

Mr. President and members of the Board

The documents you have before you today is our new PRRO, under which WFP Ethiopia will continue to provide support to refugees from South Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea and Sudan.

This PRRO will start in April 2015 and end in March 2018. It will target a total of 650,000 refugees, for a total budget of US\$480 million. This represents approximately US\$13 million per month.

There are currently 645,000 refugees in Ethiopia. Most of them come from South Sudan, the second largest group are the refugees from Somalia, followed by Eritreans and Sudanese.

Of the 645,000 refugees, WFP is currently assisting around 570,000 people, which is close to 90%. The difference is comprised of refugees who are officially registered in the camps but do not come to pick up their rations, and this is mostly the case in the Eritrean camps in Shire. Those refugees have left the country and are looking for resettlement to third countries. There are also refugees who are living in urban areas and have means to sustain themselves therefore do not require our assistance. But most of the refugees require our assistance on a monthly basis.

Since the conflict broke out in South Sudan in mid-December 2013, Ethiopia has received nearly 200,000 South Sudanese refugees, which means about 20,000 people per month on average since January. UNHCR and partners estimate that we might reach 300,000 people by December.

We are aware that given the sharp increase in the refugee numbers due to the continuous arrivals from South Sudan, it is becoming difficult for our donors to make available all the resources required to assist the increasingly large number of refugees in Ethiopia. This is why, under this new PRRO, we are putting in place new measures that will be help to partially offset those increasing requirements.

The first one is the biometrics registration of refugees during the food distribution. This is already done in Kenya and has resulted in a 20 percent decrease in refugee figures there. Every month, when they come to collect their ration, refugees will be finger-printed before collecting their ration, in order to verify that they are registered in the UNHCR database. This will avoid cards selling, as well as ownership of double or triple cards. A recent feasibility study done in the camps indicates that we will need about US\$10 million for all 24

camps in the country, so we will be appealing for this. We have already met and informed our donors locally.

The second thing that we are going to put in place is the continuous verification of the refugees' presence in the camps, which is something that we have already discussed with the government and UNHCR. It will be different from the traditional verification by UNHCR which is publicly announced beforehand. What we want to do is to continuously verify that the refugees who collect our food, are the people who really need it.

Under the PRRO, we will also continue to use cash to replace part of the in-kind food in the basket. In 2013, we have started distributing a mixed ration of in-kind and cash in 4 camps, on a pilot basis. We will reach 5 camps by December this year. We are receiving very positive and encouraging feedback from the camps where the pilot is taking place. The food security of the refugees has improved, they are very happy with this modality which gives them the choice of what they eat. It improves their dignity and their relationship with the local traders. It has had positive impact on their protection. We have also observed an improvement in their livelihood opportunities, and small businesses have developed in the areas where the cash is distributed. We are currently undertaking an external evaluation of the cash pilot, and we will have a final report by February 2015.

Based on the findings and the recommendations of the evaluation, we would like to expand this pilot to more camps. We also aim to make the project more cost efficient under the current PRRO, but this is something that will be decided based on the final evaluation and subject to re-negotiation with the government and UNHCR.

Finally I would like to express my deep gratitude to all of the donors who have generously supported us over the course of the current PRRO with this, we have been able to assist nearly 600,000 refugees in Ethiopia over the past three years. We count on your support to be able to continue to do so.

Thank You!