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SUMMARY OF THE WORK OF THE SECOND REGULAR SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD, 2007

In accordance with the methods of work of the Executive Board, the present document reflects the main points of its deliberations to be taken into account by the Secretariat in the implementation of the Board's decisions and recommendations, contained in the document WFP/EB.2/2007/15.

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OPENING REMARKS BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (2007/EB.2/1)

1. The Executive Director began her remarks by emphasizing the safety issues facing many WFP staff in the field, illustrated by the recent deaths of three contract workers in Darfur and the detention without charge of the head of WFP operations in Somalia. She then outlined the challenges, opportunities and hopes for WFP and the humanitarian community in the coming years: although the proportion of hungry people in developing countries was declining, the absolute number was increasing by about 4 million people a year; in order to meet the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of halving the proportion of hungry people by 2015, the rate of improvement would have to increase. The main challenges were: (i) the growing demand for and costs of food, which had increased by 50 percent for WFP over the past five years and were expected to increase by another 35 percent in the next two years; (ii) climate change and increased natural disasters; and (iii) declining availability of resources, which fell by 18 percent between 2005 and 2006. The food aid conference in Berlin in May had concluded that the world seemed to be entering a post-food-surplus age.
2. The quality of WFP's staff and their unique presence in many inaccessible areas was an opportunity. WFP's capping of overheads for Headquarters, regional bureaux and country office expenses at 7 percent of contributions made it a leader in efficiency; to maintain this level would require savings and staff cuts that did not undermine WFP's capacity to respond rapidly to new emergencies. Other opportunities were provided by the linking of WFP interventions to government poverty-reduction and other strategies, and the strengthening of needs assessment and partner capacity-building. Among the causes for hope were reduced food assistance needs, the fact that many past beneficiaries had recently become donors, strong partnerships with other United Nations organizations, governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector, and the increasing trend for cash rather than in-kind contributions, leading to the benefits of more local purchases of food and other resources. The capacity of individual countries to fight hunger was growing. The right to food began with individual responsibility; when families could not provide for themselves, governments normally stepped in to fill the gap. External food assistance was needed only if this was not done.
3. Dr Jacques Diouf, Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), spoke of renewed commitment to collaboration among the Rome-based agencies; it was the first time that the full range of collaboration was being recorded systematically. A number of patterns and preliminary conclusions had already emerged from the mapping exercise. The establishment of food-security theme groups at country level illustrated the importance of this collaboration. He also stressed that greater cooperation had improved needs assessments and that advocacy was being greatly enhanced through the International Alliance Against Hunger.
4. Sir J. Holmes, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, emphasized that WFP's role was crucial, not only as a provider of emergency relief, but also as a bridge spanning the emergency phase and longer-term recovery and rehabilitation efforts. He noted that a more coordinated system of information collection and a common system of classification needed to be devised; better and quicker needs assessments were needed to improve United Nations humanitarian responses; and simple, reliable methods of evaluation were also important to assess in a more reliable manner the impact of what the humanitarian community provided.



5. He observed that climate change, which he saw as a security issue, threatened millions of people, particularly poor subsistence farmers, and that WFP/FAO collaboration was hence more important than ever. Disaster risk reduction and disaster preparedness deserved much more attention. The ability of local and national governments to prepare for and respond to crises needed to be strengthened.
6. He also emphasized that the United Nations, NGOs and donors should continue to work together to increase the level of resources to meet an escalation of humanitarian crises: funding from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) was significant but not sufficient, and sources including the private sector needed to be tapped. Innovative thinking was needed. In praising the cluster approach, he noted that it could help to build a truly global humanitarian response capacity.
7. The Board offered its condolences to the families of the staff who had lost their lives. Members warmly commended the work of the Rome-based agencies – particularly WFP – and the increasing use of collaboration and partnerships, noting in particular the important contributions of the cluster approach and CERF. Board members welcomed the innovative consultation process used to design the forthcoming Strategic Plan, and expressed their commitment to supporting WFP's work on streamlining and enhancing efficiency.
8. Several Board members emphasized that WFP's main role was in emergency response; others recognized that differentiation among emergencies, recovery and development should not be too rigid and that WFP had a significant role to play in development work that aimed to prevent the onset of widespread hunger. A strong, well-resourced WFP was an essential part of the worldwide response to hunger and vulnerability. Board members reiterated the central importance of partnerships in addressing the problem of hunger, stressing in particular the need to work with governments in aligning WFP's work with national policies and programmes and in encouraging governments and national authorities to assume ownership of hunger-reduction and prevention programmes.
9. The Executive Director thanked the Board for its support, reiterating WFP's commitment to strengthening its links and partnerships, improving its needs assessment and early warning systems and experimenting with innovative approaches.

