targeting will be on food-insecure districts in which girls' enrolments are lower than national averages and will complement the efforts being carried out within the national Social Action Programme to improve the curriculum, the quality of teaching, and the sanitary conditions in schools.

Health and Nutrition

47. The health and nutrition data for Pakistan make stark reading because "The single most devastating news for developing countries is that widespread nutritional deficiencies are inflicting lasting damage on the physical and mental capabilities of their population. Malnutrition in infancy and early childhood ... also means a lower physical work capacity as adults...and the earlier onset of chronic degenerative diseases in later life".¹
48. Experience has shown that food aid can bring women to health centres in Pakistan. But going to health centres by itself will not help improve the nutritional status of women and their families. Nutrition education is needed, along with supplementary feeding for those who need it.

¹ Scrimshaw, WFP/United Nations Seminar, May 1997.



49. WFP's support to the health sector needs fundamental change, starting with a clear statement of objectives that move beyond merely promoting attendance at health centres to explicitly addressing the health and nutrition needs of women and young children. The starting point would be a clear statement of what the project activities are intending to achieve. In some cases the WFP objective might still be set in terms of enabling women and their children to gain access to primary health care services, particularly expectant or nursing mothers and women with young children. Nutrition education would be a feature of the defined service package. The quality of the health services provided by a health care centre would be the major determinant of the success of the programme, in terms not only of the health impact but also of continuing user attendance.
50. Increasingly, however, the objective should shift to the nutritional rehabilitation of malnourished mothers and children. This new emphasis would require screening potential beneficiaries against agreed indicators to determine their eligibility for entry into a supplementary feeding programme; monitoring the effect of the rations on their nutritional status; and determining when the nutritional target has been met and thus when the beneficiaries should exit the programme. WFP will address micro-nutrient deficiency through the provision of fortified food, where possible, and will examine how best to go about this for expectant mothers.
51. Different operational modalities would be required for these two quite different types of intervention. Providing food assistance in the form of food stamps might well be the most cost-effective way of enabling poor women to attend health centres. Nutritional rehabilitation, however, would require the provision of rations, and careful thought about the form in which they should be given. If the intended beneficiary is a small child who is to eat the ration at home, then the ration might be blended weaning foods, fortified as appropriate. Moreover, depending on the scale of the need, it may be worthwhile seeking to work with the private sector to establish locally the capacity to fortify domestically produced food in reasonable proximity to the target population, an approach that would involve local purchasing and reduce transport costs and logistics problems.
52. WFP Pakistan has initiated a major exercise to reformulate its health activities in collaboration with provincial health officials and other donors. The Country Programme presented to the Executive Board next year will spell out the performance indicators to be used.

Creating Assets for Rural Women

53. Food-insecure households in rural areas are often bypassed by mainstream development efforts. Food insecurity and lack of basic infrastructure often mean that women and girls are deprived of the assets they need to build better lives. Accordingly, WFP will seek to strengthen women's organizations in food-insecure communities, using participatory approaches to identify their priorities and translating these as appropriate into activities supported through food for work. WFP's long-standing support to natural resource management has led to the establishment of community-based arrangements that provide a culturally acceptable framework in which women can give voice to their needs and concerns. These arrangements can be used as a springboard to launch a new programme designed to create assets for rural women.
54. The core of the proposal is to begin with the 116 women's organizations presently operating in some 50 rural villages in the poorest districts and, using participatory approaches, expand the range of activities that WFP might support with food aid. Women living in rural communities depend on their natural resource environment for their survival



and an environmentally degraded setting may mean long hours of walking to collect fuelwood and fodder, significantly reducing women's time for other activities. Moreover, girls often help their mothers fetch fuelwood and fodder, depriving them of education. For these reasons, environmental rehabilitation and social forestry could be among the assets created for rural women. Priorities will depend on needs. One community may choose to construct a road to connect their village to a school or health centre. Another may choose to undertake a natural disaster prevention scheme to protect the village from periodic flooding. In all these situations the target group—hungry poor women—will identify the activities to be undertaken, even if it is not them who always carry out the physical works. But women and their families would retain the lasting assets created.

