

**EXECUTIVE BOARD – ODC RD STATEMENT
JUNE 2012**

SLIDE 1:

INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW OF THE FOOD SECURITY OF THE REGION

- Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,
- The MENA region continues to suffer the effects of the global economic slowdown through reductions in trade, revenue, reduced foreign investment and tourism. This has resulted in increased unemployment and higher food insecurity.
- In response, ODC continues to emphasize addressing the acute food security challenges in a number of countries through relief and recovery operations while simultaneously addressing long-term bottlenecks by **boosting national capacity to ensure that we adopt holistic solutions to tackle regional food insecurity.**
- Compounding the macro economic downturns, annual grain losses are estimated at more than 16 million tones across the whole Near East region. Some 15 percent of vegetables and legumes and more than 30 percent of perishable foods such as fruit, vegetables, dairy products, meat and fish are also wasted annually.
- Malnutrition continues to be a challenge in the region. According to WFP's Comprehensive Food Security Survey (CFSS) of May 2012, **44.5 percent of the population or 10 million people in YEMEN are food insecure.** Nearly double the number since the last CFSS survey in 2009. Chronic malnutrition – as defined by stunting - among children is also alarmingly high at 47 percent.
- Most countries in the **Caucuses and Central Asia** have recovered the output losses suffered during the 2008-9 global economic crisis, yet growth remains slower than before the crisis in most countries of the region after several consecutive years of poor harvests which have weakened the buying power of many families.

SLIDE 2:

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES UPDATE

- In 2012, WFP ODC is placing strategic focus on three major goals: i) **Strengthening emergency disaster/preparedness response;** ii) **Enhancing national food security including Food Subsidy , Safety Nets Systems and climate change adaptation**

programming; and iii) **Contribute to improving regional nutrition and addressing 'hidden hunger'**.

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EMERGENCIES

- **SYRIA** is a top priority where WFP continues to adapt to the increasing needs. Since February this year, WFP has increased its planned number of beneficiaries from 100,000 to 500,000.
- We are operating in an extremely difficult environment with security presenting a serious challenge especially affecting both access and monitoring activities. WFP is working on strengthening its presence in the field, especially with regards to monitoring the areas declared as “no go” by UNDSS.
- In addition, WFP has been meeting immediate needs of Syrian refugees in neighboring countries through two IR EMOPs: one in Lebanon (15,000 refugees) and another in Jordan (25,000 Syrians).
- Based on common assessments and planning with UNHCR and partner UN agencies, WFP is launching a Regional EMOP; the EMOP fits within the framework of the UN Regional Response Plan (RRP).

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- Our other priority in the region is **YEMEN** given the overall deteriorating humanitarian crisis. Despite the unstable security environment, WFP Yemen has already scaled up its humanitarian assistance in 2012 to assist 3.6 million vulnerable people at a cost of US\$ 207 million.

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT AND NATIONAL OWNERSHIP

- All our programmes place special emphasis on developing sustainable interventions in close coordination with national partners. In Iraq, Egypt, Opt, and Jordan (to list a few), WFP collaborates with the Government on a range of activities; including the revision of national food security strategies, reviewing the design of the cash based national Social Safety Set (SSN), setting up food security monitoring and evaluation systems, and developing disaster risk reduction and disaster management capacity.

ADAPTATION OF WFP APPROACHES IN RESPONSE TO CHANGING NEEDS

- We continue to adjust our programmes and response plans to evolving contexts. In Egypt, WFP and other EXCOM agencies (UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA) are in the process of formulating a further extension of the Country Programme, during January - June 2013 to ensure national ownership.
- In **Libya**, the interim government is gradually increasing the level of social assistance it provides to poor and other vulnerable individuals. WFP is therefore reducing the number of beneficiaries and drafting its exit strategy to successfully conclude the programme in 2012.

SLIDES 6-7

SUPPORTING SAFETY NETS

- We continue to implement safety net programmes with considerable success in the region. WFP plans to expand its school feeding programmes in Armenia, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Jordan and other countries.
- We are also expanding the implementation of Voucher activities in the region. **C&V activities have now been implemented in 8 operations with a total value of US\$ 72.4 million.** Voucher programmes will be launched in Lebanon & Jordan in support of the Syrian refugees.

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CONCLUSION (INCLUDING PARTNERSHIPS)

- Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,
- Thank you for all your support.