POLICY ISSUES

WFP Strategic Plan Concept Note (2007/EB.2/2)

10. The Executive Director began by emphasizing that WFP's work had to be tailored to the needs of the countries it served. The priorities set out in the strategy were: (i) to fill gaps in national capacities to address acute hunger; (ii) to improve the capacity of countries to prevent acute hunger; (iii) to strengthen countries' capacities to prevent the cycle of hunger from perpetuating itself; and (iv) to fill gaps in national capacities to alleviate hunger. Two informal consultations would be held before February 2008 for further discussion of the Strategic Plan. The Secretariat emphasized the importance of considering country contexts in drawing up WFP plans.
11. Board members observed that there was uncertainty in determining whether a situation called for emergency relief or long-term actions. Some members stressed that WFP needed to focus on its core competencies, including leadership of logistics clusters. Some delegations were uncertain as to whether WFP's role should extend as far as risk prevention and mitigation, which might be better suited to FAO and the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD). WFP was first and foremost a food-based agency:



full analysis was needed before non-food activities were considered. Some Board members expressed doubt as to whether WFP should be looking to broaden its role at a time when funding was becoming more constrained and food and fuel prices were rising. Questions were raised as to whether WFP had the capacity to extend its logistics services, especially in a scenario where current grants did not increase, the donor base was not extended and there was no further investment from the private sector. Some members suggested that WFP should keep and where possible increase its role in long-term solutions to hunger and that the document did not give sufficient attention to development.

12. Some members asked for an analysis of WFP's strengths and weaknesses in development work compared with other United Nations agencies in order to decide which were best placed and equipped to provide the required services. It was pointed out that WFP could help to promote sustainability from its current work, building on ongoing work such as school feeding and food for training, and by helping to increase access to farmers' markets. The Board approved the emphasis in the Concept Note on ensuring that WFP's work was flexible and sensitive to national needs and policies; WFP could promote sustainability by integrating its work with government plans in each country and by ensuring that the needs of communities were understood and addressed. Board members pointed out that WFP's presence in a country could attract the attention of governments and partners to problems in the country. Greater emphasis should also be given to hand-over strategies and partnerships. Full and multi-sector needs assessments should be carried out to ensure that WFP's responses matched needs and that the tools used were effective; one advantage would be a reduction in delivery costs. Some Board members asked for further detail on how approaches involving many agencies, partners and governments might be made to work. Board members emphasized that cooperation among the United Nations agencies and with NGOs was essential.
13. The Executive Director welcomed the consensus in the Board as to the pivotal role of WFP and agreed that building agreement on the strategy was now needed to move forward, stressing that the current strategy outline was still in progress. She pointed out that the debate on development as opposed to emergency response was a false issue in that WFP's work was often difficult to define in terms of classification into emergency or development categories. Examples of the difficulty of distinguishing between development and emergency response were drawn from Ethiopia, Niger, southern Sudan and Swaziland. There was also apparent ambiguity as to whether responses to climate change could be defined as emergency response or prevention. The Executive Director highlighted the effectiveness of the cluster approach in enabling rapid, customized responses to emergencies, for example in Lebanon and West Africa.
14. The Secretariat also noted the need for consensus and emphasized that planning for the future must be a shared task; the outlined plans were a work in progress, and a great deal more detail and discussion with the Board were still to come.

Gender and Geographical Diversity: A Way Forward for Meeting Established Targets (2007/EB.2/3)

15. In response to the Secretariat's presentation of the paper, the Board noted that the ratio of senior professional staff from developing countries was 27 percent, significantly less than the overall 40.5 percent ratio of staff from developing countries. Board members welcomed the fact that 50 percent of Assistant Secretary-General posts were filled by nationals from developing countries. They also emphasized the benefits that could accrue from having country directors from developing countries, because such staff were likely to have more in-depth understanding of the countries to which they were assigned. Board



members were particularly encouraged by efforts to prepare women for future roles and welcomed the gender-awareness programmes being introduced by WFP.

16. The Board emphasized that meeting targets in gender and geographical diversity should not be at the expense of finding the best individual for any given job. Some members asked how WFP sought to recruit staff from countries where there was no WFP presence, and how WFP sought to support women staff members with families and children. The question was raised whether it was necessary to have separate policies on human resources and gender balance; Board members wondered if the two could be merged without hampering gender plans. Some members pointed out that applicants for employment from non-English-speaking countries and countries where a United Nations language was not spoken could be impeded by the requirement of proficiency in a second United Nations language. The possibility of measures to ensure fairer competition for United Nations posts was proposed. Board members expressed the hope that the current attention to environmental and global matters would not overshadow these issues.
17. Some Board members noted that progress towards meeting gender and nationality targets had not been as extensive as had been hoped, and welcomed the appointment of an external consultant to analyse the causes of this disappointing trend.
18. The Secretariat recognized the importance of having the right balance of men and women in middle and senior management positions, partly because it would lead to greater understanding of some of the problems facing developing countries. WFP would continue to explore development opportunities that prepared staff in the lower professional grades for higher-level posts. The Secretariat agreed that appointments should be based on merit and that it was essential to appoint the most appropriate individuals. The human resources strategy would take full account of the gender and geographical issues identified by the Board and the Secretariat.
19. In response to the question from the Board regarding recruitment of staff from countries where WFP did not have a presence, the Secretariat observed that the pool of individuals for recruitment was based on all countries.
20. The Secretariat drew attention to the support it gave to staff with families, highlighting the various WFP policies governing this aspect of human resources management; in particular, WFP was a leader among United Nations agencies in supporting professional women staff with families. The Secretariat recognized that staff with families posted to field stations could face particular difficulties, and that there was a need to consider additional incentives for such staff. With reference to the requirement that applicants for employment have a second United Nations language, the Secretariat recognized the challenge but noted that mobility was central to WFP's work and that lack of an appropriate language had in the past created difficulties with finding staff able to take up certain posts. The Secretariat noted that the Executive Director was fully committed to resolving the issues raised with regard to gender and geographical diversity.

