Executive Board Item 6d)

11 November 2014

Response to the Recommendations of the Summary Report of the Peer Review of the Evaluation Function at the World Food Programme

Madam President

- I am pleased to present the Response to the Recommendations of the Summary Report of the Peer Review of the Evaluation Function at the World Food Programme.

- The main focus of the review was to assess the extent to which WFP's evaluation policy, function and products are independent, credible and useful for learning and accountability purposes.

- We presented the Summary report of the Review at the EB Annual Session in June. To recap on the main findings of the review:

- The review recognized a high level of independence of WFP's centralised evaluation, reinforced by the processes that support the evaluation system.

- In terms of credibility, the review noted that evaluation enjoys a good reputation in WFP and receives considerable attention from senior management and the Executive Board.

- The review noted that more recently the evaluation function has been given further impetus through a corporate focus on demonstrating results and accountability and enhancing monitoring, reporting and evaluation.

- And the review found that evaluations in WFP were relevant and useful both as accountability tools and benefited country programmes, global policy and strategy development.

Turning to the specific recommendations:

- First I'd like to express my gratitude for the extensive consultation that has taken place between WFP management, the Office of Evaluation and the Executive Board, through its List focal points, and more broadly through the Evaluation Roundtable in developing these responses. This dialogue has yielded a clear and robust way forward for evaluation within WFP.

- Recommendation 1 is the central recommendation of this review. It calls on WFP management to define an appropriate model for its evaluation function based on one of three distinct proposals set out in the Peer Review. In broad terms, the models are distinguished by the degree to which decentralization plays a role in the envisaged evaluation function.

- Management agrees and has taken great care to consider the costs and benefits of each model as well as the current status of change and development of key functions in the organization. The results of the recent the Business Process Review (BPR) assessment of decentralized evaluation capacity have also shaped our approach. With this in mind, WFP will pursue a modified version of Model 2 which essentially maintains a centralized evaluation function and adopts a phased and prioritized approach.

- Moving towards demand-led decentralized evaluation, remains the desired longer term goal of WFP's evaluation function. The first step in implementing this approach will focus on a review and strengthening of WFP's monitoring capacities. Priority will also be given to laying foundations for decentralized evaluation through standard setting and guidance. This approach also recognizes short-term resource and capacity constraints and will allow for stock taking at critical junctures to assess the extent to which monitoring

capacities have been sufficiently strengthened to both complement and frame subsequent decentralization efforts.

- Recommendation 3 is about the role of the Executive Board in the oversight of WFP's evaluation function. It calls on the Board to request a set of key performance indicators that support oversight. Having consulted List focal points, we suggest agreement with this recommendation and propose to work with the Office of Evaluation to identify appropriate indicators critical for Board oversight.

- I would now like to speak briefly about those recommendations with which we have only partially agreed.

- Recommendation 4 addresses the processes for management response to evaluations in WFP, with particular attention on follow-up actions to recommendations. The review suggests there is scope for further improvement in the quality and effectiveness of the follow-up processes. Management partially agrees with this recommendation. We recognize there is potential for enhancing quality and effectiveness; but we think this is better addressed through a stronger application of existing mechanisms rather than through the introduction of new roles and response processes, as the prescribed actions suggest.

- Recommendation 5 is about evaluation independence. The Review suggests that OEV should take ownership of all aspects of a given evaluation report, including its recommendations. While agreeing with the spirit of the recommendation, the Office of Evaluation (OEV) suggests that current arrangements are most appropriate for WFP. That is, external evaluation teams remain responsible for conduct, analysis and reporting of an evaluation, but these are ultimately managed by a designated OEV evaluation manager. This is consistent with independence safeguards appropriate for WFP's rotational staffing policy.

- On Recommendation 9, which focuses on the roles and responsibilities of the organization as a whole, management partially agrees. We accept the need for a clear delineation of roles across

the organization with respect to evaluation but suggest this can be done within existing reporting lines.

- I would next draw your attention to Recommendation 12 for which we now indicate our full agreement, following discussions at the Roundtable and subsequent amendments to the JIU report. The proposed term limit, six years and no re-entry, is in line with both this Peer Review and the recommended term prescribed in the draft JIU report.

- The remaining Recommendations (2, 6-8, 10, 11, 13-15) prescribe a number of actions covering evaluation strategy and policy; development of standards and guidance; and enhancements of staff capacities and expertise relevant to evaluation. Each of these recommendations are accepted and proposed follow-up actions are detailed in the response document.

- Thank you Madam President.