55. WFP's Gender Action Fund contributed US\$6,000 to a study of existing natural resources management activities to ensure that "present momentum is not lost" and that future activities are specifically directed to women. Achieving these objectives will require a greater reliance on NGOs as partners for WFP-supported activities. The transition from a natural resources management programme to the Creation of Assets for Rural Women will be managed to ensure the smooth phasing in and phasing out of activities.

Urban Hunger

56. UNDP's *Human Development Report 1998* projects that the percentage of the population living in urban areas in Pakistan will rise from 34 percent to 47 percent over the period 1995–2015. The number of Pakistani cities with a population of 750,000 or more will rise from 18 to 52 over the same period. In many ways, hungry poor people living in urban and peri-urban slums have fewer coping strategies than those living in rural areas. Moreover, traditional forms of WFP assistance such as food for work are not well suited to meet their food needs in ways that create a lasting asset for them. To help address the increasing problems of food security in urban areas, the Country Office is exploring the feasibility of allocating a small amount of resources in support of NGOs working in urban or peri-urban areas (e.g. Darul Aman, Edhi Trust, groups serving female refugees, or primarily serving women and girls more generally). The intent would be to experiment with small-scale activities for a pilot period and not to initiate a large-scale programme without further reference to the Executive Board.

Assistance to Afghan Refugees

57. WFP will keep under review the level of support, to Afghan refugees remaining in the country. Since 1995, WFP has sought to provide a safety net for especially vulnerable refugees. During the latter half of 1998, the Country Office commissioned a study to determine the food needs of refugees. The study concluded that the remaining refugees were sufficiently well established and that a formal safety net was no longer required.¹ A further study is under way to determine the extent to which Afghan girls come from food-insecure families and the possible role that food aid might play in enabling these girls to attend school.

¹ Household Food Economy Assessment of the Afghan Refugee Population in Pakistan, Camilla Knox-Peebles, January 1999.



Contingency Planning

58. Contingency planning is needed with respect to both natural and man-made disasters. Although the prospects of major earthquake or flood damage requiring significant WFP interventions are limited, the much delayed onset of winter rains in early 1999 highlights the possibility that future droughts could seriously affect food availability within the country. In addition a refugee influx from Afghanistan remains a possibility, and the present situation of civil strife in Kashmir also gives cause for concern. WFP will consider, in collaboration with the interagency United Nations task force on disaster preparedness and early warning, how best to anticipate and respond to such eventualities. The resources for responding to emergency situations would be provided separately through the Emergency Operations Programme Category, if needed.

Targeting

59. The value of WFP's programme in Pakistan totals US\$10 million a year. Maintenance of this level over the period of the Country Programme is consistent with the resource projections set out in the Strategic and Financial Plan 2000–03.¹ From a targeting perspective, given this level of resources, WFP could expect to meet about half of the grain needs for approximately 665,000 people (mainly women and children) out of the 30 million consumption poor.
60. WFP will strengthen its geographic targeting and, within selected geographic areas, its targeting of the most vulnerable women and children.

Improved Targeting

61. WFP is targeting the food-insecure through a four-stage process:
- a) **Division of country into food economy zones:** A vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM) exercise classified Pakistan into nine food economy zones. These zones are based on production of cereals and livestock, population, wealth (ability to purchase food if available) and accessibility. The classification takes into consideration the current land use, soil, topography, climate, industrial development, and population density. The food economy zones present a complex picture of food production in the country.
 - b) **Ranking of districts according to economic status:** WFP has ranked districts according to economic and social development, using composite indicators of income, wealth, agriculture, housing conditions, transport, labour, education, health and water supply (indicators used by Social Policy and Development Centre). The lowest quartile based on economic ranking is described as "poorest" and very poor. This economic ranking identifies highly developed average and least-developed districts **within** the food economy zones. It provides the indicative list of WFP target districts (to be adjusted in the light of issues of access, logistics, population density, and so on) and is the basis for discussing district-level targeting with the Government.
 - c) **Mapping the district:** The least developed districts within food-deficit economy zones are mapped to show the location of the poorest villages, roads,

¹ Strategic and Financial Plan 2000-2003, WFP/EBA/99/5-A/1 p. 41.



and physical features such as settlements, schools, health centres and natural resource management areas.