RESOURCE, FINANCIAL AND BUDGETARY MATTERS

WFP Biennial Management Plan (2008–2009) (2007/EB.2/4)

21. The Executive Director and the Secretariat presented the WFP Management Plan (2008-2009) based on forecast operational requirements from existing operations of US\$5.4 billion and the Programme Support and Administrative (PSA) budget of US\$345 million; the plan assumed 90 percent funding of current foreseen operational



requirements. The indirect support costs (ISC) income and the balance of the PSA Equalization Account were expected to be sufficient to fund PSA expenditure for the 2008–2009 biennium. The PSA budget reflected a 21 percent reduction of PSA resources in real terms compared with the 2006–2007 biennium. About 290 staff posts would be eliminated, mainly in Headquarters. The Secretariat explained that the impact on long-term staff would be minimized by early retirement and separation packages and staff redeployment. All the reductions were being made transparently and with stakeholder involvement. Country offices were to be the least affected so that programme quality and outreach could be maintained.

22. Board members were unanimous in their appreciation of the consultation process that had preceded the issue of the Management Plan, and looked forward to its continuation and expansion. They expressed appreciation of the Secretariat's commitment to revisiting the Management Plan after approval of the new Strategic Plan, expected in June 2008. The Board emphasized the need to ensure that budget and staff cuts did not impinge on the quality of WFP's programme delivery. They called for enhanced internal and external oversight and highlighted monitoring and evaluation and needs assessment as priority areas. Board members also expressed their willingness to be more involved in WFP's oversight mechanisms and to discuss the possibility of creating new and more predictable funding modalities for WFP.
23. In response, the Secretariat reiterated WFP's determination to continue the consultation process, highlighting the upcoming paper and seminar on oversight. Management Plan updates would be presented regularly; a full revision of the Management Plan would be presented to the Board in the session following adoption of the Strategic Plan. The Secretariat reminded the Board that WFP's 7 percent ISC rate – unique in the United Nations system – provided sound budgetary discipline. The current financial situation resulted from the inherent operational and funding uncertainty that WFP faces: assumptions about exchange rates and new emergencies in the Management Plan 2006–2007 had not materialized. The Secretariat looked forward to discussing with the Board more predictable funding modalities in the light of the Strategic Plan discussions.

Termination Payments for Service Contract Holders (2007/EB.2/5)

24. In response to the presentation of the paper by the Secretariat, Board members observed that under current arrangements there were situations where WFP staff were doing similar jobs under different working terms and conditions.
25. Questions were raised by Board members as to WFP's approach to outsourcing and the level of consultation with regard to the decision on termination payments. Some members recommended that WFP's contractual arrangements be aligned with those of other United Nations agencies.
26. In response, the Secretariat observed that the issue of consultation had been discussed by senior management: WFP was committed to consultation with all appropriate bodies, and its decisions would be based on sound analysis. Steps were being taken to ensure fair and equitable contract conditions for all WFP staff: these included systematic staffing reviews and regular awareness-raising exercises for managers. On the question of outsourcing, the Secretariat assured the Board that WFP was encouraging country offices to employ the practice for non-critical personnel with a view to maintaining the flexibility needed to respond to sudden and unpredictable emergencies.



