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MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SUMMARY EVALUATION REPORT OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY PROTRACTED RELIEF AND RECOVERY OPERATION 103871

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NOTE TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

This document is submitted to the Executive Board for consideration

The Secretariat invites members of the Board who may have questions of a technical nature with regard to this document to contact the WFP staff focal points indicated below, preferably well in advance of the Board's meeting.

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BACKGROUND

1. This document presents the Secretariat's response to the recommendations from the evaluation of WFP's protracted relief and recovery operation (PRRO) 103871 in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.
2. The Secretariat welcomes the findings on the relevance and efficiency of operational design, effectiveness of implementation and sustainability of interventions, and acknowledges the need to enhance capacity in the country office to effectively deliver assistance.
3. The detailed management responses and action to implement the recommendations are presented in the matrix.

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Recommendations	Action by	Management response and action taken	Implementation deadline
General food distribution			
1. The country office should continue its initiatives to replace general food distribution (GFD) with voucher-based schemes. Expansion of such schemes should be on a controlled and incremental basis, with careful attention to the lessons learned from pilot projects and the requirements for adequate monitoring and management.	Country office	Agreed. Under the new PRRO, WFP will progressively replace GFD with voucher-based schemes in urban areas and where market conditions allow, and will shift from paper to electronic vouchers. It is envisaged that under the new two-year project, the number of beneficiaries receiving vouchers instead of GFD could reach 150,000. However, WFP will first conduct an impact assessment in order to determine the pace of expansion.	January 2011
2. If its mandate allows, the country office should explore the option of replacing GFD with cash-based schemes, initially on the West Bank, even if this means having another agency implement the operation. Management requirements should be carefully determined.	Country office	Agreed. WFP will explore the option of replacing GFD with cash-based schemes as it analyses the use of vouchers during implementation of the next PRRO. This requires identifying partners with the capacity to implement cash programmes. WFP will also review and learn from the experience of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in implementing these programmes.	July 2012
3. Further research into targeting is needed and should sample the population as a whole. The methodological limitations identified in the targeting review, especially the focus on existing beneficiaries, should be recognized.	Country office	Agreed. WFP recognizes the limitations of the targeting review. However other targeting mechanisms such as the poverty-based proxy means test formula (PMTF) have been tested by the Ministry of Social Affairs and will be implemented from September 2010. In addition, WFP will combine PMTF and food consumption scores to target beneficiaries of some programmes. New application forms for participation in WFP programmes are being prepared, reflecting the changes in targeting.	September 2010
Food for work and food for training			
4. Food-for-training (FFT) and food-for-work (FFW) initiatives should put much greater emphasis on assessing long-term outcomes and prioritizing initiatives with sustainable components that promote livelihoods. For FFT, this means prioritizing training in marketable skills.	Country office	Agreed. Activities in the new PRRO aim to promote long-term resilience and protection of farming livelihoods through interventions that increase agricultural productivity and protect the environment. These include building the capacity of farming women and helping to increase their incomes by delivering food processing and conservation training, supporting the local economy and building the marketing capacity of participating shops.	July 2011



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5. The country office should consider prioritizing the planting of olive trees under FFW.	Country office	Agreed. As a component of the next PRRO, WFP will support the planting of 196,000 seedlings, including olive trees.	From July 2011
6. The country office should institute spot checks and assessments of work completed under FFW.	Country office	WFP already performs spot checks and ex-post assessments (using community asset score) of work completed under FFW activities, and will continue to do so as part of the upcoming voucher-for-training and voucher-for-work activities in the next PRRO.	Completed
7. The country office should consider working with more and a variety of types of partners in FFW and FFT initiatives. Selection of cooperating partners should be based primarily on interest in and capacity for identifying and supporting programmes that promote livelihoods, rather than on targeting vulnerable people. Priority should be given to local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), or to international NGOs willing and able to work with local NGOs. For this, WFP will need to expand its management capacity appropriately.	Country office	Agreed. In the context of within-country funding, the country office has discussed the possibility of working with local and international partners on FFW and FFT initiatives. WFP will implement these activities in the next PRRO in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture (technical assistance) and the Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committee, a local NGO, which works in cooperation with local community-based organizations. The country office will explore ways to expand its management capacity, subject to the availability of funding.	January 2011
School feeding			
8. The current pilot project should not be expanded until the proposed consultancy on school feeding is complete and the proposed research into impact has been planned. Important elements of an impact study are set out in Annex A of the main evaluation report.	Country office	WFP will conduct a decentralized internal evaluation of the school feeding project, including an impact study focusing on retention, enrolment and attendance rates, and on children's attention at school. WFP will expand its school feeding project in the next PRRO from 63,000 to 75,000 beneficiaries, targeting basic schools only as recommended by the Headquarters-led school feeding design support mission in December 2009. As recommended, the expansion will be carried out through a targeting exercise with the Ministry of Education and will focus on marginalized areas.	July 2011 Completed



