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REPORT ON THE FIELD VISIT TO KENYA OF THE WFP EXECUTIVE BOARD

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NOTE TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

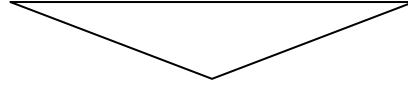
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The Secretariat invites members of the Board who may have questions of a technical nature with regard to this document to contact the WFP staff focal points indicated below, preferably well in advance of the Board's meeting.

Secretary to the Executive Board: Ms C. von Roehl tel.: 066513-2603

Should you have any questions regarding matters of dispatch of documentation for the Executive Board, please contact Ms I. Carpitella, Administrative Assistant, Conference Servicing Unit (tel.: 066513-2645).

DRAFT DECISION*



The Board takes note of “Report of the Field Visit to Kenya of the WFP Executive Board” (WFP/EB.A/2010/15-A).

* This is a draft decision. For the final decision adopted by the Board, please refer to the Decisions and Recommendations document issued at the end of the session.

PARTICIPANTS

- Ms Fatma Hussein Saber, Alternate Permanent Representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt (Representative of List A)
- Mrs Tritaporn Khomapat, Minister (Agriculture), Permanent Representative of Thailand (Representative of List B)
- Ms Andrea Londoño Osorio, Counsellor, Deputy Permanent Representative of Colombia (Representative of List C)
- H.E. James Alexander Harvey, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom (Representative of List D)
- Mr Arsen Vartanyan, First Secretary, Alternate Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation (Representative of List E)
- Ms Claudia von Roehl, Secretary to the Executive Board

INTRODUCTION

1. Representatives of the Executive Board visited Kenya between 1 and 6 March 2010; this was the first time Kenya had received a Board visit. The visit was divided between the capital, Nairobi, where WFP's work is focused on informal urban settlements, and the arid and semi-arid lands (known as the "ASAL") in which WFP has a range of activities initiated in response to moderate and high levels of food insecurity.
2. The team had discussions with the ministers or senior staff from the ministries of Education, Water, Special Programmes/Office of the President and Development of Northern Kenya and other Arid Lands; with the United Nations country team (UNCT), including the Resident Coordinator; and with donor representatives. In the field members met local government staff, community members, refugee camp residents, schoolchildren and implementing partner representatives.
3. The team visited Kibera in Nairobi, described as Africa's largest slum, and saw school feeding and programmes for children living with AIDS supported by WFP. In the arid areas they visited the refugee camp at Dadaab in Eastern Province; and Dertu village near Garissa – one of the United Nations Millennium Village Project sites. In the semi-arid areas the team visited locations in Mwingi District (semi-arid) where WFP is supporting food-for-assets and Purchase for Progress (P4P) initiatives.

CONTEXT

4. Kenya is a low-income food-deficit country ranking 148th out of 177 countries on the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) human development index. According to the 2007–2008 human development report endemic poverty, relatively low income growth in the drought-prone arid and semi-arid lands and high population growth are resulting in increasing hunger. The country is prone to severe and recurrent food insecurity related to climatic shocks. Most families in the ASAL are vulnerable to food insecurity and many resort to negative and drastic coping mechanisms such as the sale of livestock and other assets. Overall:

- Absolute **poverty has declined** from 52 percent in 1997 to 46 percent in 2005/06 but **inequality** remains high.
 - **The population** is 38.3 million. **Life expectancy** is 53 years. One in fourteen children die before their fifth birthday.
 - **Gross national income (GNI)** per capita is US\$770, compared to the sub-saharan Africa average of US\$1,082.
 - One in five Kenyans **cannot meet their basic food needs**.
 - **HIV/AIDS** peaked in the late 1990s with an overall prevalence of 10 percent in adults and has declined modestly to 7.4 percent (1.4 million people) in 2007.
 - The **economy** has begun to recover following multiple shocks (electoral violence, drought, food and fuel prices and the global downturn). Following growth of 1.7 percent in 2008 and 2.0 percent in 2009, a growth rate of 3.1 percent is projected for 2010.
5. Until 2008 Kenya had for several decades maintained a high level of political stability. However the December 2007 elections were followed by a wave of post-election violence. The power-sharing agreement and coalition government set up in early 2008 established new ministries for the Development of Northern Kenya and other Arid Lands and Nairobi Metropolitan Development, amongst others. The Government continues to face many challenges. However efforts are being made to deal with underlying tensions including a planned referendum on constitutional reform and land rights.
 6. Kenya is a significant regional economic and geopolitical hub bordering Somalia, Ethiopia, Southern Sudan, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania. The worsening situation in neighbouring Somalia and the potential influx of refugees is one of the main external challenges for the Government. For WFP, Kenya is a strategic transit zone focused on the port of Mombasa through which food aid destined for Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Rwanda, Somalia, Southern Sudan and Uganda is shipped (613,000 mt in 2009).
 7. At the time of the visit the country was in the early stages of recovery from a series of drought years – the short-rains in November–January were the best in some years. Food prices were generally falling but maize prices were still high – a significant factor in determining the level of general food distributions in the ASAL areas.

WFP's Programme in Kenya

8. The Kenya programme is one of WFP's largest. It comprises four operations: the country programme which focuses on school feeding and support to vulnerable people affected by AIDS; a protracted relief and recovery operation (PRRO) which aims to tackle food insecurity in the ASAL areas through general food distribution, emergency school feeding, supplementary feeding, mother and child health, protection rations and food for assets; a second PRRO providing food assistance to refugees in permanent camps in northern and eastern Kenya; and a Purchase for Progress (P4P) programme. The four operations span emergency, recovery, protracted relief and development.

OBSERVATIONS

9. WFP's programme appears to be appropriately focused on the most vulnerable people living in the ASALs and urban informal settlements. It plays different roles according to context, carrying out activities related to relief, recovery and development, in response to local needs and priorities.

Relationship with Government

10. The Kenyan Government has declared its intention to keep food security high on the political agenda and is taking practical measures to develop national food security capacity, for example in-kind donations to WFP, creation of strategic grain reserves, and increased investments in the economic development and infrastructure of the ASAL. The establishment of a ministry dedicated to Northern Kenya is a positive move in recognizing and addressing the needs of the ASAL. However, national coordination efforts on food security appear nascent and are challenged by implementation issues such as fragmentation of budgets and line ministries' variable capacities at district level. The involvement of other national actors (local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society and private sector) in tackling hunger and food insecurity is also vital.
11. The United Nations is a strategic partner of Government, and WFP's activities on the ground appear to be aligned with national plans, policies and strategies. Board representatives were conscious of the importance and support the Government gives to the presence and work of WFP and other United Nations agencies. One obvious demonstration of such support is the recent agreement to allocate land for an extension of the Dadaab refugee camp, a step the team found highly commendable. The team observed close coordination between local government and WFP at field level. Many valuable views were expressed by the local officials including on how to further improve the effectiveness of programmes in which WFP participates. Government officials expressed an awareness of the importance of hand-over strategies and the question of transitioning from dependence on food aid.

Relationship with United Nations Country Team and other Partners

12. WFP appears to be well integrated within the UNCT at central level. However there may be room to improve coordination among UNCT in planning and implementation of activities in the field, based on the comparative advantages of each partner. Within this a focus on the Rome-based agencies is required, particularly given the fact that Nairobi plays a vital geopolitical role in the region. This trilateral cooperation is hampered in Kenya by the lack of a full-time International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) representation and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations' (FAO) limited field deployment in the ASAL.

School Feeding, Food for Training and Working with AIDS-Affected People

13. The team observed with appreciation the effective use of targeted school feeding as a tool to reach some 720,000 vulnerable children in urban slum, refugee camp and rural community settings (in Kibera, Dadaab and Garissa District, respectively). The Government appears to assume increasing responsibility for school feeding: in 2009 it launched the Home Grown School Feeding Programme to deliver a daily hot meal to some 540,000 children previously provided by WFP, with food purchased by schools from local

markets and farmers. The aim is to ensure that this partnership will be reaching the most in-need districts. Another area where food assistance appeared to be a useful tool was in support of vocational training programmes in Dadaab town.

14. AIDS and related illnesses have killed 1.5 million people in Kenya, leaving some 2.4 million children orphaned. The team visited a clinic in Kibera providing anti-retroviral treatment (ART) to children with AIDS. We heard first hand from the clinic's staff about the need to ensure children had food to enable them to tolerate the treatment. WFP's activities in this field began with a pilot programme and currently reach 75,000 people.

General Food Distributions (and other Forms of Distribution)

15. The team observed general food distributions in Dadaab Camp and in Garissa District. In both cases operations were managed by WFP's implementing partners. In Dadaab, whilst distributions amounting to 6,000 mt per month appeared well organized, we were struck by how what must have been planned as a temporary measure had become "institutionalized" over time – the camp having been in existence since 1990 with some families now into their third generation. We welcome the fact that WFP is building a new distribution centre that will offer a more pleasant environment. We were unable to observe other forms of distribution i.e. blanket or targeted supplementary feeding, nor to form a view of how these different approaches are perceived by beneficiaries. Nor were we able to form a view on efficiency (in terms of inclusion or exclusion error) although at one location we visited local people complained that some people were missing out.

Refugees

16. The existence of large semi-permanent camps such as Dadaab and Kakuma presents highly specific challenges for Government, the United Nations and WFP. We were told that in Dadaab (a three-camp complex of 260,000 people described as the oldest, largest and most congested camp in the world) numbers of refugees were still increasing, with a concern about the possibility of further influxes should the situation in southern Somalia deteriorate. There is evidence of economic activity in the camps (bars, internet cafes) and this further amplifies the issue of how to also support "host" communities.

Food for Assets

17. WFP is working with the Arid Lands Resource Management Project and local implementing partners to support creation of assets ranging from in-field soil and water conservation in semi-arid areas to livestock watering pans in the dryer rangelands. Both zones are prone to drought and have significant numbers of people who are chronically food-insecure and hence in periodic and sometimes permanent need of food assistance.
18. Food for assets represents a more dignified and productive way of distributing food to people who are in periodic need. It can be considered an innovative tool to bridge the gap between relief and recovery and contribute to the longer-term food security scenarios. It can be an effective way to support local agricultural development and a stimulus for local communities and Government to invest more in rural infrastructure.
19. Land improvement has been a feature of Kenyan policy for many years and is a core component of the current ASAL strategy. If this is the primary objective then there may be alternative ways of achieving it. Some of WFP's implementing partners have been delivering cash for assets with success; indeed we were told this is the preferred modality of the Ministry of Water. The point is not which of food for assets or cash-for-assets is better – this will depend on a range of factors including beneficiary preference. But being limited to food transfers reduces WFP's flexibility to deliver a more appropriate mix.

Purchase for Progress

20. Purchase for Progress in Kenya is a pilot. The team was impressed with the innovative way in which it is being implemented. Whilst P4P has been able to purchase maize in central Kenya at competitive prices, WFP is focusing on the uncontrolled markets (e.g. for sorghum) in medium-potential areas outside of the central maize zone where marketing is less well developed, working through small-scale traders such as the one in Mwingi District whose warehouse the team visited. However it is facing some challenges. In some areas the team heard that WFP is this year facing problems with quality – notably dangerously high aflatoxin levels in contracted grain. The co-location of P4P and food for assets within the same district introduces an additional conundrum – that in poor seasons when food assistance needs are highest production is lowest, and *vice versa*.
21. In addressing these issues the team noted the potential for partnership with the other Rome-based agencies. That said, WFP is already obtaining excellent technical input from Kenyan organizations such as the Ministry of Agriculture, the national agricultural research organization and specialist NGOs and it is too early in the P4P experiment to say whether IFAD investment would be appropriate.

Millennium Village Project

22. In Dertu village (one of two Millennium Villages in Kenya and 14 in Africa) the team observed improvements in a range of basic services including health, education, water, animal health and animal nutrition. The approach is being tailored to the needs of pastoral communities for which Dertu is a focal service centre (rather than a place of residence). The Millennium Village Project aims to demonstrate how a set of *simultaneous* basic improvements can lead to radical improvements in poor people's lives. As a demonstration it appears to be having some success; however the challenge will be how to ensure sustainability, about which the team had questions.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

23. Kenya is a challenging environment owing to the intricate economic, political and regional context. But WFP experiences good cooperation with the Government at national and local level. And the prevalence of food insecurity in the country justifies a significant WFP presence.
24. WFP assistance is evidently benefiting large numbers of food-insecure people. But there is a need for a more strategic approach by Government and its partners to tackling the structural reasons for food insecurity and vulnerability in which there is a fuller integration and rationalization of WFP's contributions. In the ASAL areas there is a need to move towards a Government-led, multi-year, safety net approach that transitions the predictably food-insecure beneficiary caseload from seasonal general food distribution to protective and productive livelihoods support. WFP needs to continue to fully engage with Government and the donor community to address the challenges of both urban and ASAL areas.
25. The WFP country office in Kenya is not in line to develop a new-style country strategy. However there would be merit in the WFP team thinking through how the different elements of the current suite of activities might better relate to and support one another. This is particularly important in light of the underfunding of all three main operations and the need to maximize synergies. The team offers some specific recommendations:

➤ **School feeding, food for training and working with AIDS-affected people**

Continue to develop nationally owned school feeding programmes as a part of social safety policy. At the same time support gradual hand-over of responsibility to the Government and communities in order to maintain the sustainability and continuity of WFP school feeding projects. Pay more attention not only to the educational aspect of school feeding but also to other implications: health, social protection, nutrition, etc. Strengthen partnership with the World Bank, in particular, in delivering a renewed concept of school feeding as a social safety net.

➤ **General food distributions (and other forms of distribution)**

As a trail use cash/vouchers alongside physical distribution in general food distributions, notably in Dadaab camp.¹ This has several potential benefits: bringing a degree of “normalcy” to food distribution; providing a way in which the presence of the camp can provide economic benefit to the host community as suppliers; and potential cash savings. There are risks – a large but physically isolated community could be hostage to market exploitation – but they can be managed.

➤ **Food for assets**

Complement food for assets with cash-based approaches. We heard from implementing partners and beneficiaries that for some people and in some seasons cash-based asset programmes would be preferable. Some of WFP’s partners are already delivering cash-based programmes and it would make sense for WFP to have the flexibility to vary its delivery modality. Cash and voucher interventions should remain at a pilot level and optional until links between beneficiaries and markets and the consequences of their impact on the market prices are thoroughly evaluated.

➤ **Purchase for Progress**

Continue with the experiment, which has strong innovative elements. The ultimate objective of establishing a food chain from producer to consumer and ensuring access by small farmers to local and regional markets is extremely important and deserves appreciation. But carefully explore questions of volume, quality, sustainability, cost effectiveness and the issue of seasonality (in years when food assistance needs are high the options for local purchase are reduced). Conduct a mid-term evaluation to explore these issues.

➤ **Millennium Village Project**

In order not to further complicate achievement of long-term sustainability WFP's intervention in Dertu village should be limited and equivalent to that in other ASAL areas. Lack of good data is a significant problem across the ASAL, and the Millennium Village Project, through its comprehensive data collection and analysis, may provide useful insights into the effectiveness and impacts of different food assistance tools.

¹ The team understands that WFP Kenya is considering a trial of cash/vouchers in Dadaab, taking into account the Government’s encampment policy.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

26. The team would sincerely like to thank the WFP Country Director Mr Burkard Oberle and the entire WFP staff in Kenya for organizing the visit and accompanying the team, and for their efforts to ensure open productive and substantive discussions. We would also like to thank the Government of Kenya for facilitating meetings with ministers and senior officials and for helping assure the team's security at all times. And a special note of appreciation to the people and communities who welcomed the team and offered us their gracious hospitality.

ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
NGOs	non-governmental organization
P4P	Purchase for Progress
PRRO	protracted relief and recovery operation
UNCT	United Nations country team