Has Decentralisation Met the World Food Programme's Operational Needs? Report by the External Auditor (2007/EB.2/6)

27. The External Auditor introduced the report on decentralization, which provided analysis and comment on the mixed results of decentralization, the delegation of accountability among Headquarters, regional bureaux and country offices, and the appropriateness and flexibility of WFP's structure in terms of providing rapid emergency responses in varying locations. Although the Secretariat's formal response to the Auditor's recommendations would be made at the First Regular Session of 2008, the findings of the report were relevant to decision-making for the Management Plan (2008–2009).
28. The Board noted the concerns raised in the report: absence of the expected reduction in staffing levels at Headquarters, inconsistencies in the oversight role among the regional bureaux, the need for offices and staff to be appropriately located, the importance of matching resource levels to needs, and the use of consultants. Board members emphasized that decentralization must benefit the recipients of WFP assistance: they requested the Secretariat to provide: (i) an assessment of this issue; (ii) clarification of the oversight functions in regional bureaux; (iii) a review of WFP's structure; and (iv) regular assessments to keep resource flows in line with needs. Board members stressed the importance of flexibility for WFP, but some members warned against the overuse of consultants when full-time staff should be employed.
29. In response, the External Auditor reiterated that there was no single model for all situations. He did not think that further detailed reviews were needed, given the many other evaluation reports on decentralization produced for recent Board sessions.
30. The Secretariat undertook to include indicators for measuring the effectiveness of decentralization in the new Strategic Plan. The Secretariat noted that sharing offices with other United Nations agencies was not always the most cost-effective option, and that the proposal for a single central office per continent needed thorough assessment before it could be adopted; country offices already designed their own emergency operations (EMOPs) and protracted relief and recovery operations (PRROs).

Progress Report on the Implementation of the External Auditor's Recommendations (2007/EB.2/7)

31. The Secretariat introduced the progress report, noting that of the 40 audit recommendations, 25 had been implemented; two recommendations had been completed after finalization of the report, increasing the percentage of recommendations implemented to 67 percent.
32. The Board applauded the progress made since June 2007 and commented favourably on the excellent implementation of some of the audit recommendations where 100 percent of required actions had been achieved.
33. With regard to a question raised by some Board members as to the Secretariat's disagreement with the recommendation on the recording of staff time spent on profile-raising, the Secretariat indicated that further discussions would be held with the External Auditor; the outcome of the discussions would be reported at the First Regular Session of 2008.
34. Regarding the recommendation by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) that future progress reports be presented annually after the External Auditor had given his views, rather than at every Board session, Board members



proposed that the advantages and disadvantages of the ACABQ proposal be evaluated by the Bureau, which would then report its views to the Board at an appropriate time.

Special Audit Requested by the Executive Board in Relation to WFP's Activities in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea: Report by the External Auditor (2007/EB.2/8)

35. The External Auditor presented the special audit report requested by the Board on WFP's operations in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). He noted the risks and constraints inherent in the DPRK operating environment and the work undertaken to minimize the risks to WFP. The report set out sufficient findings and analysis to enable the Board to manage the issues raised in the United Nations with regard to operations in DPRK, thus meeting the Board's request.
36. The Board expressed concern with regard to WFP's ability to monitor food deliveries, and acknowledged the difficulties in the operating environment in DPRK.
37. In response to Board comments and questions, the Secretariat noted that DPRK was a unique setting in terms of arrangements for the hiring of staff. WFP nonetheless remained committed to capacity-building and the transfer of knowledge in DPRK.

STRATEGIC REMARKS BY MR L. MICHEL, EUROPEAN COMMISSIONER FOR DEVELOPMENT AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

38. Speaking on behalf of the European Commission, WFP's second largest donor and the second-largest humanitarian donor in the world, the Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Assistance outlined the challenges facing WFP and the humanitarian community as they adjusted to the increasing complexity of the causes of food insecurity: conflict, poverty, market distortions, climate change and natural disasters. An emerging issue was the possibility that the development of biofuels could have negative effects on food security. In 2006, in-kind food aid had been at its lowest level since 1973; the resulting increase in cash donations was allowing WFP to increase its local purchases, boosting local agricultural production and promoting agricultural development.
39. The Commissioner saw food aid as a temporary tool for dealing with emergencies; sound early warning and vulnerability assessments were essential to WFP. The long-term causes of hunger had to be tackled through agricultural development and good national governance; the international community should support efforts in these areas. WFP's humanitarian response depended on: (i) improving its capacity to respond to emergencies on the basis of sound vulnerability and other assessments; (ii) improving the interface between emergency and prevention and recovery activities; and (iii) enhancing its partnerships, focusing on WFP's comparative advantages.
40. The Board expressed its appreciation of the Commissioner's views. Members emphasized in particular the value of local procurement in helping farmers and the need for WFP to have sound hand-over strategies for post-emergency situations.
41. Responding to questions from Board members, the Commissioner reiterated that national governments had the main responsibility for fighting hunger: governance strategies were as important as finances. WFP should concentrate on its core business, but it also had a role in development, for example through school feeding, targeted feeding programmes and other interventions that were being piloted.