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Recommendations	Action by	Management response and action taken	Implementation deadline
Institutional feeding			
9. Institutional feeding should be continued along current lines, but should still be considered an interim measure until the Palestinian Authority is able to resume its responsibilities.	Country office	Agreed.	Ongoing
Procurement and logistics			
10. The country office should expand the local purchase of food items even when prices are higher, because this both supports the local economy and improves the efficiency, effectiveness, flexibility and timeliness of deliveries. The country office should develop guidelines on acceptable cost premiums for local purchase, taking such other benefits into account.	Country office/ Regional Bureau/ Headquarters	In line with WFP regulations and Palestinian Authority policy, WFP will continue its efforts to expand local purchases and local processing whenever possible, and will continue to encourage donors to fund local procurement. The country office, with support from the Regional Bureau and Headquarters, will develop guidelines for local purchases that stimulate the local economy.	Ongoing
11. In considering local purchases, the country office should analyse all costs involved, and establish who benefits from such initiatives and their impact on the local economy.	Country office	Agreed.	December 2010
12. The country office should study the effectiveness and impact of purchasing vegetable oil locally, including the option of importing oilseed for local milling.	Country office	Subject to the availability of funding, the country office will conduct the recommended study and incorporate the findings into the guidelines indicated in Recommendation 10.	December 2010
13. The country office should review the option of purchasing olive oil locally, whether regularly or occasionally; if this appears feasible, a study of the impact of such an initiative should be commissioned.	Country office	WFP has already had experience with purchasing olive oil locally, but given limited local production, market distortions occurred. There are also significant seasonal variations that need to be considered. In addition, the cost of locally purchased olive oil is very high.	Not applicable
14. WFP should develop a secure, hand-held, electronic system of receipt and delivery accounting for use at warehouses and other delivery points.	Country office	Agreed. The new electronic system with barcodes and mobile devices will be in place by September 2010.	September 2010



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15. WFP should consider moving the intermediary warehouse in the Gaza Strip away from its insecure location near the border, and relocating the intermediary warehouse for the West Bank within the West Bank, to complement better the contingency stocks held by cooperating partners.	Country office	WFP will conduct a comprehensive study to find suitable storage facilities in both Hebron and Nablus. The initial findings of a study conducted in the Gaza Strip show an acute shortage of appropriate storage facilities, which may force WFP to keep the Karni warehouse running in the short term.	December 2010
Finance			
16. WFP Headquarters should develop the capacity to provide greater interim financial support in response to temporary funding crises.	Headquarters/ Budget and Programming Division	WFP's advance financing facilities are under review, which may lead to an increase in advances available. In 2008, WFP began to pilot the Forward Purchase Facility, resulting in significant reductions in lead times for purchasing food; and formed the Strategic Resource Allocation Committee, which is responsible for guiding the allocation of multilateral resources and structuring donor discussions on directed contributions to increase fundraising capacity and improve funding predictability. WFP continues to improve its management of short-term funding shortfalls, but re-sizing programmes is sometimes the most responsible action to take.	Ongoing. Proposals presented to the Board by November 2010.
Advocacy			
17. In collaboration with other United Nations agencies, the country office should advocate with the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories and/or other Israeli authorities to: i) allow Palestinian trucks to start loading at Kerem Shalom as soon as cargo is available; ii) install lighting to allow movement after dark; and iii) handle transport waybills in a recognized professional manner.	Country office	Agreed. WFP, together with other United Nations agencies, will continue to advocate with the authorities.	Ongoing
18. In collaboration with other United Nations agencies, the country office should take a lead in explaining the practical impact of the political restrictions on the effectiveness of humanitarian operations, and the extent to which they undermine humanitarian responsibilities. The objective would be to have the restrictions modified, in both theory and practice.	Country office	Restrictions stem from the fact that the United Nations is part of the Quartet on the Middle East, adhering to the "no-contact" policy. WFP will continue to advocate through the humanitarian country team for more flexibility.	Ongoing



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Recommendations	Action by	Management response and action taken	Implementation deadline
19. In collaboration with other United Nations agencies, the country office should advocate to mitigate the impact of closure and blockade. In particular, WFP should focus on efforts to lift restrictions on the commercial shipment of specific foods and on the reopening of the Gaza Strip crossing points.	Country office	Agreed. WFP, in collaboration with other United Nations agencies and the humanitarian country team, will continue to advocate through various fora.	Ongoing
Planning and monitoring			
20. Logframes for the next PRRO should be better aligned with the context of the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the goals to be achieved and should include relevant and – where possible – measurable indicators. The logframes should be based firmly on the realities of the operation and be clearly connected to WFP Strategic Objectives.	Country office	Completed. The new PRRO will be submitted to the Board in November 2010.	Completed
21. Monitoring and reporting procedures should be based on indicators developed in the revised logframes.	Country office	Completed. The results-based management toolkit for the new PRRO reflects the revised logical framework.	Completed
22. Field monitor assistant training should be improved, especially with regard to qualitative assessment.	Country office	Completed. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) staff have been trained in qualitative data collection and communication skills.	Completed
23. The work of programme and M&E staff should be more closely integrated.	Country office	Agreed. Programme and M&E staff meet regularly and share information to address identified gaps.	Completed
24. After an initial quality check, the first draft of a WFP evaluation report should be circulated to all WFP stakeholders so that inputs and comments can be made concurrently and at an early date. The evaluation team should be debriefed by the Office of Evaluation at or near the end of the evaluation process.	Headquarters/ Office of Evaluation	This recommendation suggests processes that have already been implemented in the Evaluation Quality Assurance System. Therefore no follow-up action is required.	Not applicable