- d) **Study of food security status:** WFP is preparing a survey to identify the food-insecure communities within these districts. The survey will seek to determine:
- i) the extent and nature of food insecurity in these villages;
 - ii) the extent to which food insecurity prevents women and girls from taking advantage of development activities; and
 - iii) the extent to which women and girls might be enabled by food aid to attend schools and health centres, to benefit from nutritional rehabilitation activities or to participate in the creation of physical assets, which they themselves have identified.

62. Development opportunities are few for the women and children who live in the often remote locations characterized by inadequate food consumption. Typically, it is the Government that provides existing opportunities through support of health centres and schools, and partnerships among government agencies operating in other sectors to help women gain physical assets.
63. Even though health and education programmes supported under the SAP are relatively well protected against budget reductions, they seldom have access to all of the resources needed. Accordingly, prior to the preparation of the new Country Programme, and in collaboration with government authorities, the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) and other partners, WFP will explore the possibility of building partnerships with a wider circle of potential service providers, particularly local government authorities, NGO and community-based organizations.
64. There will, however, be a change in the character of these partnerships. To gain a greater pooling of resources and secure access to technical expertise, WFP is prepared to adjust somewhat its preferred geographical targeting to some extent to accommodate the preferences of its more traditional partners. This measure should lead to more substantive partnerships. In some cases, however, the more obvious partners will not have programmes in areas of high priority for WFP, and they may not be willing to initiate them. In these cases, WFP will need to embark on a pro-active search for new development partners. The size and scope of the activities designed and implemented through these new networks might be small initially but should offer the prospect of future expansion. By showing what can be done, WFP may be able to encourage other development partners to join them, as has been the case in the forestry sector where WFP's pioneering efforts in showing how to involve women have been adopted by others.

PARTNERSHIPS

65. For WFP in Pakistan, partnerships are essential. A wide variety of partners make available development opportunities; and WFP enables hungry poor people to gain access to them. Partners offer the chance to pool resources, to gain access to technical expertise, to assist WFP in targeting and in the identification and implementation of project activities. As indicated earlier, WFP will be pro-active in seeking both traditional and new partners active in development in Pakistan.



66. WFP is centrally involved in various mechanisms for United Nations system coordination, including the UNDG Gender and Development Group and two thematic groups of the Pakistan United Nations system: the thematic group on data-sharing and geographic information systems (GIS) (coordinated by WFP); and the thematic group on food security and rural development (in which WFP plays a lead role in sub-groups on improving information and on preparedness and response to emergencies). In addition, WFP is a member of the “Population and Reproductive Health Coordination Forum” initiated by the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA). Participation in these groups allows WFP to contribute its expertise and to play an advocacy role in highlighting food-security issues within the United Nations system.
67. In terms of collaboration with donors in the health and education sectors, WFP is working with Canada on a joint programme to provide iron and folic acid supplements to reduce the incidence of anaemia in expectant mothers at WFP-assisted health centres. As noted above, there is need to expand substantially WFP’s collaboration with other SAP donors in health and education activities, in order to improve services and encourage greater community participation. Discussions are under way with various donors, as well as with the Multi-donor Support Unit that coordinates contributions to the SAP.
68. WFP is working closely with the Ministry of Women’s Development and UNDG partners in the implementation of the National Plan of Action following the Beijing Conference.
69. When it comes to donor collaboration in the natural resource sector, WFP has long benefited from co-financing of activities with the Governments of Australia, Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands and participates in the Forestry Donor Coordination Group. Such links need to be extended and strengthened to support the new programmatic emphasis, Creating Assets for Rural Women. In addition, WFP is exploring, prior to the development of the Country Programme, the possibilities for collaborating more extensively with AsDB, FAO, IFAD and UNDP.

NGOs

70. WFP will also continue to collaborate with a range of NGOs. In southern North West Frontier Province (NWFP), for example, NGOs will provide support for WFP natural resource activities in the area of training and institutional development. NGOs in other areas help to form community organizations and implement natural resource activities. WFP’s support to girls’ schools in Afghan refugee areas will continue to be carried out through NGOs. WFP also expects to establish links with NGOs such as the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP) to assist in health and education activities during the next Country Programme period. WFP will involve NGOs in the implementation and assessment of its micronutrient programme, in collaboration with UNICEF and the Asia Foundation.

EXIT STRATEGY

71. WFP will manage its exit strategy in the social sector on two levels: first, by monitoring food security indicators so that food aid will not be provided when there is no longer a problem of food consumption; and second, by monitoring the agreed indicators of performance in the relevant sector. In the education sector, for example, exiting could be envisaged when, say, 70 percent of girls enrol in and regularly attend primary school. In the



health sector, one indicator might be when 90 percent of expectant mothers attend health centres and would continue to do so in the absence of food aid. In the case of nutritional rehabilitation, a cut-off point might be when standard growth patterns have been resumed. In this sense, the indicators that evidence the existence of the problem would also show when the problem no longer exists. The Country Programme will include proposals for specific indicators.

72. Advocacy will be an essential element of a structured exit strategy. WFP will work with other partners to ensure that the benefits of regular attendance at health centres become apparent to women, their families, and their neighbours. Changing community attitudes in favour of basic health will help ensure that these programmes continue to generate benefits well after WFP has ceased its assistance. Similar steps will be taken with regard to girls' education to ensure that parents see the results, share experiences with each other, and talk with teachers. These effects should be consolidated through the establishment of parent-teachers committees or village health committees in areas assisted by WFP.
73. WFP-supported natural resource activities will undergo a fundamental transformation in the direction of greater concentration on women's activities. Given the issues raised by this shift, especially regarding the need to make women's organisations effective and sustainable, it is difficult to predict when support in this sector can be phased out. However, an exit strategy can be expected to emerge from the evaluations of these activities which will take place within the time frame of the next Country Programme.

KEY ISSUES AND RISKS

74. The successful implementation of this strategy will depend, of course, on the extent to which the Government is willing and able to make women and girls the major programmatic emphasis for WFP-assisted activities. Equally, it will depend on the extent to which WFP can deliver food to the country in a timely manner and, indeed, on the availability of resources to sustain the programme. Other key issues and risks are:

Social Sectors:

- Government support for effective targeting, including agreement on specific schools and health centres to be supported;
- the degree of success in altering traditional attitudes in the short term towards participation by girls/women in educational/health activities;
- the extent to which counterpart staff can be trained to deal with programmatic, implementation and food delivery issues;
- the extent to which food aid is well integrated with the provision of health and education services of acceptable quality.

Creating Assets for Rural Women:

- Government support for effective targeting to areas of greatest food insecurity;
- the effectiveness and sustainability of community organizations, especially women's organizations;
- the ability to expand the involvement of women in planning and implementing food-assisted activities;



- the ability to engage a wider circle of potential partners to work on project design and to provide technical inputs and support.

The Country Programme will contain specific measures to reduce or contain these risks.

75. This Country Strategy is designed to bring the next Country Programme in line with the Executive Board's decisions on Food Aid and Development. By making women and children the centrepiece for action, WFP is targeting the most food-insecure; by focusing on primary education, basic health and nutrition and creating assets for rural women, WFP and its partners will address some of Pakistan's key development challenges; and by using participatory approaches, WFP is seeking to empower the beneficiaries and give them greater choice in their lives. The next Country Programme should translate these ambitious goals into activities that enable well over half a million Pakistani women and their children, particularly girls, to gain access to development opportunities.