EVALUATION REPORTS

Evaluation of WFP's Strengthening Emergency Needs Assessment Implementation Plan (2007/EB.2/9)

42. The Office of Evaluation (OEDE) presented the document, noting that the Strengthening Emergency Needs Assessment Implementation Plan (SENAIP) had improved the quality of emergency needs assessment (ENA) through collaboration with partners, production of a handbook and capacity-building for 800 WFP and partner staff, among other outcomes. The evaluation identified weaknesses in: (i) the use of participatory methods for assessments; (ii) the application of research findings to develop new methods; (iii) standardization of assessment tools; and (iv) identification of non-food responses. It recommended: (i) more constant surveillance of vulnerability; (ii) a balance of accuracy, timeliness and cost-effectiveness and between the use of generalists and experts; (iii) clearer information as to how ENA results guided programme planning; and (iv) greater use of ENAs to guide funding decisions.
43. The Board welcomed the document as demonstrating a change of culture that would increase donor confidence in WFP. Board members emphasized the importance of mainstreaming assessment capacity in governments and other organizations. Board members expressed concern about lack of donor interest in funding capacity-building in ENAs for national partners.
44. Responding to questions from the Board, the Secretariat explained that different assessment tools were used at different stages of the programme cycle. WFP was designing a monitoring strategy to align the various tools and would base its response decisions on consultations with implementing partners. It would make more frequent reassessments during programmes and provide clearer explanations of how programme components were linked to assessment findings, although in situations of rapid change such linkages did not always exist. The Secretariat assured the Board that WFP's assessment capacity would not be diminished by the cuts; donations were being sought to fund additional posts for assessment experts in the regional bureaux. The Secretariat emphasized that governments and other partners should contribute to the mainstreaming of assessment capacity in their countries.
45. The President registered the Board's concern that the Management Plan (2008–2009) could not accommodate the full range of ENA needs.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR WFP OPERATIONS: DEBATE WITH REGIONAL DIRECTORS

46. The Regional Director of the Bureau for the Sudan (ODS) opened the debate, noting that progress in the Darfur peace initiative had been limited; tribal tensions remained high in the refugee camps and WFP had been unable to reach 100,000 people per month suffering from food insecurity because of the instability. There was concern that the recently deployed United Nations military force had political implications that could have an impact on WFP's ability to carry out humanitarian work. Priorities other than staff security included drawing up a new EMOP by early December and making operations more cost-effective. In southern Sudan, there was an urgent need for a greater level of assistance. It was proving difficult to achieve aid targets because there were fewer returnees than



expected, largely because of the lack of services such as schools and clinics. WFP would increase its emphasis on local purchases across the Sudan and on areas such as expanding school feeding. The Regional Director urged the Board to help to secure funding from governments as early as possible in 2008.

47. The Director of the Regional Bureau for East and Central Africa (ODK) observed that improved land and water management were a major means of ensuring sustainability and increasing food security. ODK was integrating WFP's strategy with that of governments and communities wherever possible with a view to increasing local ownership and enhancing the efficiency of targeting and implementation. WFP supported local procurement as a way of increasing opportunities for farmers in activities such as storage and pest control.
48. The Director of the Regional Bureau for Southern Africa (ODJ) noted that cycles of natural disasters were increasing: long-term recovery needed funding as much as short-term solutions. WFP was supporting agriculture through local purchases; capacity-building was being promoted in areas such as developing early-warning and assessment systems. The Regional Director emphasized the importance of WFP identifying the appropriate entry point in developing social protection activities. Governments were WFP's main partners, with a view to taking over operations in future.
49. The Director of the Regional Bureau for West Africa (ODD) stressed the importance of partnerships, which had played a major part in reducing child mortality by a third and in reducing acute malnutrition in five Sahelian countries. The Regional Director drew the Board's attention to the facts that WFP food-for-work projects had been the driving force in improving agricultural production and that reforestation programmes had helped to reduce land degradation. WFP had worked in collaboration with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the Government of Liberia to enable the voluntary return of the country's internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees; returns had been completed in June 2007. The Regional Director stressed that relief work should be linked to recovery and rehabilitation for refugees; education played an important role in this, and WFP was assisting through the school feeding programme.
50. The Board unanimously welcomed the presentations by the Regional Directors, and commended them on the quality and extent of the programmes in their regions. Board members called for more discussion on projects such as food for education as a means of encouraging longer-term solutions to hunger and asked for clarification of the amount of authority delegated to regional bureaux. Board members voiced concern at the rising number of attacks on WFP staff, which were in breach of international law: they drew attention to governments' responsibility to ensure the safety of workers. There was a request for WFP to submit a security report to Board members and for a motion to be submitted to the Board formalizing the condemnation of attacks and threats.
51. The Executive Director emphasized the importance of all parties respecting the status of WFP staff. Ways had to be found of improving security, from using appropriate vehicles to strengthening regional institutions. Senior staff would look at the best means of providing the Board with security updates.
52. The Secretariat informed the Board that delegation of authority went to the country level, covering EMOPs, procurement and recruitment of consultants. Overall authority was at the country director level. In the Asia Regional Bureau (ODB), serious instability continued in Afghanistan and Sri Lanka; peace was fragile in post-conflict Nepal. WFP



would continue its work on the principle that food security gave people a vested interest in peace; this underlay projects such as food for work and food for education in Afghanistan.

