

## **Executive Board – Second Session**

**10-14 November 2014**

### **Agenda item 6c) Management Response to the Recommendations of the Summary Evaluation Report – The Democratic Republic of Congo Country Portfolio (2009 – 13)**

1. Madam President, I am pleased to present the Management Response to the Recommendations of the Summary Evaluation Report of the – The Democratic Republic of Congo Country Portfolio (2009 – 13). This evaluation focused on the extent of alignment and strategic positioning of WFP's operations in the country; the drivers of key strategic decisions; and the performance and results of WFP operations.
2. A main theme emerging from the evaluation is that the lack of adequate resources was a critical impediment to the full implementation of planned activities. This is duly reflected in the findings of the evaluation which recognizes that effectiveness of decision-making was hampered by financial constraints which in turn prevented the CO from fully engaging with partners and government. This compounded the ability to seek creative solutions to operational challenges.
3. Despite the constraints of low resourcing, management is pleased to note the evaluation found the DRC portfolio broadly relevant and aligned with the needs of women and men, as well as with government policies and priorities.
4. Management appreciates the findings and recommendations, and particularly welcomes the opportunities identified to enhance WFP activities in the DRC, particularly to strengthen capacity in terms of preparedness and for broader outreach and engagement with partners in key areas. A number of these activities are already

underway and the conclusions of this evaluation will guide further actions.

5. With regard to the specific recommendations, **Recommendation 1** focuses on preparedness, calling on the Country Office to have developed, by the time of this EB Session, a preparedness plan for emergency interventions which can be adapted to various scenarios. Management agrees but proposes a deadline of June 2015, since present resourcing levels and staff rotation cycles do not make the prescribed deadline feasible. A number of actions to lay the foundations for this plan are already underway and are detailed in the response.
6. **Recommendation 2** calls on the country office to maximise the potential of alternative methods of food assistance transfers. It suggests that the CO develop an appropriate strategy and implementation plan geared towards a balanced use of transfer modalities. Management agrees and notes that the CO will pursue a business model, currently under development with WFP's Cash for Change Unit, that lays out roles and responsibilities in the design and implementation of cash and voucher transfer schemes.
7. Capacity development at both Country Office and Area Office levels is the focus of **Recommendation 3**, calling on WFP to strengthen relevant capacities to ensure they are sufficient to support the attainment of WFP's Strategic Objectives in DRC. Specifically, the recommendation highlights the need for filling human resource gaps, especially regarding senior staff, and improved communications with donors. Management partially agrees, pointing out that funding constraints led to CO to make considerable staff reductions. This is further compounded by the broader challenge faced by WFP corporately to mobilise sufficient numbers of senior staff with a suitable profile for DRC operations. The CO will therefore seek to address gaps through alternative human resource options including UN volunteers. Regarding communication, the CO has stepped its engagement with donors at the country level and has recruited a donor relations officer.

8. **Recommendation 4** suggests a shift away from a purely humanitarian modus operandi in DRC and calls on the Country Office to transition to a Country Programme approach. Management welcomes the spirit of this recommendation but points out that consultations and a review of DRC's country strategy are only recently underway, the results of which will inform the most appropriate way forward. Until these results are known, it would be premature at this point to commit to a Country Programme approach. That said, the CO does agree to the formulation of a development project specifically focusing on nutrition.
9. **Recommendation 5** calls on the country office to improve the quality and use of performance monitoring. Management is keenly aware of the shortcomings in field level monitoring as evidenced by this and a number of other country level evaluations and are giving this issue priority attention. We therefore again welcome the spirit of this recommendation but only partially agree with the prescribed action, namely the adoption of a specific monitoring system and platform (ActivityInfo). WFP will instead focus on the continued roll out of COMET, some modules of which are already active in DRC. Other actions to strengthen monitoring in the DRC are identified in the response.
10. **Recommendation 6** identifies steps for the DRC country office to strengthen inter-agency logistics management, by differentiating the activities of Service Provision and the Logistics Cluster and improving the understanding of respective roles and responsibilities. Management agrees with this and notes that, the regular meetings of the Logistics Cluster will seek to reinforce communication and presentation of the logistic cluster activities and service provision to the partners.
11. Effectiveness and timeliness of food deliveries are the focus of **Recommendation 7**, which suggest that that these can be achieved through more ambitious local purchase strategy. While management acknowledges that a more robust strategy can and will be pursued, we do not presume an exclusive linkage of such to effective and timely food delivery in the DRC, given the unique operational

challenges. Where appropriate, WFP will draw the benefits on local purchase but will continue to avail itself of other tools such as the Forward Purchase Facility where circumstances warrant.

12. Finally, **Recommendation 8** calls for improved integration of a number of cross cutting issues, including gender and protection, throughout the project cycle. Management agrees, noting that work is already underway to address a number of these as reflected in the revised project logframe as well as strengthening of monitoring to incorporate these issues.
13. With that Mme President, I will conclude my introductory remarks.  
Thank you