

ANNUAL EVALUATION REPORT 2008



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The fourth WFP annual evaluation report summarizes the findings of evaluations managed by the Office of Evaluation and conducted in 2008; it takes note of decentralized evaluations and reviews carried out by regional bureaux and country offices.

The report differentiates between the findings of strategic evaluations of WFP policies and those of single-operation evaluations. The section on strategic evaluations examines the quality, implementation and results of WFP policies for capacity development, HIV and AIDS, and gender. The section on single-operation evaluations focuses on operational design, implementation and results. Operational design considers the relevance and appropriateness of WFP operations and activities and deals with such issues as needs assessment, coherence and the consistency of logical frameworks. Implementation considers efficiency, and the results section focuses on the effectiveness, impact and sustainability of WFP interventions.

The report also presents steps taken to strengthen evaluation in WFP, focusing on i) the new evaluation policy;¹ ii) the new evaluation quality assurance system; iii) Office of Evaluation support for decentralized evaluations; and iv) initiatives to close the learning loop by making the lessons of evaluation more accessible. The report highlights the Office of Evaluation's main activities for 2008, including its programme and the resources available for evaluation. The next section outlines the Office's outreach and participation in external evaluation groups and networks. The last section identifies focus areas for the Office of Evaluation as it moves forward.

The strategic evaluations highlighted the relevance of WFP's policies on capacity development, HIV and AIDS, and gender, but noted the need to ensure that policies do not remain static and are updated regularly to capture shifting policy debates. The evaluations also noted the need for clearer policy objectives, to facilitate more consistent interpretation and application of policies. The evaluations considered several constraints that should be addressed to enhance the overall implementation of policy at the field level. To address these constraints, the evaluations called for: i) greater communication about newly approved policies; ii) clarification of the priority to be assigned to each competing policy issue; iii) increased guidance on how to implement new policies and iv) adequate financial resources to ensure that WFP is able to deliver on policy commitments, especially at the level of field operations.

The evaluations of single operations tended to highlight: i) WFP's ability to mobilize quickly and under difficult conditions, to meet the emergency needs of disaster-affected populations; ii) WFP's resourcefulness and flexibility in dealing with resource shortfalls and delays; and iii) the continued success of WFP logistics in overcoming myriad operational constraints and delivering food where it is most needed. Evaluations also noted that WFP continues to face significant challenges in demonstrating the achievement of planned outcomes, owing to systemic weaknesses in its monitoring systems and activities.

¹ "WFP Evaluation Policy" (WFP/EB.2/2008/4-A)

INTRODUCTION

1. This fourth annual evaluation report of the Office of Evaluation (OEDE) presents a synthesis of findings from seven evaluations managed by OEDE and completed in 2008.² Of these, three are strategic evaluations and four are evaluations of WFP operations. The report also takes note of 12 decentralized evaluations and reviews carried out by regional bureaux and country offices in 2008.³ A list of these evaluations and reviews is presented in Annex I.
2. The report is divided into five main sections: i) evaluation findings; ii) strengthening the WFP evaluation system; iii) WFP evaluation activities in 2008; iv) outreach; and v) outlook.
3. The evaluation findings section differentiates between the findings of strategic evaluations of WFP policies and those of single-operation evaluations. The three strategic evaluations examined WFP's capacity development, HIV and AIDS and gender policies. Of the four operation evaluations, two were undertaken in the Latin America and Caribbean region (OMP) and two in the Southern, Eastern and Central Africa region (OMJ).
4. Of the 12 decentralized evaluations and reviews, three were conducted in the Asia region (OMB), one in the Latin America and Caribbean region (OMP), five in the Southern, Eastern and Central Africa region (OMJ), and three in the West Africa region (OMD). OEDE appreciates the efforts of regional bureaux and country offices to carry out such reviews, and the contribution they make to learning at the country office level.
5. The section on strengthening WFP's evaluation system highlights OEDE's activities in 2008 to improve both the evaluation system and the reporting of evaluation findings. Achievements include: i) the Board's approval of the new evaluation policy in October 2008; ii) the development and application of an Evaluation Quality Assurance System (EQAS), which was applied to OEDE evaluations in 2008; and iii) beginning of the roll-out of EQAS to regional bureaux and country offices so that it can be applied to decentralized evaluations.
6. The section on WFP evaluation activities in 2008 focuses on OEDE's programme of work and the availability of both human and financial resources for evaluation.
7. The section on outreach focuses on OEDE's inter-agency work and participation in professional evaluation groups and networks such as the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP), the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Real-Time Evaluation Interest Group and the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG).
8. The evaluation outlook section focuses on OEDE work and initiatives in: i) developing the evaluation strategy; ii) increasing support for decentralized evaluations; and iii) increasing evaluation capacity in both impact assessment and real-time evaluation.

² The decision not to produce a 2007 annual evaluation report was explained in the Annual Informal Consultation on Evaluation held on 13 May 2008.

³ The findings of decentralized evaluations are not reflected in the overall synthesis of findings, in accordance with OEDE's commitment in its 2006 annual evaluation report not to include such findings until the OEDE Evaluation Quality Assurance Standards have been applied.

EVALUATION FINDINGS

9. This section presents the main findings from strategic and single-operation evaluations managed by OEDE and conducted in 2008. The first part presents strategic evaluation findings regarding the quality, implementation and results of each policy. The second part presents findings from operation evaluations regarding operational design, implementation and results. A list of these evaluations is presented in Annex I.

Strategic Evaluations

10. Strategic evaluations completed in 2008 focused on WFP policies for capacity development, HIV and AIDS, and gender. The following findings assess: i) the quality of the policy; ii) the implementation of the policy and WFP's capacity to deliver against policy commitments; and iii) the results achieved as a result of policy implementation. Each of the following sections begins with a brief introduction that outlines an underlying conceptual framework for the analysis that follows.

⇒ *The quality of WFP policies*

11. The quality of each WFP policy may be examined in terms of: i) how well it addresses an identified need; ii) how consistent it is with other WFP policies and strategic plans; iii) how consistent it is with broader United Nations policies, and how well it continues to reflect best practice and the latest thinking outside WFP; and iv) how clearly it defines a corporate results framework, specifically in terms of objectives and associated indicators. The quality of WFP's policies on capacity development, HIV and AIDS and gender are discussed below in these terms.
12. The evaluation of WFP's **capacity development policy**⁴ found that there is a clear need for locally-owned capacities to address acute and chronic malnutrition and hunger. The evaluation also found that the policy was consistent with WFP's mandate, other policies and strategic plans. However, the high priority accorded to capacity development as one of the five corporate Strategic Objectives was not well reflected in the policy document. The evaluation found that the policy was consistent with decisions of the United Nations General Assembly and that, at the time it was approved, it was in line with the latest thinking, which emphasized principles of local ownership and the need for long-term and flexible endogenous processes to drive capacity development. The evaluation highlighted the absence of clear objectives; specifically there were dual objectives and it was not clear whether capacity development efforts were to focus on supporting implementation of WFP food assistance programmes, or on developing locally-owned capacities to address acute and chronic malnutrition and hunger more generally.
13. WFP's **HIV and AIDS policy**⁵ establishes an institutional framework for WFP's engagement in the global HIV and AIDS response. The evaluation found that WFP has a distinct role in providing food and nutrition support for food-insecure people living with HIV (PLHIV) and households affected by AIDS. The evaluation found that the policy was in line with central elements of the global Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) but did not reflect the expanded scope of collaboration to support research, prescribed in section 13 of the MOU. Although the policy was a pioneering document at the time of its approval, the evaluation

⁴ "Building National and Regional Capacities" (WFP/EB.3/2004/4-B)

⁵ "Programming in the Era of AIDS: WFP's Response to HIV/AIDS" (WFP/EB.1/2003/4-B)

noted that it had not been revised to reflect evolving national and international approaches, emerging knowledge and technological advances since 2003. The policy paved the way for WFP to incorporate HIV and AIDS concerns in all programme categories, and committed WFP to adjusting its programming tools to reflect the reality of HIV and AIDS, but it did not provide guidance on the duration of food assistance, possible exit or graduation strategies and food distribution modalities.

14. WFP's **gender policy**⁶ focuses on WFP's Enhanced Commitments to Women; the evaluation noted that it compared favourably with the gender policies of peer organizations at the time of its approval. The evaluation found that the policy was strategic in that it addressed women's needs for food security, protection and empowerment. The policy was consistent with WFP's existing modalities and incorporated pragmatic measures into existing programmes. Regarding policy objectives, the evaluation noted that it was not always clear to what extent operations were meant to focus on the contribution of women and girls to achieving food security as opposed to the wider promotion of gender equality articulated in the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC) resolution on gender mainstreaming. The evaluation also noted that the policy's inclusion of gender equality in staffing may have created confusion about the distinction between human resources policy and policies meant to guide operations.

⇒ *The implementation of WFP policies*

15. The relative success or failure of implementation of WFP policies depends on several factors, including: i) the clarity of policy objectives and the articulation of a systematic approach to implementation, with appropriate guidance material; ii) the leadership and sustained commitment of senior management; iii) the roll-out or communication of policy to the field level; iv) the availability of expert human resources at the country level; and v) the availability of adequate financial resources. The last three factors are directly linked to WFP's overall capacity to implement a particular policy.
16. In terms of WFP's **capacity development policy**, the evaluation found that it addressed partner countries' needs for dealing with acute and chronic malnutrition and hunger, despite: i) a lack of clarity regarding dual objectives and the recommended approach to implementation; ii) a lack of roll-out or communications initiatives to explain the policy to managers and field staff; iii) the limited helpfulness of guidance material; iv) limited staff expertise in capacity development; and (v) a funding mechanism that was not conducive to systematic capacity development. The evaluation found that WFP bases its capacity development assistance on existing long-term partnerships at the field level, and more systematic analysis of partner countries' capacity development requirements is needed. The evaluation found that capacity development assistance depended largely on the expertise and experience of individual staff members. Most capacity development activities involved only training, although there were examples of more sophisticated and promising approaches combining a number of tools.
17. In terms of WFP's **HIV and AIDS policy**, the evaluation found that HIV and AIDS activities were being implemented in 54 percent of countries regularly assisted by WFP in 2004–2005, with most being implemented in Africa in the context of protracted relief and recovery operations (PRROs). The evaluation also noted that, as areas with high levels of food insecurity are not necessarily the same as those with high prevalence of HIV, there were particular challenges regarding needs assessments and targeting; and operating in

⁶ "Gender Policy 2003–2007: Enhanced Commitments to Women to Ensure Food Security" (WFP/EB.3/2002/4-A)

relatively more food-secure areas with high HIV prevalence. The evaluation noted variations in strategies, practices and food distribution modalities at the field level, resulting from a lack of guidance in the policy. Constraints to policy implementation included: i) the relatively low priority given to in-house expertise on HIV and AIDS; ii) limited capacities at the country office and sub-office levels, partly due to staff rotation and to the tasking of a single staff member, or inexperienced junior or temporary staff members, with HIV and AIDS responsibilities; iii) funding constraints; and iv) partners' limited capacity in HIV and AIDS programming issues at the field level.

18. The evaluation of the **gender policy** noted that overall implementation was strong because of the commitment and hard work of staff responsible for the policy at Headquarters, and because of measures to extend implementation to the operations level. The Gender Unit delivered promised outputs such as manuals, learning and training initiatives, a newsletter for sharing best practices, and data collected through baseline and follow-up surveys. At the level of field operations, however, there was still some uncertainty about WFP's role in promoting gender equality because: i) the manuals, guidelines and newsletters were not necessarily widely read; ii) the training initiative did not reach many new staff and partners, so may not have facilitated a functional understanding of gender analysis; and iii) the focus on outputs and compliance for the baseline and follow-up survey led to weak generation and sharing of information about best practices. The evaluation also noted weaknesses in the gender focal point system and three factors that reduce field staff's receptiveness to gender mainstreaming: i) lack of understanding of gender analysis; ii) concerns about conflicts with local cultures; and iii) the pressures of working in emergency contexts.

⇒ *The results of WFP policies*

19. The overall effectiveness or impact of a WFP policy document may be assessed in terms of: i) the degree to which it alters WFP staff's perception of their work and relative priorities; ii) the degree to which policy elements are integrated or mainstreamed into regular programme activities; iii) the extent to which it affects WFP's corporate priorities and focus; iv) the extent to which it affects the enabling or policy environment at the country level; and v) the extent to which it affects the lives of WFP beneficiaries and partners. Impact may be felt at the levels of the individual, the programme, the institution and beyond. Some policies have a much greater impact than others.
20. Regarding the impact of the capacity development policy, the evaluation highlighted that capacity is being developed in a wide range of areas and in most countries. Owing to uneven reporting, project documents and performance reports do not always reflect the full extent of the work done, but there was a tendency to focus on outputs, such as the number of people trained, at the expense of outcomes, such as whether knowledge was imparted through training and, if so, how it was subsequently used. The capacity development toolbox, which includes advocacy and regional information sharing, capital goods and financial support for government partners, workshops and on-the-job training for partner staff, has enabled WFP to strengthen partners' capacities to: i) undertake WFP-specific vulnerability analysis; ii) manage programmes and food stocks; iii) generate government commitment to addressing acute and chronic malnutrition and hunger; and iv) develop the capacities of fortified-food producers.
21. Regarding the effectiveness of the HIV and AIDS policy, the evaluation found that WFP's proactive advocacy had helped to integrate food assistance and nutrition support into national AIDS planning documents in 32 of the 41 countries where it carried out HIV and AIDS activities during 2004–2005. However, the evaluation also noted little

mainstreaming of HIV and AIDS across programming categories, beyond the integration of HIV prevention and awareness in primary schools, and limited progress in the adjustment of programming tools to reflect HIV and AIDS issues – Uganda was a notable exception. Although it was not possible to quantify the achievement of planned outcomes, the evaluation found some evidence that regular WFP food assistance contributed to weight gain among PLHIV undergoing anti-retroviral treatment (ART). In general, it was difficult to assess the impact of WFP activities on the beneficiaries' quality of life.

22. Regarding the impact of the gender policy, the evaluation found that it raised the visibility of women and girls dramatically, and ensured that both staff and partners now recognize women's special needs and contributions to food security. This increased visibility and recognition provide a foundation for further gender-related work. The widespread adoption and use of monitoring forms requiring sex-disaggregated data was another achievement. In many contexts, WFP demonstrated commitment to girls' education, to targeting women in food-for-training (FFT) and food-for-work (FFW) programmes, and to putting food in the hands of women. However, WFP's focus on implementing measures that target women tended not to facilitate a widespread understanding of gender analysis, deepen awareness of gender issues in specific local contexts, or lead to innovative measures for promoting gender equality.