53. The Director of the Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean (ODP) described WFP's extensive work with governments and partners on reducing child malnutrition and on disaster prevention and response in the region. ODP was working to support government efforts to achieve the MDGs and to target particular aspects of child malnutrition. The Regional Director noted that WFP was at the forefront of training local staff in vulnerability and emergency assessment.
54. The Director of the Regional Bureau for the Middle East, Central Asia and Eastern Europe (ODC) drew attention to increasing humanitarian needs as a result of conflict and violence, which posed the greatest challenge to WFP: the number of IDPs continued to grow in Iraq and security restrictions, particularly in Gaza where 80 percent of the population had become dependent on international assistance, were increasing food insecurity. In Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia, WFP had built capacity in emergency preparedness and food security, and was in a position to hand over responsibility to the countries in 2008. New partnerships in Egypt, Jordan and Syria and were supporting capacity-building. Dramatic rises in food prices constituted a major challenge in several areas. In response to a question from the Board, the Regional Director noted that governments in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia were already involved in their own capacity-building and were well-placed to continue in 2008 after the WFP hand-over, but WFP would provide further support on request.
55. Finally, the Regional Directors noted that although high-profile emergencies occupied the world's headlines, it was important to bear in mind the "forgotten emergencies" of food insecurity in various regions.
56. The Board approved a decision urging the protection of humanitarian workers, calling on all countries to renew their commitment to helping ensure safe and unhindered access to those in need. It also called upon the Secretary-General of the United Nations to use all the means at his disposal to enhance the safety and security of humanitarian workers.

SOUTHERN AFRICA REGIONAL PORTFOLIO

Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation Malawi 10586.0 (2007/EB.2/12)

Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation Mozambique 10600.0 (2007/EB.2/13)

57. The Regional Director presented the two PRROs, which focused on disaster risk reduction and livelihood protection for vulnerable groups. The targeting and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) techniques applied were in line with recommendations from assessments of other PRROs in the region. Mozambique was a pilot country for the "Delivering as One" reform process.
58. The Board applauded the participatory design process used for the PRROs, which involved national and provincial governments, NGOs, other United Nations agencies and beneficiary groups. Board members welcomed the integration of PRROs with national government strategies, harmonization with national and international poverty reduction interventions and the focus on accurate targeting. The Board commended the national institutional arrangements for poverty reduction being developed in both countries and



emphasized the need for sufficient capacity-building to ensure hand-over to national ownership.

59. In response, the Regional Director underlined that the consultative process used for design would continue and would include capacity-building. The Malawi country director informed the Board of the Government's strategic grain reserve and recently approved food-security policy: WFP was supporting the Government in designing food aid and agricultural development policies. HIV/AIDS-affected people were included in food-for-work and food-for-assets projects after they had benefited from WFP food aid linked to anti-retroviral therapy. The Mozambique country director explained that aid would become more cash-based as beneficiaries' need for food aid declined. As part of WFP's local purchasing system, farmers and traders were receiving training to bring the quality of food products up to export standards.

LATIN AMERICAN AND THE CARIBBEAN REGIONAL PORTFOLIO

Summary Evaluation Report of Haiti PRRO 10382.0 (2007/EB.2/14)

Draft Country Programme Bolivia 10596.0 (2008–2012) (2007/EB.2/15)

Draft Country Programme Honduras 10538.0 (2008–2011) (2007/EB.2/16)

Draft Country Programme Nicaragua 10597.0 (2008–2012) (2007/EB.2/17)

Development Project Cuba 10589.0 (2007/EB.2/18)

Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation Haiti 10674.0 (2007/EB.2/19)

60. The Bolivia country director highlighted the alarming malnutrition rates in the country over the past ten years. WFP was promoting the consumption of local foods, with links to development and production. The draft country programme (CP) targeted health and education; the main beneficiaries were women and children.
61. The Honduras country director informed the Board that the draft CP included nutrition, health (with particular focus on HIV/AIDS), rural development and education. WFP was helping the Government to implement a school feeding programme.
62. The Nicaragua country director stated that after years of conflict and disaster there was now a stable Government. But low incomes among a large proportion of the population meant that food instability continued. WFP activities under the draft CP included health education, food for education and food for training.
63. The country director for Cuba noted that a national priority was to prevent and control anaemia, a significant factor in food insecurity. Development actions addressed iron deficiency and emergency preparedness and response. The Government had prepared a national response; it had requested the help of WFP in supplying blended and enriched flours and in increasing local capacity to supply flour.



64. The Haiti country director noted that the security situation remained volatile, though there had been increased school attendance and fewer kidnappings. He pointed out that WFP had played a major role in supporting the peace agreement and reducing instability through enhancement of government programmes.
65. Board members welcomed the proposals by the country directors, observing that Bolivia might learn lessons from the past in terms of capacity-building and collaboration with United Nations agencies and other partners. Some Board members wondered if all indigenous ethnic groups were being included in the Honduras programme, and also highlighted the importance of benchmarks and timelines in hand-over plans. Collaboration with local partners in areas such as sustainability was also important to avoid duplication. Board members expressed the view that WFP's strategy in Nicaragua needed to be adapted to recent events; they asked for clarification as to which areas WFP would help to improve livelihoods and what steps it would take to avoid environmental degradation. Some members asked for clarification with regard to innovations and the overall sustainability of WFP's work in the region.
66. In response to a point raised by a Board member, the Bolivia country director noted that the programme in Bolivia was based on lessons learned and focused on building local capacity. The country director for Honduras informed the Board that consultations had been held to establish the best ways to incorporate ethnic groups into programmes in the country. Consultation was helping to avoid duplication in all areas. The Regional Director and the country director emphasized that hand-over measures were in place in Honduras, where WFP had passed on valuable experience in school feeding, allowing it to be continued by the Government in the future.
67. Responding to the point raised by Board members regarding the sustainability of projects, the Nicaragua country director noted that the recently elected Government in Nicaragua had new priorities and targets, and that WFP was waiting for these to become clear. Examples of innovation in Cuba included helping to create markets, fostering local production and changing cultural habits, which would all help improve local capacity-building.
68. Board members observed that the Haiti evaluation could be a guide for other countries in the region, and strongly encouraged capacity-building through local institutions. Some members asked for an outline of actions to remedy shortcomings in partnerships outlined in the evaluation and urged incorporation of the recommendations into the new PRRO. The Board approved the work in support of nutrition, monitoring of food supplies and training. They highlighted previous problems with implementation, which were raised in the evaluation.
69. The Haiti country director noted that some previous plans had not been implemented at the national level as a result of political instability; lack of staff had been a problem, but this was being tackled in the new PRRO. WFP would monitor the security situation before making decisions on longer-term plans. Capacity-building would continue to focus on health and education; there was a role for preventive work, but it had been hampered by weaknesses in partnerships and difficulties in access and monitoring.

ASIA REGIONAL PORTFOLIO

Country Programme India 10573.0 (2008–2012) (2007/EB.2/20)

Development Project Sri Lanka 10607.0 (2007/EB.2/21)

**Budget Increases to Protracted Relief and Recovery Operations –
Sri Lanka 10067.1 (2007/EB.2/22)**

**Budget Increases to Development Activities – Nepal Country
Programme 10093.0 (2007/EB.2/23)**

Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation Cambodia 10305.1 (2007/EB.2/24)

70. The Regional Director introduced these four items. Based on the findings of a CP review, the Sri Lanka development project: (i) concentrated on mother-and-child health; (ii) was in line with the priorities of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF); (iii) supported local capacity-building and the use of locally produced blended food; and (iv) bridged the transition from previous WFP interventions. The budget increase to a PRRO ending in December 2007 would cover fewer beneficiaries and a reduced area in 2008, serving groups made vulnerable by the recent escalation of conflict in northern and eastern Sri Lanka. The budget revision in Nepal would consolidate peace-building under WFP's development project and enhance the Government's capacity to take over school feeding and other programmes. The Cambodia PRRO would focus on primary education and health, with a small disaster management component.
71. The Board welcomed these activities as sound responses to the situations in the three countries. Members emphasized the importance of clear hand-over strategies and national involvement in planning, implementation and monitoring. Board members stressed the need to seek innovative non-food responses and asked WFP to inform the Board immediately when problems arose in the field.
72. Replying to questions, the Regional Director assured Board members that their concerns would be acted upon. Food aid was more appropriate than cash in the Sri Lanka interventions, which focused on the health of women and children. The Sri Lanka Government was a supportive partner, but had no access to areas controlled by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam; WFP had recently ensured its own access to these areas.
73. The Sri Lanka country director explained that blended food was being imported because local supplies of *thripasha* were insufficient; WFP was helping to build local production capacity and expected to be procuring all its blended food locally within three years.
74. The Nepal country director emphasized the difficulties and high cost of food deliveries in Nepal. Most food-for-work activities had been taken up by a PRRO; those left in the CP were related to school feeding. Geographical coverage was in line with those of other United Nations agencies. The timing of the hand-over was partly based on resource constraints as donors moved from supporting development to peacekeeping activities; national partners were preparing to take over WFP activities after programme completion.
75. The Cambodia country director informed the Board that 90 percent of the food distributed by WFP came from inside the country. Food for work helped to protect against



the risks of socio-economic deterioration and increased food insecurity. Through monthly meetings with local authorities, WFP was enhancing the Government's capacity to manage school feeding. Cambodia was not yet stable enough for a CP, but was expected to be so by about 2011 as a result of an expected increase in oil and gas revenues and the starting of a new UNDAF in that year.