⇒ *Conclusions of strategic evaluations*

23. The strategic evaluations of capacity development, HIV and AIDS, and gender policies yielded similar findings in several key areas: i) updating of policies; ii) clarification of policy objectives; and iii) capacities for policy implementation. The findings of the three policy evaluations confirmed those of an earlier evaluation of WFP's mother-and-child health and nutrition policy and programme.⁷

Updating of policies

24. The evaluations emphasized that WFP policies are developed and approved in dynamic contexts where new debates, thinking and approaches are constantly emerging. Although WFP has approved relevant and timely policies, and has adopted important policies before its sister organizations, subsequent policy updates may need to focus more on evolving policy directions than on the implementation status of a particular policy. This will keep policy documents on the cutting edge and help ensure that WFP is well placed to contribute to important dialogues with the humanitarian community and decision-makers.

Clarity of policy objectives

25. To influence implementation in the field, policies require clear objectives. Some imprecision in policy formulation may provide space for initiative and creative thinking, but also leads to a multitude of interpretations that do not necessarily advance WFP in the direction of its corporate policy. There is also the risk that when policy objectives are not clearly defined: i) operations and interventions may pursue multiple or conflicting outcomes; ii) activities may not be clearly focused; and iii) it may be difficult to measure project outcomes and impacts. Policy documents could articulate linkages with the corporate strategic results framework. This would: i) increase the clarity of goals and objectives; ii) facilitate the development or modification of related programme guidance;

⁷ "Summary Report of the Thematic Review of WFP-Supported Mother-and-Child Nutrition Interventions" (WFP/EB.1/2006/7-C)

and iii) help ensure greater consistency in implementing policies at the field operation level.

Capacities for policy implementation

26. The evaluations found that WFP policies were relevant to field realities, but had a limited role in guiding operations because: i) newly-approved policies were not well communicated to the field colleagues who had to interpret and apply them to their own tasks; ii) difficulties at the field level were compounded by the limited practical guidance the policies provided to facilitate application; iii) policies were not prioritized, making it difficult for field colleagues to choose which to implement when resources were limited; and iv) owing to limited resources and minimal investments in staff technical capacities, policy implementation depended largely on the commitment and hard work of field staff who were not necessarily equipped to deal with increasingly specialized areas of, for example, capacity development, HIV and AIDS, and gender.

Operation Evaluations

27. This section presents the findings of the four operation evaluations completed in 2008. These evaluated a PRRO in Colombia, an emergency operation (EMOP) and a country programme (CP) in Kenya, an EMOP and an immediate-response EMOP in Nicaragua, and a PRRO in Madagascar. The section presents the findings of these evaluations regarding: i) operational design; ii) operational implementation; and iii) operational results. A sample of 30 evaluations is usually required to achieve statistical validity; future annual reports ought to therefore have a more solid basis for the identification of common performance issues.

⇒ *Operational design*

28. This section focuses on the overall relevance of the operations, and examines issues related to i) needs assessment; ii) internal and external coherence and iii) the consistency or logic of project design.

Needs assessment

29. All the operation evaluations conducted in 2008 recognized the key contribution that timely vulnerability analysis and needs assessments make to the success of WFP operations. The evaluations highlighted the importance of: i) pre-existing vulnerability and assessment work when a natural disaster strikes without warning; ii) continuous vulnerability analysis during an emergency period; and iii) the timely release of needs assessment results.
30. In **Colombia**, four comprehensive nutrition and socio-economic surveys helped confirm the specific vulnerabilities of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and led to the inclusion of non-registered IDPs as beneficiaries of the PRRO. The evaluation found that the targeting of both groups of IDPs was appropriate, and the inclusion of non-registered IDPs was an important innovation that ensured appropriate and balanced targeting within the operation's framework.
31. In **Kenya**, the evaluation recognized that WFP had fulfilled its commitment to ensuring continuous vulnerability analysis and data collection for the geographical targeting of the most vulnerable areas during a period of recurrent natural disasters. However, the evaluation expressed concern about delays in releasing the results of semi-annual needs assessments.

32. In **Nicaragua**, where Hurricane Felix struck in September 2007, the EMOP benefited from assessment work done as part of the comprehensive food security and vulnerability assessment (CFSVA) in 2005 and two emergency food security assessments (EFSAs). An additional EFSA in March 2008 was instrumental in justifying the EMOP's extension until November 2008.
33. **Madagascar** suffered nine tropical storms during the first two years of the PRRO (July 2006 to June 2008). WFP and its partners carried out rapid needs assessments after each disaster and ensured the rapid provision of an appropriate level of food assistance.

Coherence

34. WFP operations were generally found to be consistent with the policies of WFP, external partners and donors. However, the evaluations highlighted the need to: i) ensure complementarity among the activities within an operation; ii) move beyond the routine adoption of corporate Strategic Objectives and adapt them to suit the particular context; and iii) ensure that multiple operations in a country complement each other and that the relationships among them are clearly defined.
35. In **Colombia**, the evaluation found that the PRRO was fully consistent with the longer-term needs of IDPs identified by the Government of Colombia, other international organizations, local and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and beneficiaries themselves. The evaluation also noted that the Government and the humanitarian community were widely supportive of the WFP operation.
36. In **Kenya**, during the peak of the drought in 2006, the country office was dealing with a highly ambitious and complex EMOP and CP. The evaluation found that the CP activities, which had been carried over from the previous CP without sufficient further analysis, could have been better designed to complement each other. The evaluation signalled concern about the use of cyclical EMOPs and noted the need to address underlying causes of food insecurity.
37. In **Nicaragua**, the evaluation found that the EMOP was generally in line with the policies and priorities of WFP, donors and the Government of Nicaragua. It was also in accord with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and the United Nations 2000 common country assessment (CCA), and supported the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP).
38. In **Madagascar** the evaluation found that the PRRO complemented the ongoing CP, but that the relationship between the two operations should be better defined, as both aimed to improve food security and mitigate disasters in cyclone-risk zones. Given the regular recurrence of natural disasters, the evaluation found it appropriate that a succession of EMOPs had been replaced with a medium-term PRRO.

Consistency of project design

39. The evaluations noted several issues related to the overall design of operations as reflected in project logical frameworks, including the choice of appropriate Strategic Objectives, the selection of specific activities for each operation, and the choice of performance indicators. Specifically, the evaluations noted that in some contexts: i) operations focused on one or more Strategic Objective at the expense of other relevant objectives; ii) operations included too many activities, which could not be sufficiently prioritized; and iii) Strategic Objectives and associated indicators were not sufficiently contextualized to permit adequate implementation and produce meaningful results.

40. In **Colombia**, the evaluation found that individual activities were generally well designed, but the overall focus on protecting livelihoods was not fully appropriate, and nutrition and education objectives could also have been included. The evaluation noted that shortcomings in the operation's design limited its usefulness in terms of how to prioritize or scale up or down certain activities.
41. In **Kenya**, the evaluation determined that the country office's focus on general food distribution activities during the EMOP was appropriate, and reflected the limited time and resources available to organize and support the labour-intensive FFW activities that had been included in the EMOP design.
42. In **Nicaragua**, the evaluation noted that the EMOP design was appropriate, and emphasized the transition to recovery while ensuring that vulnerable groups continued to receive relief as required. The evaluation also noted limitations in the selection of indicators reflected in the project's logical framework.
43. In **Madagascar**, the evaluation found that the PRRO objectives were in line with the relevant WFP Strategic Objectives, but the recovery objectives needed to be more clearly defined in the context of Madagascar. The recovery component needed further development to allow WFP to deliver longer-term solutions for disaster-affected populations.

⇒ *Operational implementation*

44. This section focuses on evaluation findings regarding five elements of efficiency: i) resource adequacy; ii) targeting; iii) logistics; iv) monitoring and evaluation (M&E); and v) partnerships.

Resource adequacy

45. The operation evaluations present a mixed picture regarding the timely availability of resources at the start of an operation and their ongoing availability throughout the operation. The evaluations highlighted such issues as: i) the limited overall resources compared with assessed needs; ii) the limits of borrowing at the outset of an operation; iii) the paradox of successful activities sometimes receiving the least donor support; iv) the severe consequences of pipeline breaks for beneficiaries and partners; v) the vital difference that local in-kind donations can make to overall project efficiency and attracting donor support; and vi) the risk of WFP relying too much on limited partner resources.
46. In **Colombia**, the evaluation concluded that resource availability was limited compared with overall needs, leading to significant pipeline breaks that reduced the PRRO's efficiency. A significant pipeline break in late 2006 led to a major disruption of WFP activities and adverse consequences for beneficiaries and cooperating partners.
47. In **Kenya**, the EMOP benefited from a substantial in-kind contribution of cereal from the Government, which enabled relief distributions to start quickly and encouraged unusually strong donor support. The government's flexibility regarding the timing of its contributions also prevented major pipeline breaks during the EMOP. In contrast, there was weak donor support for some CP activities, especially those in favour of PLHIV. The evaluation found the lack of funding for these activities particularly unfortunate, given their importance and success.
48. In **Nicaragua**, the evaluation found that the EMOP was well funded, and WFP was able to provide food commodities very quickly in the aftermath of Hurricane Felix. The evaluation noted that there was a two-month gap between the start of general food

distributions and the start of planned FFW activities, partly caused by delays in food deliveries. By May 2008, the EMOP was 90 percent funded.

49. In **Madagascar**, the evaluation found that resources were not available until 6 months after the PRRO had started, but it was fully funded within 24 months. The initial funding delay necessitated the borrowing of food commodities to launch activities, which were at levels well below targets during this period. In addition, WFP depended almost completely on its partners' limited resources to fund key elements of recovery activities, which adversely affected implementation of the recovery phase.

Targeting

50. The operation evaluations underlined the following targeting issues: i) targeting is complex, especially in situations of protracted internal displacement; ii) there are challenges associated with monitoring targeting processes; iii) clear targeting criteria are essential, especially in empowering communities through community-based targeting and distribution (CBTD) and minimizing the discretionary selection of beneficiaries; and iv) the geographical targeting basis should be updated more regularly in long-running operations.
51. The **Colombia** evaluation highlighted the complexity of targeting IDPs in a complex and evolving situation. WFP was grappling with such questions as whether to target only those who had been driven from their land, the appropriate time-frame for assistance, how to balance assistance between rural and peri-urban areas, and the appropriate level of assistance for historically poor and vulnerable populations in areas where IDPs settle. The evaluation acknowledged the dilemma WFP faced in deciding whether to base targeting on displacement rather than vulnerability, and found the decision to allocate 70 percent of resources to the recently displaced and 30 percent to the historically poor to be balanced and appropriate. The selection of beneficiaries was also found to be quite good and based on the comprehensive knowledge of both community leaders and cooperating partners. There was sometimes a need for clearer targeting criteria to minimize the risk of discretionary selection of beneficiaries by partners.
52. In **Kenya**, the evaluation found that, despite some shortcomings, CBTD was an appropriate method of targeting aid resources to the neediest households, given the size and geographical scope of the operation. The 2005 thematic review of targeting in relief operations⁸ had identified the adoption of CBTD as one of two substantial advances in targeting practice, because it empowers the community in identifying the neediest while reducing the agency costs associated with administrative targeting and food distribution. The evaluation noted that distribution processes could be improved to ensure the targeting of intended beneficiaries, and that the absence of systematic monitoring of the targeting process made it difficult to determine coverage, especially at sub-district levels. Regarding the CP, the Kenya evaluation highlighted the need to update the geographical targeting basis for the school feeding programme, in line with the most recent vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM) surveys and Ministry of Education data.
53. In **Nicaragua**, the evaluation commended the communities' participation in targeting and distribution processes, and found that geographical targeting focused on the most affected areas.

⁸ See "Thematic Review of Targeting in Relief Operations: Summary Report" (WFP/EB.1/2006/7-B)

54. In **Madagascar**, the evaluation found that geographical targeting and the selection of beneficiaries, focusing on those identified as most vulnerable by the government's social protection policy and a 2005 CFSVA, were correct.

Logistics

55. The findings of the operation evaluations reaffirmed WFP's comparative advantage in logistics and food delivery. The evaluations noted: i) the success of WFP logistics in delivering food in difficult and insecure environments; ii) the responsiveness of logistics in adapting and strengthening operations when required; and iii) the willingness of logistics to explore non-conventional or innovative delivery approaches in the pursuit of greater effectiveness and efficiency.
56. In **Colombia**, the evaluation found that the entire logistics operation had been strengthened and was running efficiently, and food losses had been nearly eliminated, despite the challenges of working in an insecure environment.
57. The **Kenya** evaluation noted that the logistics operation was massive, well-coordinated, and managed with remarkable efficiency. Major pipeline breaks were avoided under the EMOP, and relief supplies reached drought- or flood-stricken populations at more than 2,000 distribution centres.
58. In **Nicaragua**, the evaluation commended the innovative approaches adopted by logistics to ensure the rapid and cost-effective delivery of relief food at the outset of the EMOP. WFP used sea and river transport where appropriate, and arranged for coastal communities to collect food in their own boats, thereby reducing WFP costs considerably.
59. In **Madagascar**, the evaluation found that the logistics system had been set up correctly, the two main warehouses were well situated, and transport arrangements were appropriate. However, it noted that storage capacity tended to exceed requirements and may need to be adjusted more quickly to reflect reduced requirements. It also noted that WFP had taken measures to reduce demurrage costs associated with the late arrival of shipping documents and the slow pace of customs formalities.

Monitoring and evaluation

60. The operation evaluations consistently noted systemic weaknesses in WFP's monitoring of planned project outcomes. In some cases, monitoring systems were largely absent, at least partly owing to lack of resources or prioritization. In other cases, the technical guidance and tools developed were subsequently deemed too complicated and time-consuming to apply. The evaluations noted the importance of: i) adequate prioritization and funding of monitoring activities; ii) striking the right balance between overly complex monitoring tools and approaches and the need to provide useful information for decision-makers; and iii) having functioning monitoring systems in place before the onset of emergencies. It was also clear that good project design, including clear project objectives and suitable performance indicators, plays a crucial role in ensuring that appropriate monitoring systems can be developed and maintained.
61. In **Colombia**, there was a comprehensive package of technical guidance and training tools, and some guidance was offered to external partners. However, use of the package was limited by its high cost, complexity and conceptual confusion. The appointment of a dedicated programme officer had helped to strengthen the monitoring function, but there was limited operational supervision at the sub-office level. Monitoring reports focused on outputs and processes, rather than planned outcomes, and some partners were attempting to measure outcomes on their own. WFP had tried to use case studies to measure the effect of

food assistance on household food expenditures and dietary diversity, but questions remained about the soundness of this methodology.

62. In **Kenya**, the evaluation found that although WFP was making progress on both distribution and post-distribution monitoring (PDM), PDM processes were too complicated and time-consuming and the information collected did not meet the needs of decision-makers. Monitoring systems were not in place at the onset of the emergency, and staff and partners had not always been sufficiently trained. For the CP, it was felt that monitoring of school feeding activities – which accounted for more than 80 percent of planned resources – was not satisfying the commitments stated in CP planning documents, and funding for six monitoring positions was inadequate.
63. In **Nicaragua**, monitoring efforts focused on logistics and partners' FFW activities, but there were no monitoring formats to track either nutrition or food security outcomes of activities.
64. In **Madagascar**, the evaluation assessed the lack of systematic monitoring as a major shortcoming and also noted the lack of a coordinator responsible for M&E.

Partnerships

65. The operation evaluations highlighted several risks that emerge when WFP partnerships are not adequate for the tasks to be performed, along with the unexpected benefits that can emerge when partnerships are particularly strong. It is clear that the overall strength or weakness of a partnership depends on what each partner is able to bring to it. In some cases, WFP partners had inadequate technical skills or financial resources to meet WFP performance expectations, which posed particular challenges for WFP in terms of establishing realistic expectations; minimizing over-reliance on partners; and ensuring adequate guidance and support for partners. Challenges faced by WFP in specific contexts include: i) limiting the number of partnerships, to allow a meaningful level of support and oversight; ii) ensuring the availability of detailed action plans so that mutual obligations for different activities are well understood; and iii) streamlining the process of joint project formulation to ensure the timely utilization of resources and positive working relations.
66. In **Colombia**, the evaluation noted several strengths in WFP's partnerships. It found that the PRRO demonstrated joint ownership between WFP and its government partners, and identified the tripartite regional committee – a mechanism to provide recommendations on project proposals – as a good innovation. However, some concern was expressed about the large number of partners and WFP's limited capacity to provide an adequate level of guidance and oversight.
67. In **Kenya**, the evaluation noted a spirit of particularly close cooperation between WFP and the Government, and commended the strong government ownership at all levels. It emphasized the success of the single pipeline approach adopted by WFP and partners in preventing inter-agency competition for the requisition of transport, storage and related logistics services; this approach also helped to ensure that WFP was the main entity managing relations with individual NGO partners. The success of the common basket approach, whereby all actors followed the Government's ration standards, was also noted. Regarding the CP, however, the evaluation found some lack of understanding about the details of mutual obligations and planned objectives among school feeding partners. The evaluation also noted that coordination needed to be strengthened between the HIV and AIDS programme and other United Nations agencies and government partners.
68. In **Nicaragua**, the evaluation found that WFP had taken a flexible approach with partners. The limited number of NGOs operating in the area had led WFP to work with

individual communities, and had encouraged the forging of a strong working relationship with concerned government ministries.

69. In **Madagascar**, the evaluation found that although WFP and partners had undertaken some very useful activities to improve disaster preparedness and mitigation, many partners did not have the necessary skills to provide and manage technical support for more complex FFW. WFP may be relying too heavily on the limited resources of its partners. The evaluation also found that the process for formulating joint projects was laborious and costly, making it difficult to ensure the timely utilization of pre-positioned stocks available for FFW activities.

⇒ *Operational results*

70. This section focuses on the effectiveness, impact, sustainability and connectedness of WFP operations. Effectiveness examines the achievement of planned outcomes; impact gauges the wider effects of an operation; sustainability considers the extent to which the benefits of WFP assistance are likely to extend beyond the duration of the operation; and connectedness considers how effectively the implementation of short-term activities takes into account longer-term challenges.

Achievement of planned outcomes

71. Despite the limited availability of quality outcome data, the evaluations provided valuable insights into the perceived overall effectiveness of operations and specific sub-components. In general, the evaluations suggested that WFP achieved its life-saving objectives in emergency situations and provided a meaningful level of support that may have contributed to the socio-economic recovery of some of its beneficiaries. The evaluations highlighted the importance of the following for achieving outcomes: clear objectives, complementary non-food inputs, strong partnerships and holistic approaches. In some contexts, it may be easier for WFP to demonstrate the effectiveness of school feeding activities – in terms of increased enrolment and attendance, for example – and some FFW activities than the achievement of nutritional outcomes through nutrition interventions.
72. In **Colombia**, the evaluation found that the relief component was particularly successful: it provided meaningful support to the most vulnerable with no evidence of having created dependency. School feeding also seemed to be effective in increasing attendance rates and improving children’s energy levels and attention spans. FFW and FFT activities were also judged to be effective in supporting recovery, but there were insufficient data to assess the economic reintegration or recovery of beneficiaries. On the other hand, the nutritional component focusing on pregnant and lactating women was deemed to be largely ineffective in contributing to improved nutrition status, owing to the small ration size, the sharing of rations among family members and the lack of focus on nutrition objectives; nutrition interventions were more successful when strong partners were able to develop a holistic approach.
73. In **Kenya**, it was not possible to determine the number of lives saved through the EMOP or to assess the exact nutritional impact of general food distributions. But the evaluation judged that a massive humanitarian disaster had been averted and noted that there were no reports of large-scale population migration or deaths during the emergency period. In the 15 districts covered by the emergency school feeding programme (ESFP), data showed that both enrolment and attendance rates increased during the emergency period. Regarding school feeding activities under the CP, however, although there seemed to be a general increase in gross and net enrolment rates in most districts, the evaluation noted difficulties with attributing these increases to school feeding, and weaknesses in the data.

74. In **Nicaragua**, the evaluation noted that food security objectives included measurable performance indicators, but these were not monitored. It noted that WFP supported a range of FFW activities, and when beneficiaries prioritized the reconstruction of housing they were less successful in achieving food security. The evaluation deemed that FFW restored community and individual assets, and communities made effective use of food to support recovery. However, it was not possible to measure nutritional outcomes.
75. In **Madagascar**, the evaluation found that the proportion of household expenditures devoted to food purchases may have decreased and the nutrition status of children under 5 may have improved as a result of WFP assistance, but it recognized that these findings were not entirely reliable.

Impact of operations

76. An operation's impact, whether intended or unintended, positive or negative, can vary widely and usually depends on the specific context. Impact assessments are difficult to carry out, and to some extent the following findings are based on anecdotal evidence. The attribution of observed impacts to WFP assistance is also problematic owing to the complex interplay of external factors. The evaluations found that some of the impacts of WFP operations extended beyond food security and nutrition and were experienced at the levels of individual beneficiaries, beneficiary communities, cooperating partners and local governments. In general, it was difficult to assess the nutritional impact of WFP food assistance, owing to an absence of high-quality nutrition information. The evaluations noted the following positive impacts related to either WFP's presence or specific activities: i) an enhanced sense of physical protection and psychological benefits among beneficiaries in insecure areas; ii) improved social cohesion and greater awareness of disaster risk at the community level; and iii) increased national government awareness about such issues as the plight of IDPs and food-related factors.
77. The **Colombia** evaluation identified several positive impacts that had not necessarily been fully anticipated at the start of the operation: i) increased awareness about IDP issues at the national level; ii) increased humanitarian space ceded by armed groups; iii) an enhanced sense of physical protection among beneficiaries in insecure areas; iv) possible enhanced social cohesion in communities supported by the PRRO; and v) psychological benefits for beneficiaries due to partners' integrated and holistic programming approach.
78. In **Kenya**, the evaluation highlighted the central role of good nutrition information and analysis in improving understanding of the real impact of WFP food assistance, noting WFP's reliance on other agencies to monitor the nutritional situation of targeted populations and the tendency for global acute malnutrition (GAM) analysis to overemphasize food as the critical factor in malnutrition. The evaluation noted the tremendous impact of WFP food assistance in the five HIV and AIDS projects under the CP, and its helpful role in enabling some people to resume their livelihoods. However, the evaluation also found that the impact of supplementary feeding support was much reduced by the absence of critical complementary health inputs.
79. In **Nicaragua**, the evaluation identified several positive impacts of WFP support: i) diversified agriculture; ii) strengthened partnerships; iii) improved local infrastructure; iv) increased community awareness of disaster risk; and v) increased government awareness of food-related issues. However, it also noted that it was not possible to assess the nutritional impacts of WFP food assistance.

80. In **Madagascar**, the evaluation noted that the distribution of 4,000 mt of sorghum in Grand Sud region helped to protect the seeds distributed by other partners, thereby supporting a strategy to reintroduce a crop that had almost disappeared following previous droughts.

Sustainability and connectedness of operations

81. The evaluation findings on the sustainability of the benefits of WFP assistance tended to focus on the transition from relief to recovery and the need for viable exit strategies before undertaking or expanding programmes. Strong partnerships and national and local government capacity and financial resources were recognized as key elements of exit strategies.
82. In **Colombia**, the evaluation found a clear connection between IDPs' receipt of relief and recovery assistance and their ability to begin a new life. The evaluation judged that FFW-assisted housing activities and FFT employment generation were particularly likely to provide long-term benefits to participants. In general, this connection to recovery was easier to discern for FFW, FFT, school feeding and preschool feeding recovery activities – provided they were implemented with strong partners – than for supplementary feeding activities, whose overall purpose was less clearly defined and where children at risk might fall back into a state of malnutrition.
83. The evaluation in **Kenya** expressed concern about the absence of adequate exit strategies in school feeding under the CP, HIV and AIDS projects under the CP and the ESFP under the EMOP. It is recognized that very strong partnerships would be required to continue school feeding programmes in the absence of WFP, and it is not clear whether the Government has the budget capacity to manage the ESFP schools once the EMOP is over.
84. In **Nicaragua**, the evaluation found that the EMOP had enhanced partnerships, improved local infrastructure and developed local capacity, which would be valuable in future emergencies and would facilitate the hand-over of WFP-supported programmes. Regarding sustainability, the decision to replace damaged houses with more hurricane-resistant structures, which should not require repair or replacement for a decade, is of particular interest, as this will allow more time to be devoted to agricultural work, which may lead to improved food security.
85. In **Madagascar**, the evaluation found that the hand-over strategy was over-ambitious in terms of the number of capacity-building activities planned for the short duration of the operation.

⇒ *Conclusions of Operation Evaluations*

86. Operation evaluations undertaken in 2008 highlighted both strengths and weaknesses regarding operational design, the implementation of operations, and the results achieved by WFP humanitarian and development operations.
87. Regarding **operational design**, the evaluations highlighted the availability of strong vulnerability assessment work to underpin and guide the focus and design of operations, and emphasized the importance of ensuring the timely release of needs assessment findings. The evaluations also noted the need to ensure that Strategic Objectives are adapted and contextualized, and activities and operations are coherent and complementary.

88. Regarding the **implementation** of operations, the evaluations highlighted the success of CBTD approaches, the ability of WFP logistics to adapt, innovate and deliver food under difficult conditions, and the pivotal importance of effective partnerships with local governments and other partners, based on realistic assessments of their capacities and resources. The evaluations also cautioned about the limits of commodity borrowing at the outset of an operation to deal with funding delays, and the need to address systematic weaknesses in the monitoring of planned outcomes. These weaknesses were found to be due to: inadequate prioritization and funding of monitoring activities; difficulties in developing suitable guidance and tools; and weaknesses in project design and logical frameworks.
89. Regarding the **results** achieved by operations, the evaluations found that WFP has been successful in saving lives and averting large-scale humanitarian disasters under difficult conditions, and has contributed to the longer-term recovery of beneficiaries in the aftermath of disasters. The evaluations also found that WFP's presence and food assistance had wider positive impacts beyond food security or nutrition outcomes. The evaluations highlighted: i) the general difficulty in quantifying the achievement of planned outcomes, due to the lack of quality monitoring data; ii) WFP's dependence on its nutrition partners' complementary inputs and holistic approaches to achieve planned nutrition outcomes; and iii) the need for more articulated exit or hand-over strategies to address sustainability issues.

STRENGTHENING THE WFP EVALUATION SYSTEM

90. This section reports on progress made in strengthening WFP's evaluation system in line with the strategy set out in the WFP Biennial Management Plan (2008–2009)⁹ and in response to the observations and recommendations of the 2007 independent peer review.¹⁰ The section summarizes OEDE's progress in: i) the new evaluation policy; ii) development of EQAS; iii) support to decentralized evaluations; and iv) initiatives to close the learning loop.

New WFP evaluation policy

91. The new WFP evaluation policy, which was approved by the Board at its Second Regular Session in October 2008, addresses a number of concerns of the 2007 peer review. Specifically, it: i) consolidates and updates earlier evaluation policies; ii) outlines measures taken to strengthen the structural and institutional independence of evaluation; and iii) ensures that WFP conforms to internationally accepted evaluation principles and is fully in line with UNEG norms and standards.
92. The evaluation policy reaffirms the dual purpose of evaluation to be accountability for performance and results; and learning to inform policy discussions and strategic decision-making. It also ensures that the key evaluation principles of independence, credibility, utility and quality are systematically applied in WFP's evaluation function, processes and products. WFP activities, operations, strategies and policies continue to be evaluated against the standard criteria of relevance/appropriateness, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability.

⁹ "WFP Biennial Management Plan (2008–2009)" (WFP/EB.2/2007/5-A/1) (hereafter "Management Plan")

¹⁰ "Peer Review of the Evaluation Function at the World Food Programme" (WFP/EB.1/2008/7-A)

93. In articulating the role of regional bureaux and country offices in decentralized evaluations and self-evaluations, the evaluation policy highlights the shared corporate responsibility for evaluation; and OEDE's role in ensuring that decentralized evaluations meet the same quality and independence standards as those managed by OEDE.
94. The new evaluation policy also articulates a consistent approach to the selection of operations to be evaluated during a specific year, to ensure representative samples in terms of geographical distribution, operation size and programme category. These criteria apply to evaluations managed by OEDE and decentralized evaluations.

Evaluation Quality Assurance System

95. As foreseen in the Management Plan, the new evaluation policy and the Annual Evaluation Report 2006, OEDE has developed EQAS, comprising detailed templates, process maps, quality assurance checklists and technical notes. EQAS is based on the international good practice standards of ALNAP, OECD/Development Assistance Committee (DAC), UNEG and other bilateral and multilateral organizations.
96. The purpose of EQAS is to ensure that standards are consistently applied to evaluation approaches, processes and products, thereby helping to ensure the consistent high quality, independence, credibility and utility of evaluations managed by OEDE and of decentralized evaluations. The standardization of evaluation reports supports consistent reporting on the same issues, and facilitates the synthesis and comparison of evaluation findings. Over time, this will improve the quality of the annual evaluation report.
97. EQAS was introduced in January 2008 and has been applied to all evaluations managed by OEDE since then. It will be expanded to decentralized evaluations during 2009.

OEDE Support for Decentralized Evaluations

98. The new evaluation policy articulates OEDE's role in ensuring that decentralized evaluations meet the same quality and independence standards as those managed by OEDE. This application of the same quality standards to decentralized evaluations represents a major shift to address the highly variable quality and limited utility of earlier evaluations, as noted in previous annual evaluation reports.
99. To support regional bureaux and country offices in managing quality decentralized evaluations, OEDE has adopted a two-pronged approach comprising: i) the phased roll-out of an EQAS training programme; and ii) ongoing OEDE support during critical phases of the evaluation process. The training initiative was launched in November 2008, when senior programme staff from three regional bureaux and five country offices came to Rome to participate in the first phase, which included preparation for specific evaluations to be undertaken in 2009. This training initiative will be continued and expanded in 2009 and 2010, with financial support from the Government of Sweden as part of its overall support for strengthening evaluation in WFP.

Closing the Learning Loop

100. The new evaluation policy commits OEDE to closing the learning loop, or facilitating learning and good practice within WFP. In addition to ensuring the wide dissemination and accessibility of annual and other evaluation reports, in 2008, OEDE started to develop an enhanced system for sharing lessons, based on a detailed analysis of the needs of actual and potential users. The information needs of users were analysed to determine the optimal content, timing and format for lessons, so that they can be more readily absorbed by users.

101. OEDE will continue its key role in the dissemination and communication of evaluation findings to member countries, WFP senior management and internal decision-makers at various operational levels. Evaluation reports submitted to the Board will be available on WFP's external website (www.wfp.org).

WFP EVALUATION ACTIVITIES IN 2008

102. This section presents the OEDE programme of work; and the financial and human resources available to carry out evaluation work as foreseen in the Management Plan.

OEDE's programme of work

103. The OEDE programme of work was set out in Annex III of the Management Plan. It was planned that OEDE would manage four or five strategic evaluations, three country-level evaluations and twenty evaluations of single operations during the biennium.
104. The number of strategic evaluations was revised down to three, all of which are at various stages of implementation. Two of the planned country-level evaluations were initiated in 2008, and a third will be started in 2009. Of the planned evaluations of single operations, nine were initiated in 2008; two of these were completed and presented at the Board's First Regular Session in February 2009.
105. The Management Plan also foresaw that regional bureaux and country offices would conduct 40 decentralized evaluations of single operations during the biennium. As OEDE's EQAS training programme was launched in November 2008, it was not anticipated that decentralized evaluations would be compliant with EQAS in 2008. The decentralized evaluations and reviews completed in 2008 are presented in Annex I.

Resources for Evaluation

106. The Management Plan specified a level of staffing and budgetary resources to be made available to OEDE for its planned programme of work.

⇒ *Human resources*

107. The Management Plan specified that there would be 12 OEDE staff: a Director (D2), 7 evaluation officers and 4 support staff. In line with the new evaluation policy, OEDE anticipated that 50 percent of professional staff positions would be filled on a rotational basis by WFP professionals, and 50 percent through the recruitment of external evaluation specialists.
108. During 2008, excluding the Director, there were six rather than seven professional evaluation staff, owing to budget limitations. Only two positions, including that of the Director, were held by external evaluation specialists. The ratio of externally recruited evaluators to WFP staff subject to rotation was therefore 2:5 instead of 4:4. Efforts to recruit additional evaluation experts have not succeeded. Evaluation staff, including the Director, professional and support staff, represent approximately 0.08 percent of WFP's total staff of 12,000.
109. The departure of four professionals in 2007 and the arrival of only three in early 2008 affected OEDE's overall evaluation capacity during the transition period from mid-2007 to March 2008. In addition, budgetary constraints in mid-2007 adversely affected the

implementation of planned evaluations. In 2008, four OEDE staff attended a three-day specialized training in evaluation organized by ALNAP and Channel Research in Belgium.

110. There are no specific staff positions to support the decentralized evaluation work carried out by regional bureau and country office staff. This situation does not take into account the additional workload of managing an evaluation. OEDE's EQAS training support programme, although tailored to sharing knowledge and skills as needed, does not address the workload challenge for concerned staff.

⇒ *Financial resources*

111. Evaluations are carried out predominantly by externally recruited consultants; they therefore require considerable non-staff budget allocations. The Management Plan allocated a total of US\$1.4 million from the Programme Support and Administrative (PSA) budget for all non-staff costs, including office administration and others. It was foreseen that an additional US\$6 million would be allocated from direct support costs (DSC) and other non-PSA resources to fund the planned 60 evaluations of single operations.
112. Strategic and country-level evaluations are funded from PSA resources. The funding arrangement for operation evaluations posed particular challenges because DSC funding had to be negotiated with country offices case by case. This placed a high demand on country office resources and made decentralized evaluations, in particular, highly unattractive. In 2009, funds have been allocated to OEDE to cover planned evaluations managed by OEDE, but similar allocations are not available for decentralized evaluations.
113. Total expenditure for evaluation in 2008 was approximately US\$3 million, representing 0.06 percent of WFP's total funding of US\$5.8 billion.

OUTREACH

114. This section highlights OEDE's participation in professional evaluation groups and networks. OEDE participates in these to keep up to date on developments in evaluation methodologies, maintain contact with other evaluation professionals and contribute to the development of professional standards. OEDE plays an active role in ALNAP, the IASC Real-Time Evaluation Interest Group and UNEG. It also supports the evaluation work of IASC and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

ALNAP

115. OEDE is a member of ALNAP and attends the semi-annual meetings. The main theme of the 23rd ALNAP meeting, held in Madrid in June 2008, was a new agenda for news media and humanitarian aid. Participants examined the complex obligations and interests that develop in media and humanitarian agencies during humanitarian crises, and identified five recommendations that could improve this relationship and promote positive humanitarian outcomes.
116. The December meeting was hosted by the German Foreign Ministry in Berlin. The agenda focused on the limits and possibilities of humanitarian impact assessments and on how to develop a shared understanding to enhance the application and utilization of these assessments in humanitarian aid. To improve their understanding of humanitarian impact, participants considered the politicization of humanitarian aid, the institutionalization of the humanitarian sector and the changing nature of vulnerability during humanitarian crises.

117. The OEDE Director served as an external reviewer of the document developed by ALNAP to guide real-time evaluations.

IASC Real-Time Evaluation Interest Group

118. The IASC Real-Time Evaluation Interest Group is made up of humanitarian agencies in the United Nations System, non-governmental agencies and bilateral donors. It was formed to trigger and manage inter-agency real-time evaluations, which are still in an experimental phase. In 2008, the group collaborated on the real-time evaluation of the Myanmar Cyclone Nargis response.

UNEG

119. UNEG is a professional network of the heads of evaluation offices in the United Nations System. It aims to strengthen evaluation across the United Nations and to advocate for recognition of evaluation as an important learning, decision-making and accountability tool.
120. OEDE supports the work of the UNEG evaluation quality enhancement, training and South Africa country-level evaluation task forces, and of the management group for the evaluation of the Delivering as One pilots.
121. The evaluation quality enhancement task force has been focusing on: peer reviews; online fact sheets and self assessments; good practice in management response; quality assurance of evaluation products; and performance indicators for evaluation functions. OEDE participated in the ongoing peer review of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in 2008.
122. The training task force has been developing a UNEG introductory course on evaluation in the United Nations System, and an evaluation training programme. A task force meeting with the United Nations System Staff College (UNSSC), held in Turin, Italy, in November 2008, focused on the planned introductory course and the overall training programme.
123. The South Africa Evaluation Task Force has been managing the joint UNEG-Republic of South Africa country-level evaluation of the role and contribution of the United Nations System in South Africa, and its three strategic policy priorities.
124. The Delivering as One management group has been conducting an evaluation of processes and results related to Delivering as One United Nations pilots. The first phase produced an assessment of the extent to which the pilots can be evaluated.

Other

125. OEDE has also been supporting the cluster approach evaluation commissioned by IASC to determine whether the approach has led to any measurable improvements in the capacity, coverage and predictability of humanitarian response since its introduction in December 2005.
126. OEDE has been supporting the external evaluation of the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), commissioned pursuant to United Nations General Assembly Resolution No. 60/124 by the United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator in consultation with IASC. The overall purpose of this evaluation is to provide strategic guidance to Member States and the United Nations System on the future of the CERF. It is managed by the Evaluation and Studies Section (ESS) of OCHA.

OUTLOOK

127. This section highlights the work to be undertaken by OEDE in: i) developing the evaluation strategy; ii) strengthening support for decentralized evaluations; iii) continuing the learning loop initiative; and iv) increasing evaluation capacity in both impact assessment and real-time evaluation.
128. The new evaluation policy commits OEDE to preparing a separate evaluation strategy articulating how OEDE will implement the policy. The strategy will consider the choice of strategic evaluations, the quality of evaluations and processes, feedback and reporting issues, and larger issues of contributing to a corporate culture of accountability and learning. It will focus on how to enhance the effectiveness of evaluation at WFP so that it contributes to continuously improving performance and results.
129. Given the responsibilities of regional bureaux and country offices in carrying out decentralized evaluations, as clearly articulated in the new evaluation policy, OEDE has an important support role in promoting and enhancing quality standards for these evaluations. An important element of this support is the EQAS training package developed in 2008. The training initiative that began in November 2008 will be developed and expanded in 2009 and beyond.
130. In 2009, OEDE will be moving to the next phase of its learning loop initiative with the development, testing and full application of learning prototypes, to enhance the accessibility and utility of insights emerging from evaluations. This work will progress in tandem with the redesign and improvement of OEDE's evaluation website.
131. In 2009, OEDE will be undertaking initiatives to strengthen its evaluation capacity in two critical areas: impact assessment and real-time evaluation. The difficulty that WFP has in reporting robust findings on the longer-term and wider impacts of its operations and policies is well documented by previous evaluations. The adoption of measures for developing evaluation capacity in this area will help to strengthen this aspect. The development of real-time evaluation capacity will help OEDE to evaluate shorter-term EMOPs, which tend to be more difficult to reflect in biennial work plans. Enhanced capacity to manage real-time evaluations will help to ensure that EMOPs are better reflected in annual work plans and that they are evaluated in ways that lead to meaningful assessments and insights.

EVALUATIONS COMPLETED IN 2008

Evaluations managed by OEDE

“Summary Evaluation Report Colombia PRRO 10366.0” (WFP/EB.1/2008/7-B)

“Summary Evaluation Report of Kenya Emergency Operation 10374.0 and CP 10264.0 (2004–2008)” (WFP/EB.1/2008/7-C)

“Summary Report of the Evaluation of WFP’s Capacity Development Policy and Operations” (WFP/EB.A/2008/7)

“Summary Report of the End-of-Term Evaluation of WFP’s Gender Policy (2003–2007): Enhanced Commitments to Women to Ensure Food Security” (WFP/EB.2/2008/6-B)

“Summary Report of the Thematic Evaluation of WFP’s HIV and AIDS Interventions in Sub-Saharan Africa” (WFP/EB.2/2008/6-A/Rev.1)

“Summary Evaluation Report Nicaragua Emergency Operation 10700.0 and Immediate Response Emergency Operation 10695.0” (WFP/EB.1/2009/7-B)

“Summary Evaluation Report Madagascar PRRO 10442.0” (WFP/EB.1/2009/7-A)

Decentralized evaluations and reviews

Regional Bureau Asia

“Mid-Term Review of PRRO 10427.0: Post-Conflict Relief and Rehabilitation in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan” (April 2008)

“Mid-Term Review of Myanmar PRRO 10066.3” (2008)

“Report of the Evaluation of Nepal EMOP 10523.0” (February 2008)

Regional Bureau Latin America and the Caribbean

“Impact Evaluation of Peru Development Project 06240” (2008)

Regional Bureau Southern, Eastern and Central Africa

“Assessment of WFP Nutritional Support for the Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission (PMTCT) Programme in Four Selected WFP Sites in Ethiopia” (September 2007)

“Review of Supplementary Feeding Programme Operations in the Arid Districts of Kenya (2007–2008)” (June 2008)

“WFP NSART Programme Evaluation 2008: A WFP HIV and AIDS Targeted Food Support Pilot Programme in Zimbabwe” (April 2008) [NSART stands for “nutrition support to anti-retroviral therapy”.]

“WFP Experiences of Large-Scale Community-Based Targeting in Zimbabwe” (2008)

“WFP Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) 2007/2008 Season, Lessons Learned (Sub-Office Workshops)” (May 2008)

Regional Bureau West Africa

“After-Action Review of Benin Development Project 10308.0” (October 2008)

“Report on the Impact and Future of WFP Food Aid in Guinea-Bissau” (March 2008)

“Mid-Term Technical Review of Central African Republic Development Project 10361.0 (2005–2009): Support for Education for All and Health” (May 2008)

OEDE STAFF

(As of 31 December 2008)

Ms Caroline HEIDER, Director

Mr Alain CORDEIL, Senior Evaluation Officer

Mr Tahir NOUR,¹ Senior Evaluation Officer

Ms Claire CONAN,² Evaluation Officer

Mr Michel DENIS, Evaluation Officer

Ms Maureen FORSYTHE,³ Evaluation Officer

Ms Anne-Claire LUZOT, Evaluation Officer

Ms Rosa NETTI, Programme Assistant

Ms Eliana ZUPPINI, Senior Staff Assistant

Ms Jane DONOHOE, Administrative Clerk

Ms Sofia AKEMI MARCHI, Temporary Research Consultant

Ms Sally BURROWS, Temporary Research Consultant

Ms Daniela DEL GIUDICE, Temporary Research Consultant

¹ Mr Nour took up his function on 1 January 2008.

² Ms Conan took up her function on 10 March 2008.

³ Ms Forsythe took up her function on 10 March 2008.

ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action
ART	anti-retroviral treatment
CBTD	community-based targeting and distribution
CCA	common country assessment
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CFSVA	comprehensive food security and vulnerability assessment
CP	country programme
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DEV	development project
DSC	direct support costs
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council of the United Nations
EFSA	emergency food security assessment
EMOP	emergency operation
EQAS	Evaluation Quality Assurance System
ESFP	emergency school feeding programme
ESS	Evaluation and Studies Section
FFT	food for training
FFW	food for work
GAM	global acute malnutrition
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IDP	internally displaced person
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	non-governmental organization
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OEDE	Office of Evaluation
OMB	Regional Bureau Asia
OMC	Regional Bureau Middle East, Central Asia and Eastern Europe
OMD	Regional Bureau West Africa
OMJ	Regional Bureau Southern, Eastern and Central Africa

OMP	Regional Bureau Latin America and the Caribbean
OMS	Regional Bureau Sudan
PDM	post-distribution monitoring
PLHIV	people living with HIV
PMTCT	prevention of mother-to-child transmission
PRRO	protracted relief and recovery operation
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PSA	Programme Support and Administrative
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNSSC	United Nations System Staff College
VAM	vulnerability analysis and mapping
VGf	vulnerable group feeding