EAST AND CENTRAL AFRICA REGIONAL PORTFOLIO

Summary Evaluation Report of Ethiopia PRRO 10362.0 (2007/EB.2/25)

Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation Ethiopia 10665.0 (2007/EB.2/26)

Development Project Rwanda 10677.0 (2007/EB.2/27)

76. In her introduction to operations in ODK, the Regional Director drew attention to population pressures, environmental degradation and price inflation in Ethiopia, which constituted major challenges to food security, and to significant progress in Rwanda towards improving food security. She stressed that challenges remained, particularly in the areas of malnutrition and children's education.
77. Board members welcomed the two innovative PRROs for Ethiopia and Rwanda, expressing particular support for plans for capacity-building in Ethiopia and for the disaster risk management proposals; some members asked for more details as to how capacity would be transferred to the Government. Board members acknowledged the solid achievements and the remaining challenges and asked what further improvements might be made to the country's supplementary feeding programme. Board members also supported the evaluation team's call for an impact assessment. Some members wondered if the Ethiopia plan was trying to cover too many areas, and whether this might hamper the hand-over strategy. Board members expressed the view that increased coordination between relief plans and the productive safety-net programme (PSNP) would be beneficial.
78. The Board noted the importance of establishing a clear hand-over strategy in Rwanda, where development plans were increasingly important in the light of climate change and its impact on the region. Some Board members asked for more detail on the role of women in operations in Ethiopia and encouraged WFP to continue to carry out procurement in local areas. Board members stressed the importance of looking at the overall picture if WFP was to identify ways of breaking the long-term cycle of poverty in the region.
79. The country director for Ethiopia noted that WFP had incorporated the recommendations of the evaluation into the PRRO; an impact assessment would be conducted to measure results on reducing malnutrition. New measurement methods were being developed to replace methods that had come to be regarded as impractical. The country director for Rwanda noted that WFP was finalizing a common operational document and that WFP's experience in school feeding, which had started in 2003, would be valuable in planning the programme.

ORGANIZATIONAL AND PROCEDURAL MATTERS

A Proposal for Handling Succession Planning Issues in the Executive Board Bureau (2007/EB.2/32)

80. The President presented this paper, which the Board welcomed as the solution to what had been a long-term issue.
81. In response to a specific concern, the President assured the Board that the new rule IV for Election of the Bureau would have no cost implications for WFP. The Board approved the new rule.

Collaboration among the United Nations Rome-Based Agencies (2007/EB.2/33)

82. The Board welcomed the work described by the Secretariat on enhancing partnerships to improve cost-effectiveness and avoid duplication. Purpose-driven joint needs assessment was one area of collaboration that would improve efficiency. Board members called for a comprehensive strategic approach to strengthening WFP partnerships, including partnerships with UNHCR, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Rome-based agencies. Some Board members suggested that the Rome-based agencies should have a short-term and long-term common strategy on food security and agricultural and rural development, which would enable it to be built into Common Country Assessments (CCAs), UNDAFs and Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRS). Some Board members considered the paper too descriptive and called for an analysis of the benefits of joint cooperation to assess the impact in the future. The Board highlighted the importance of WFP's work in Africa and the benefits of strengthening partnerships. Board members highlighted early-warning systems as an area where WFP and FAO could increase their work together; increased analysis in the aftermath of crises could be added to WFP's current role of providing food. During crises, IFAD and WFP could work together more: for example, IFAD could secure more funding for reopening transport routes, reducing the need for WFP to incur the high costs of delivering food by air. Board members also highlighted crisis recovery as an area for greater collaboration: FAO could provide seeds and tools, for example, and WFP could follow up with food projects. Some Board members enquired about the role of other development partners and about ways in which global issues such as climate change might affect strategies on collaboration.
83. The Secretariat agreed that there was a need for a more strategic perspective; this would be included in the Strategic Plan. There had been considerable progress in work on the division of labour and on the need for a more consultative approach involving other partners. Individual governments were best placed to build links with partners in the first instance; WFP's policies were always most effective when integrated into national strategies. The Secretariat drew attention to the history of collaborative work with IFAD in Asia, which was in many ways a model for future developments in Africa.



ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

ACABQ	Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions
CCA	Common Country Assessment
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CP	country programme
DEV	development project
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
EMOP	emergency operation
ENA	emergency needs assessment
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
IDP	internally displaced person
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ISC	indirect support costs
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NGO	non-governmental organization
OCHA	Office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODB	Asia Regional Bureau
ODD	West Africa Regional Bureau
ODJ	Southern Africa Regional Bureau
ODK	East and Central Africa Regional Bureau
ODC	Middle East, Central Asia and Eastern Europe Regional Bureau
ODP	Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Bureau
ODS	Sudan Regional Bureau
OEDE	Office of Evaluation
PRRO	protracted relief and recovery operation
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategies
PSA	Programme Support and Administration
PSNP	productive safety-net programme
SENAIP	Strengthening Emergency Needs Assessment Implementation Plan
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund