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SUMMARY OF THE WORK OF THE FIRST REGULAR SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD, 2006

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.1/2006/14.

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CURRENT AND FUTURE STRATEGIC ISSUES

Current and Future Strategic Issues (2006/EB.1/1)

1. After welcoming the members and observers of the Board, the Executive Director drew attention to the challenges in 2005 to which WFP had responded, beginning with the Asian tsunami and ending with the Pakistan earthquake. Operations in the Sudan to feed 6 million people in 2006 would require US\$697 million, of which only 4 percent had been received; insecurity in Darfur was threatening WFP's ability to reach beneficiaries. In the Horn of Africa, WFP expected to feed 6.25 million people as a result of the drought; a further US\$700 million was needed to fund operations. In the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), malnutrition rates had been significantly reduced in the ten years of WFP interventions – 6.4 million people had been supported in 2005. The Government had indicated, however, that further emergency aid was not required. WFP would propose a small-scale protracted relief and recovery operation (PRRO). An after-action review in Niger had identified various lessons, the most important being the need to (i) balance awareness-raising publicity about food emergencies with respect for national self-esteem; (ii) take account of the role of regional and sub-regional food markets in food security and (iii) fully appreciate the impact of food security mechanisms and reserves within the country.
2. In southern Africa, where failed harvests had exacerbated the “triple threat” situation (food insecurity, weakened capacity for governance and HIV/AIDS), WFP was supporting 9.3 million people. The number of children orphaned by AIDS was increasing. Many governments were demonstrating increased commitment to addressing the HIV/AIDS situation, but limited capacity was restricting delivery of services. The Executive Director stressed that United Nations reform could enhance teamwork in responding to needs in southern Africa and that the United Nations was aligning its programming with government poverty-reduction plans. The Regional Directors Team was established, and leadership from Resident Coordinators was enabling country teams to work more collectively. Reducing the impact of chronic problems in southern Africa called for consideration of a range of approaches, including actual delivery of food, the use of vouchers and cash. With regard to the recent fraud incident, the perpetrators were facing legal action brought by WFP; financial controls in the regional bureau had been strengthened and new international regional financial staff had been appointed. In Pakistan, WFP was currently reaching 1 million of the 2.3 million earthquake-affected people, in partnership with the Government. The Executive Director paid particular tribute to encourage and resourcefulness of the people affected. The new cluster approach of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) had been implemented for the first time. Improvements in the approach were needed, but it served as the basis for a more effective United Nations response.
3. In line with developing a capacity to respond simultaneously to four major emergencies, WFP was strengthening its emergency assessment and vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM) capabilities, expanding its humanitarian response depot network and setting up procedures for rapid scale-up of operations in an emergency. The work of WFP's 13 standby partners was recognized as a major element in WFP's emergency-response capacity. The expansion of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF) was another reform activity supported by WFP. Unrestricted multilateral cash donations were the most effective form of contribution in enabling WFP to respond to emergencies; the Immediate Response Account (IRA) was also a major factor in WFP's ability to respond quickly.



4. The Executive Director stressed the importance of partnership in WFP's work. The Child Hunger Initiative was continuing and reaching out to new partners. A planned visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo with the High Commissioner for Refugees and the Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) underlined the strong partnership with these agencies. WFP intended to continue to strengthen relationships with other agencies along the same lines.
5. The Executive Director noted that the establishment of the office of the WFP Ombudsman had been much appreciated. The activities of the National Staff Project were being mainstreamed – employees with five years' experience would be offered full-time contracts. Risk management was also being mainstreamed in WFP processes. Auditing capacity was being enhanced; all members of the Audit Committee would be external to WFP. The importance of micronutrients was recognized: work was ongoing on salt iodization in five countries.
6. With regard to fundraising and advocacy, the Executive Director noted that the US\$6.4 billion Management Plan had been increased by US\$250 million for the drought in eastern Africa. He expressed warmest gratitude to all donors for their support: US\$2.76 billion had been raised – an all-time high – supplying 80 percent of WFP's requirements. The number of donors had increased significantly from 54 in 2001 to 76 in 2005; the share of the top ten donors had declined, and the share of the largest contributor had shifted from 57 percent in 2003 to 44 percent in 2005. Twinning of cash donations had enabled WFP to reach significantly more beneficiaries. Over US\$100 million had been raised from private sources, and the lottery initiative was receiving major support.
7. In conclusion, the Executive Director emphasized the persistent nature of hunger: hungry families passed their hunger from generation to generation. WFP was committed to working toward the Millennium Development Goals and improving the United Nations system so that more could be done to help more beneficiaries worldwide.
8. In response, the Board noted the need to prepare for a potentially serious food situation in the Horn of Africa and Kenya, for which considerable resources would be required. Several members emphasized the need to address the underlying causes of food insecurity and to work towards significant investment in medium-term and long-term measures to prevent food crises and to break the cycle of poverty and hunger. A major element in such investment would be needed in the agricultural sector in Africa; several countries were already enhancing their grain-reserve systems. The proportions of WFP resources devoted to food aid and to development would need to be reconsidered. The importance of dependable, accurate early-warning systems and of a comprehensive targeting policy was emphasized by several members. Members noted that food aid was one of several options, but not enough alone in the long term: there was a need to integrate agricultural and rural development, and to include short-term programmes in this integrated framework. Several members urged WFP to source its food aid from local, sub-regional or regional markets to encourage their development, and to work with local actors and organizations, who often had untapped skills, and to work within the policies of governments and respect national sensibilities. The Board noted that conflict was often a problem in areas affected by food shortages; the safety of WFP and United Nations personnel was of paramount importance.
9. It was agreed that reform of United Nations operating approaches, more joint programming and greater coordination would be important in enhancing humanitarian work. The Board welcomed the introduction of the cluster system, which it regarded as an optimum operational approach for making the best use of resources. The importance of recording and learning from experience was emphasized by several members; facilitating South-South cooperation was an important means of sharing knowledge among countries.



10. Some members stressed the need to increase aid flows, using the CERF mechanism for example. Innovative funding modalities such as the proposed lottery would also have to be identified and adopted. The importance of maintaining the level of the IRA was stressed. Several members agreed with the Executive Director that untied multilateral cash contributions increased WFP's ability to respond flexibly to emergencies. The Secretariat was urged to continue its good work on increasing the size of the donor base and bringing more private donors on board. The Board noted the importance of positive publicity in generating support humanitarian for humanitarian action.
11. The Executive Director thanked the Board for its generous support and paid tribute to the courage and commitment of WFP staff worldwide. More support was needed, however, especially untied cash contributions; even small donations could make a huge difference for struggling communities. He reassured the Board that WFP was fully aware of the need to operate without negative effects on local markets, to build local capacities and use national strengths positively. Speed of response was WFP's great strength: work was ongoing to improve this further. The Executive Director concluded by re-emphasizing the centrality of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the work of WFP and expressed his appreciation of dialogue with the Board.

ANNUAL REPORTS

Annual Report for 2005 to ECOSOC and FAO Council (2006/EB.1/2)

12. The Board complimented WFP on the contents and conciseness of the report, outlining innovations, successes and challenges from 2005.
13. Responding to points raised by the Board, the Secretariat emphasized the need to balance cost-saving joint activities and the benefits of agencies with specialist roles; only 10 percent of WFP's resources were for development, limiting its potential role in development partnerships.
14. Initial investments in the United Nations joint office pilot in Cape Verde had been higher than expected, and it was too early to assess the cost-effectiveness of this initiative. WFP was establishing how best to contribute to the United Nations system-wide follow-up to the September 2005 World Summit, especially the work of the high-level panel appointed by the Secretary-General.
15. The Secretariat would, with the Bureau, consider how to report to the Board on its capacity-building activities for disaster preparedness and emergency awareness. The Secretariat also took note of other suggestions for issues to be addressed in the next Annual Report and would determine whether these issues would be best addressed in the Annual Report to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the Council of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) or in the Annual Performance Report.
16. The Secretariat described WFP's commitment to making the cluster lead-agency system for humanitarian response work effectively, and the positive direction of WFP's bilateral cooperation with UNICEF and other major United Nations agency partners.



POLICY ISSUES

Targeting in Emergencies (2006/EB.1/3)

17. This paper was considered together with the Thematic Evaluation of Targeting in Relief Situation .

EVALUATION REPORTS

Thematic Evaluation of Targeting in Relief Situations (2006/EB.1/11)

18. The Secretariat presented both items, the targeting policy paper having been informed by the thematic review of targeting. In both documents, WFP presented targeting as central to its activities. The review, commissioned by the Office of Evaluation (OEDE), aimed to identify typical targeting challenges and opportunities faced by WFP in recent relief operations in order to highlight good practice and identify priority areas for improvement. The policy paper proposed the first comprehensive policy at WFP for targeting in emergencies.
19. In general, Board members recognized the complexity of the task and complimented the Secretariat on the comprehensive and frank treatment of targeting issues in both papers. The Board agreed with the assessment in the report of targeting as a critical, central element in determining the success of WFP's food aid programming, and therefore felt that priority attention should be directed at some of the most serious issues outlined in the targeting review.
20. The issues from the targeting review most frequently mentioned in the discussion included (i) weak and inconsistent monitoring of targeting assumptions and outcomes, (ii) the importance of participation by government and other partners in WFP targeting efforts, (iii) lack of objective verification of the sources and accuracy of targeting data and analysis, (iv) lack of information on costs of targeting, (v) the absence of cost/benefit analysis in WFP targeting decisions and (vi) the need for flexibility and iteration in targeting processes.
21. The Secretariat recognized that although WFP currently used both formal and informal mechanisms for checking the effectiveness of its targeting in many countries, a more consistent system was required; such a system was under development. The Secretariat explained that WFP's ability to respond rapidly to emergencies might be compromised by striving to achieve perfect targeting, particularly in the initial stages of an emergency. In practice, a balance had to be struck between the cost and the accuracy of targeting. However, a number of Board members cautioned that such practices were essential to effective and responsible programming of WFP food aid and should be integrated into WFP targeting practices wherever possible and as soon as possible.
22. Multi-stakeholder decision-making had many benefits and was not incompatible with community-based targeting; it was time-consuming and often required compromises, which made it inappropriate for some situations. The discussion nonetheless supported increased stakeholder participation in WFP targeting when possible and appropriate, while recognizing the need for agreed protocols to guide such efforts. Several Board members stressed the importance of training of local partners if this were to be effective.

23. The Secretariat expressed reservations regarding the last paragraph of the joint statement referring to the creation of a new donor advisory group, and reminded the Board that there were external technical advisory structures already in place in WFP; and that efforts should not be duplicated.
24. The Secretariat pointed out that the reports under discussion dealt exclusively with relief operations in WFP, and not with development activities where the operating environment was often more flexible. It also reminded the Board that the current policy discussion should not be too much concerned with related guidance issues, which would be covered in subsequent WFP activities.
25. The Secretariat reiterated WFP's commitment to dealing with both chronic and acute food insecurity, distinguishing between these when appropriate. It recognized that good baseline data were essential in informing these decisions, for which iterative vulnerability and food-security assessment were required, especially in high-risk areas.

POLICY ISSUES

Humanitarian Access and its Implications for WFP (2006/EB.1/4)

26. The Secretariat presented its report on challenges to humanitarian access in conflict and non-conflict situations in the context of ongoing United Nations reform. The document incorporated concerns previously expressed by the Board concerning access in non-conflict situations, references to the gender dimensions of access, and clarification of WFP's role in integrated missions. The Secretariat noted that the revised document did not present additional field examples, but called attention to a forthcoming book on humanitarian access, which included field experiences in DPRK, Nepal and the Sudan, and to a United Nations manual on negotiation with armed groups. The Secretariat also pointed out that it had revised the paper in such a way that the legal framework for humanitarian access was not summarized, but simply recognized as existing.
27. The Board recognized the critical importance of humanitarian access in WFP's operations and the usefulness of the paper. It also recognized the difficulty of standardizing WFP response and the need for WFP flexibility, and encouraged the Secretariat to develop innovative approaches to overcome access constraints.
28. Board members stressed the essential functions and responsibilities of governments in guaranteeing access; and emphasized that the responsibilities applied to all States. Board members also noted the need to expand the definition of humanitarian access to include natural disasters and other difficult situations. The Board commended WFP's coordination with partners such as United Nations agencies, OCHA in particular and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and emphasized the importance of the role of the Emergency Relief Coordinator.
29. The Board expressed concern for the security of WFP staff as well as of the civilian population, and also requested information on WFP preparations to ensure access in the case of a pandemic such as avian influenza. The importance of WFP being seen to maintain neutrality was noted, and the Secretariat was asked to comment on circumstances where the perception of neutrality was compromised.



30. The Secretariat pointed out that carrying out WFP's work in the context of integrated United Nations missions with political objectives was one example of an operational context that potentially posed risks to perceptions of WFP's neutrality. The Secretariat explained that it was essential in such situations to work continuously to protect perceptions of neutrality.

Food Procurement in Developing Countries (2006/EB.1/5)

31. The Secretariat presented its report on food procurement in developing countries, which considered the potential of procurement to contribute to market development and food security in these countries. The Secretariat expressed its gratitude to the Governments of Belgium and Sweden for funding six case studies on the impact of WFP's food procurement on local and regional markets. These studies made a significant contribution to broadening knowledge of the positive impacts of local and regional procurement.
32. The Board commended the Secretariat on producing a detailed, clear report. The Board was encouraged by the positive impact that procurement had had on markets, quality enhancement, processing and the agricultural economy. It called for more studies on the impact of food procurement on markets and food security. The Board noted the importance of transparency and expressed interest in more detailed information about WFP food procurement.
33. The wider context of food security was stressed as the context for WFP work, and collaboration with FAO and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) was mentioned in this regard. The Board stressed capacity-building for local traders, processors and farmers' groups, and encouraged cooperation with national governments and partners. The Board stressed the importance of providing food suitable to the dietary habits of the population; some members acknowledged the important role of fortified food and suggested continuing to support the local production of fortified food.
34. The Board encouraged local and regional procurement. The importance of detailed market analysis for procurement was stressed. It was suggested that WFP should explore the use of the South African Futures Exchange for purchase in that region as a means to improve cost efficiency. Some members requested that priority procurement from countries with economies in transition be encouraged as well as from developing countries. Donors were urged to provide unconditional cash contributions in order to allow more timely and flexible response.
35. The Secretariat explained that with market liberalization in Africa, large movements of grain across borders through private traders were normal. Monitoring and analysis of markets was therefore undertaken before food was procured in countries with food needs. The Secretariat reiterated its commitment to purchasing locally, but recalled that emergencies could require larger quantities that might be available locally, but not necessarily from the smallest suppliers. The Secretariat also reiterated that capacity-building was an important element of WFP's work.

Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition Initiative (2006/EB.1/6)

36. The Deputy Executive Director of the Policy and External Affairs Department welcomed representatives from the World Bank and UNICEF.



37. The Secretariat stressed that the initiative was gaining momentum through consultations between WFP, UNICEF and the World Bank; leadership of the initiative would be expanded to include the participation of the African Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank. A plan of action would be finalized by November 2006.
38. The UNICEF representative emphasized that hunger and undernutrition were underlying causes in half of under-5 deaths from infectious diseases and fundamental factors in the lack of progress in economic development and of individual growth and intellectual potential. The focus of the Initiative was to integrate nutrition into national policies and programmes and the Plan of action would adapt to country needs. In Ethiopia, for example related efforts had reached 6.8 million children and 1.5 million pregnant and lactating women in two years. India and countries in Central America would be given a high priority as the initiative expanded.
39. In response to questions from the Board, the UNICEF representative noted that the MDG criteria were used with regard to undernutrition, and that the World Health Organization (WHO) would be involved as the initiative developed.
40. The representative of the World Bank stressed the importance of the non-income dimension of poverty and of the "window of opportunity" to address malnutrition in children in the first two years of their lives. She also explained to the Board that the World Bank operated through loans and credits but that grant funding could be made available in certain cases.
41. The Secretariat noted that WFP had established a team to manage its efforts, and a group of external advisers to support technical and programme development which had met for the first time in January.
42. The aim was to develop a programme of engagement with regional and multilateral organizations and NGOs. The initiative called for a global effort to tackle a problem of global dimensions, of which WFP's inputs would be a part. The Secretariat would update the Board on progress at its Annual and Second Regular sessions.
43. In response to questions and observations from Board members, the Secretariat emphasized that the initiative would be pursued at the country level; governments and national organizations would be the driving forces. Board members noted that the initiative needed to be guided by needs identified in country food security assessments and best practices from the evaluation of WFP operations. Several members noted that only a large-scale partnership had a realistic chance of attracting the resources of donors and host countries. It was of fundamental importance to synergize the efforts of all actors. Informal consultations on the issue were being planned.
44. The Executive Director stressed that the aim was to focus the world's attention on child hunger as the most powerful economic investment a country could make in its future. The initiative was ambitious – it could require funds in the region of US\$5 billion but it was above all achievable.

RESOURCE, FINANCIAL AND BUDGETARY MATTERS

Review of ISC Rate Modalities (2006/EB.1/7)

45. The Secretariat presented the review, pointing out that it included only preliminary inputs for decisions to be made in June. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) paper recommended maintaining the status quo for the current biennium, pointing out that an analysis of risks, costs and consequences of changing the Indirect Support Costs (ISC) rate should be considered. The FAO Finance Committee had also encouraged examination of costs implied in changes in the policy.
46. The Board suggested looking at many cases in order to obtain the most accurate ISC rate. It encouraged fixing the ISC rate as close to actual costs as possible and requested greater detail in the Secretariat's presentation at the Annual Session in June. Several members called for further analysis and supported the initiative to re-categorize support costs. It was suggested that the mechanisms of the international accounting standards could be used for tracking actual Programme Support and Administrative (PSA) costs. Some members expressed concern regarding the use of the PSA equalization account as a reserve account available for other expenses, and called for consideration of other options, including that of not maintaining a PSA equalization account at all. The Board requested a seminar on the subject before the June meeting. Some members called attention to potential gaps between planned expenditures and expected revenue in an organization based on voluntary contributions, and flagged the risk of shortfalls.
47. The Secretariat explained that the PSA equalization account was meant to provide flexibility for WFP in case of differences between ISC and PSA; it was an accounting tool used to balance PSA expenditure and ISC income over time. More information on both alternatives would be included in the document submitted to the Annual Session in June. If Alternative 2 were chosen, only audited figures would be used, but those figures would not be available until March of the following year. WFP could work with the 7 percent rate only if the PSA equalization account were available in cases of shortfall. The Board encouraged participation in the seminar in order to reach an agreement before the Annual Session in June.

Review of the Arrangements for Reporting Post-Delivery Food Losses to the Executive Board: Report by the External Auditor (2006/EB.1/8)

48. The External Auditor presented his report, referring to the importance for WFP of the quality, reliability and integrity of information reported from the field. He summarized the findings from the external audit review, which had confirmed under-reporting of losses and a risk that post-delivery losses reported to the Executive Board did not represent the full extent of worldwide food loss. Controls needed to be strengthened because some country offices were not aware that all losses should be comprehensively reported — including those below the two per cent threshold — and the present monitoring systems had still to achieve a complete and accurate picture of the food supply process at a global level.
49. The External Audit report presented ten recommendations to improve the existing arrangements and ensure a more accurate and complete picture of actual losses through better analysis and risk profiling; the reporting of all losses on a comprehensive basis; reviewing systems and procedures currently in use to achieve greater effectiveness and consistency; and the development of performance indicators. The Board fully supported



the recommendations. The Secretariat would respond to the External Auditor's report at the Annual Session in June 2006.

Follow-Up on the Recommendations of the External Auditor (2006/EB.1/9)

50. The Secretariat reported on progress in implementing the recommendations arising from three reports by the External Auditor.
51. Responding to questions from the Board, the Secretariat explained that the Dubai Support Office/Fast Information Technology and Telecommunications Emergency Support Team (FITTEST) operated on the basis of full cost recovery from its clients, and therefore there were no added costs for WFP. Most of the recommendations in the Dubai/FITTEST report would be implemented by the Annual Session in June. The adoption of International Public Sector Accounting Standards would also be officially presented at the Annual Session, with an update on their implementation and a timetable. The WFP Information Network and Global system (WINGS) upgrade was a two-year project: several of the actions recommended by the External Auditor would not be completed until the project ended.
52. In all future follow-up reports, the Secretariat would include timelines for implementation.
53. The External Auditor confirmed that reports on the implementation of all recommendations were made biennially as part of its Long-Form Report to the Board.

EVALUATION REPORTS

Evaluation of WFP's Assistance to China (1979–2005) (2006/EB.1/10)

54. The Secretariat presented an evaluation of 26 years of assistance to China, which had phased out on 31 December 2005. It included a historical review and an evaluation of the 2001–2005 country programme. Total assistance had amounted to close to US\$1 billion, benefiting almost 30 million people; assistance had evolved over the years from emergency food assistance to integrated rural development. The evaluation demonstrated the effectiveness of food aid when fully integrated into national development programmes. It noted the effects of funding shortfalls, such as cancellation of activities and reduced impact. The Government of China had provided significant cost-sharing throughout the programme: counterpart funding had grown over time to be almost three times WFP's contribution. Lack of staff at the end of WFP assistance had resulted in sporadic monitoring and reporting on the phase-out process. The Chinese delegation expressed gratitude to WFP and donors for their assistance, and commended OEDE on the quality of the evaluation.
55. The Board called attention to the central role of the Government of China and wondered to what extent the WFP experience in China was replicable given the nature of China's recent development, but expressed hope that WFP's achievements could be replicated in other areas of the world. The Board commended the coordination among United Nations agencies in China and called attention to lessons learned in phasing out. Some members noted the example of cost sharing with the host government, and asked that it be applied where appropriate to other countries. The Board invited further study and wider distribution of lessons learned from the China programme.



56. The author of the evaluation agreed that the recommendations could not be reduced to a formula, emphasizing that WFP's success depended on the three pillars of food aid, financial assistance and technical assistance. The government's assistance had again been fundamental. A large United Nations Conference on Trade and Development project had lent important technical assistance. The evaluation team did not itself consider the applicability of lessons learned, but left it to the Secretariat.

Summary Report of the Thematic Review of WFP-Supported Mother-and-Child Nutrition Interventions (2006/EB.1/12)

57. The Director of Evaluation presented this review, which had been carried out by a consultant from the Royal Tropical Institute of the Netherlands. The review recommended that WFP's mother-and-child nutrition (MCN) activities would be improved by: (i) greater corporate commitment to MCN; (ii) improved country and regional office expertise for MCN; (iii) more effective collaboration with United Nations and other agencies; (iv) changing cash-funding mechanisms to provide more financial resources for complementary activities; and (v) greater flexibility to allow reallocation of resources.
58. The Board complimented OEDE for the high-quality thematic review, but noted that the management response, which was weak and did not correspond well with the recommendations of the review, needed to be further developed.
59. The Board shared the concerns expressed in the review findings, particularly WFP's declining resources for MCN, the missing link between policies, guidelines, evaluation recommendations and action on the ground, as well as the problem of weak nutritional data for effective targeting, for which it welcomed the increased use of nutritional data in WFP's VAM assessments and emergency needs assessments. The Board also urged WFP to engage in more community-driven MCN programmes to increase effective demand for MCN. The Board emphasized that WFP should use local expertise and strengthen country office capacities. Improved collaboration with other actors, including governments, was recommended. The Board expressed its strong support for the development of local capacity to produce blended food. It supported the recommendation of the review that the four guiding principles be developed into a toolkit.
60. The Board approved the review and requested the Secretariat to present a more detailed response to the review recommendations at its Annual Session in June 2006

WFP/UNHCR Joint Evaluation of the Pilot Food-Distribution Projects (2006/EB.1/13)

61. Following a revised Memorandum of Understanding signed in July 2002, WFP took over from UNHCR final food distributions in refugee camps and settlements in five countries. A July 2004–June 2005 joint evaluation of these pilot projects, focusing on costs and logistics, management and coordination, and beneficiaries' perceptions and protection, found that the pilots rationalized operations and led to more efficient food distribution. As expected, costs for WFP had increased, estimated at an average overall total of US\$18/mt for the five pilot projects. The collaboration had led to enhanced field-level dialogue, especially on registration of beneficiaries.
62. In response to the Board's questions, the Secretariat explained that the evaluation did not contain recommendations; management decisions resulting from the evaluation would not be available until a high-level meeting between the agencies scheduled for April. Further collaboration between WFP and UNHCR was foreseen, especially on issues relating to



internally displaced persons (IDPs). The Board suggested that governments and country offices should be better informed of the pilot projects. The Secretariat acknowledged the need for more coordination at the country level; WFP and UNHCR were reaching closer agreement on refugee numbers. The Secretariat explained that governments were not normally active in monitoring final food distributions and that statistics were not usually integrated with national census numbers but kept separately by UNHCR and WFP. The question of how much information should be included on ration cards was under discussion. With regard to costs, the Secretariat emphasized that the project generated savings per tonne, especially in Sierra Leone. UNHCR probably used its savings from the pilots to cover non-food item shortfalls in its own programmes.

63. The UNHCR representative pointed out that the pilot projects had enabled WFP to gain new awareness of refugee problems, including protection issues and the contents of rations; UNHCR had gained from WFP work on gender issues. UNHCR staff did not distribute food, so their time was freed for other activities on behalf of the refugees. By working together in the field, staff from both agencies became more aware of the extent of joint WFP/UNHCR efforts.

SOUTHERN AFRICA REGIONAL PORTFOLIO

Protracted Relief and Recovery Operations for Executive Board Approval – Angola 10433.0 (2006/EB.1/14)

64. The Director of the Southern Africa Regional Bureau (ODJ) summarized WFP activities in southern Africa, where a monthly average of 105.000 mt of food — four times the previous year's amount — would have to be distributed to 9.3 million people during this first quarter of 2006. The prospects for the April 2006 harvests were promising, however. Inter-agency collaboration was working well in HIV/AIDS activities, and joint responses to food insecurity were being investigated.
65. The Regional Director then presented the Angola PRRO, which it indicated would probably be the last WFP food intervention in Angola. The PRRO would provide food aid for schoolchildren, women and returning refugees prior to the eventual hand-over of these activities to the Government.
66. The Board commended the PRRO's focus on education and the transition to development, in harmony with the Government's prioritization of universal primary education. Responding to Board questions, the Secretariat clarified that the teaching infrastructure and facilities of schools and other non-food elements had to be confirmed as adequate by WFP before being admitted to the school feeding programme. WFP was providing capacity-building training and low-cost transport to provincial and municipal governments to enable them to replace international and national NGO, which had previously implemented feeding programmes on behalf of WFP. The numbers of newly resettled people who needed WFP assistance had declined significantly, though this was partly offset by growth in the school feeding programme. Vulnerability assessment capacities were to be fully transferred to the Government during the life of the new PRRO. The Government had prepared a poverty reduction programme with a short time horizon; the World Bank was currently discussing the possibility of expanding this into a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. The Government had pledged at least US\$10 million to the new PRRO, and was committed to consider increasing this amount, starting with the 2007 budget.



MIDDLE EAST, CENTRAL ASIA AND EASTERN EUROPE REGIONAL PORTFOLIO

Protracted Relief and Recovery Operations for Executive Board Approval – Pakistan 10504.0 (2006/EB.1/15)

67. The Director of the Middle East, Central Asia and Eastern Europe Regional Bureau (ODC) reported on the recent joint WFP/UNHCR mission to Algeria following the flooding in the Tindouf area, where Western Saharan refugees live. Much of the February food distribution had been lost and there was an immediate food shortage. An immediate one-month ration replacement was possible, however, thanks to a strategic buffer stock of the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO) and WFP's IRA funds and an ECHO contribution. Contributions were urgently needed to avert pipeline breaks in March.
68. Eleven of the 16 main food operations covered by the regional bureau would end during 2006; the Bureau would focus on plans for WFP's future presence in those areas and defining exit strategy indicators where appropriate. A regional assessment officer in the bureau was dedicated to analysis of various aspects of markets. In March, Cairo would host a WFP global workshop on market analysis with funding from the Strengthening Emergency Needs Assessment Capacity (SENAC) project.
69. The Regional Director noted that WFP's Albania office would soon be closing, and took the opportunity to congratulate the country on its improved economic situation. He noted that WFP would remain in contact with the Government, the United Nations community and NGOs in Albania on technical issues.
70. Challenges in the region included the operation in Chechnya, where the Danish Refugee Council, WFP's largest partner, had had to withdraw; the situation was being monitored. In the Occupied Palestinian Territory, a post-election response strategy was being developed for the provision of humanitarian assistance; WFP was working with donors locally and internationally. Needs and shortfalls for 2006 included Afghanistan, Algeria, Iraq, the Russian Federation and the new PRRO for Pakistan. Country programmes in Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Yemen were being formulated and would require support. The option of debt swap initiatives, as for Egypt, would be examined.
71. The Regional Director described the Pakistan earthquake damage and emphasized the danger of landslides as the snow melted. The PRRO was designed for one million beneficiaries – 250,000 in camps, the rest in remote mountainous areas; a massive helicopter operation carried out by WFP and the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service had been vital to the response. There had been major contributions from the Government of Pakistan and excellent donor response. The Regional Director expressed hope that the new PRRO would not be protracted but that food aid would be limited to a two-year post-earthquake contribution to Pakistan's national reconstruction programme. WFP expected to support camp populations until they could return and was working with FAO to develop a package of food, seeds and fertilizer. WFP would support schools, health and nutrition, coordinating with UNDP, FAO, UNICEF and the Government of Pakistan. Projected needs were 113,000 mt of food, at a cost of US\$68 million, with additional funds required for helicopter operations. The Regional Director highlighted the urgent need for donations, especially cash contributions for local procurement.



72. Some members of the Board expressed appreciation of WFP's clear, well targeted approach and its determination to limit the length of the relief intervention; others were concerned that plans were over-optimistic but praised the inclusion of development and capacity-building elements. Members of the Board requested further clarification regarding the markets for the produce of certain activities, and the effects of social perceptions of women working in certain areas. The Board also suggested analysis of potential labour and market distortions, and pointed out the necessity of NGO coordination.
73. Board members commended WFP's role in the cluster system, which had facilitated coordination among United Nations agencies, and strongly urged continued coordination. It supported development of a strong exit strategy.
74. The Regional Director explained that earthquake recovery would take many years; WFP aimed to limit food aid to the period during which it was needed and appropriate and would monitor the situation. Some inputs not covered by WFP would be provided by partners. The exit strategy included reactivating markets in remote areas.

ASIA REGIONAL PORTFOLIO

Protracted Relief and Recovery Operations for Executive Board Approval – DPR Korea 10488.0 (2006/EB.1/16)

75. The Director of the Asia Regional Bureau (ODB) outlined WFP's activities in the region, where 15.5 million people had been assisted with 940,000 mt of food at a cost of US\$450 million during 2005. WFP would be assisting 13 million people with 555,000 mt of food for US\$321 million in 2006.
76. After 26 years of activities in China, the move to a liaison office had been completed. An alarming situation in the Mindanao area of the Philippines would be met by a 12-month emergency operation (EMOP), starting in March 2006, to assist 2.1 million people at a cost of US\$27 million in support of the Government's peace-building and development priorities. Post-tsunami assistance to the Maldives had ended; in Indonesia and Sri Lanka the transition from EMOP to PRRO was under way. WFP operations in Nepal were adapting to deteriorating security conditions. The Lao People's Democratic Republic now had a factory for blended food that was using local produce.
77. In Indonesia, after initial funding delays, a special operation (SO) to supply shipping services for non-food items for United Nations, NGO and other humanitarian organizations had started; US\$9 million was urgently needed to support humanitarian air services until the end of 2006. In Sri Lanka, a pilot project was distributing the cash value of food aid to 12,000 beneficiaries. Avian flu prevention and preparation activities included a pilot project to improve critical-incident management through increased ability to work in remote locations using telecommunication and computer technology.
78. The Regional Director presented the PRRO for DPRK. The Regional Director stressed that WFP would proceed with the PRRO only when it had obtained a satisfactory Letter of Understanding (LoU) with the Government.
79. The Board approved the PRRO, but some members raised serious concerns regarding access for assessment, targeting and monitoring. It requested the Secretariat to keep Board members informed of progress in LoU negotiations with the Government of DPRK, and to present an update at the Board's Annual Session in June 2006.



REGIONAL PRESENTATION, ODD

80. The Director of the West Africa Regional Bureau (ODD) provided a strategic overview of the food security situation, stressing that poverty was widespread and severe. In the Sahel, recent evaluations had shown acute malnutrition; recent harvests had been good, but coping strategies were overextended. PRROs were ongoing in Niger, Mali and Mauritania. The security situation in Côte d'Ivoire was very serious: WFP offices had been looted, 680 mt of food had been lost and staff and families relocated; a regional inter-agency contingency plan had been developed. There had been positive developments in Liberia, including elections; WFP would consolidate activities to resettle refugees, IDPs and former combatants. In Chad, WFP was providing food in 12 refugee camps, with significant help from the Government; host communities had received food in the framework of food for work and school feeding activities.
81. The Regional Director also presented a thematic overview of the region. The Sahel Alliance for Education had supported governments in achieving the MDGs relevant to education. Avian flu had recently appeared in Nigeria. It was likely that the H5N1 virus would soon be discovered in neighbouring countries, where laboratory facilities and response capacities were rudimentary. ODD had established a regional task force that would monitor the situation to ensure that WFP was represented in assessments organized by OCHA. The availability of funds from the IRA had made possible robust and timely responses to crises, most recently in Niger and Côte d'Ivoire.
82. The Regional Director noted that no new project had been presented at the Board meeting. He appealed for timely funding of existing development, rehabilitation and emergency projects. All the Sahel countries had ongoing country programmes that had been unable to provide an adequate first-level crisis response during 2005 because of chronic under-funding. It had been repeatedly shown that emergency relief operations cost much more than timely preventive action.

REGIONAL PRESENTATION, ODPC

83. The Director of the Latin America and Caribbean Regional Bureau (ODPC) presented an update on WFP activities in the region. This focused on improving emergency preparedness, strengthening national capacity in project management and design for food assistance programmes, resource mobilization and public information and advocacy. Hurricanes, floods and storms in 2005 had affected 7 million people throughout the region; WFP had provided food assistance for 1.2 million people. Natural disasters were forecast to increase in frequency and intensity up to 2015.
84. In his presentation and response to the Board's questions, the Regional Director outlined the programme to establish a network of humanitarian response hubs in three countries: Ecuador, whose hub was already operating, El Salvador, which would be operating within six weeks, and Barbados, for which a Memorandum of Understanding was to be signed within the next two weeks. More effective inter-country coordination strategies and mechanisms were also being set up.
85. To back up emergency preparedness, stand-by cooperation agreements were being negotiated with governments throughout the region. Agreements regarding access to government food reserves were also being drawn up.



86. A ten-year programme with the Inter-American Development Bank to eradicate chronic malnutrition in Central America was also in preparation. WFP awareness-raising and advocacy efforts were directed to increasing government and private-sector commitment to investing in food security, especially for children; a foundation in Panama was studying the tax and other implications for private donors with a view to attracting more private funding. The low prevalence rate for HIV/AIDS meant that few resources were available for prevention activities, in spite of the advantages.
87. The Board took note of the severe funding shortfall for many WFP operations in the region, including the US\$7.3 million shortfall for the Guatemala post-hurricane EMOP — equivalent to 40 percent of requirements. It also commended ODPC's efforts to combat HIV/AIDS before the prevalence rate rose.

REGIONAL PRESENTATION, ODK

88. The Director of the East and Central Africa Regional Bureau (ODK) outlined WFP activities and responded to questions and comments from Board members. Following poor rains in 2005, all countries in the region were facing drought; forecasts for the rains of May and June 2006 were pessimistic. WFP had pledges for 42 percent of the US\$2.5 billion it needed for 4.4 million mt of food in 2006. In 2005, local purchases had been 445,000 mt at a cost of US\$113 million.
89. Civil government had been established in Burundi, but sporadic security problems continued. Drought and cassava mosaic virus meant that 72,000 mt of food were needed up to July 2006. An EMOP for 50,000 drought-affected people in Djibouti would run until September. Refugee numbers were down from 28,000 two years ago to 6,000.
90. Because of the security situation in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, 100,000 people had been displaced; chronic food-distribution problems had been compounded by the grounding of 32 air freight operators, 18 of which were used by WFP. Food distributions for PRRO 1092 in Eritrea were delayed while the Government carried out a household vulnerability survey. Of the projected 18,000 mt per month, only 1,400 to 1,500 mt were being distributed, and 70,000 mt were in storage. The safety-net programme was doing well in Ethiopia; WFP had the necessary resources to feed 1.7 million drought-affected people.
91. The drought had hit Kenya hardest. WFP needed funding to move 60,000 mt of Government-supplied food. The Republic of the Congo lacked resources for HIV and school feeding activities. The situation in Rwanda was calm, although 3,000 of its people had crossed into Burundi; 41,000 Congolese refugees remained. The Government had started distributions of 42,000 mt of food to 202,000 drought-affected people.
92. Somalia was the second hardest hit by drought. WFP's feeding of 1 million people faced distribution problems, which were likely to increase unless a recent outbreak of violence could be contained. In the United Republic of Tanzania, the Government had started to distribute low-priced food to its 3 million drought-affected people in October 2005. WFP was preparing a programme to assist 565,000 beneficiaries with 41,000 mt of food between May and October 2006. There were still 392,000 refugees in Tanzania and in Uganda, WFP had 1.46 million beneficiaries.



REGIONAL PRESENTATION, ODS

93. The Regional Director presented the situation in Sudan. He drew attention to the operational context of Sudan being influenced by the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. In Darfur, there had been rebel movements, banditry and resurgence of armed militia activity, but little advance in talks. Humanitarian access had been reduced, especially in the west, and attacks on WFP trucks had increased.
94. A relatively good rainy season in Sudan had led to an increase in cultivated land and an improved food security situation at the macro level. But grain prices remained high as a result of pest infestation in late-harvested fields. A post-realization harvest assessment by FAO and WFP was imminent. In spite of the good harvest, however, an additional 800,000 mt of food were necessary overall to support 6.1 million people, including the conflict-affected people in Darfur, returnees in the south Three Areas and vulnerable populations, especially in the northeast. The bulk of resources were dedicated to general food distribution and food for recovery activities covering 4.3 million beneficiaries, of whom 850,000 were returnees, as well as 646,000 children under school feeding programmes and joint projects on nutrition with UNICEF and medical NGOs for 300,000 beneficiaries. WFP's EMOP is the anchor for its activities in Sudan, complemented by a country programme and a number of SOs.
95. In relation to Board concerns regarding security risks connected to WFP operations, the Regional Director stated that practical requirements rather than a set policy dictated decisions affecting operations. The Department of Safety and Security of the United Nations had deployed six security officers, a small number given the 10,000 humanitarian workers in Darfur. The continued conflict, increased insecurity and a poor harvest had seriously affected the people of Darfur, leading to the need for WFP to expand its coverage in Darfur in April 2005; 18 WFP security officers had been mobilized to undertake assessments with a view to expanding coverage rapidly, especially to rural areas.
96. The Sudan Bureau was preparing to shift from relief to recovery and rehabilitation, and would submit a PRRO in 2007. WFP would help to sponsor a national debate on the future in Sudan, beginning in May.
97. The Regional Director emphasized that borrowing cash from Headquarters to pre-position food had enabled coverage of more beneficiaries in 2005, with donors' forecast pledges serving as collateral. Pledges had been realized, but the use of some of the funds was limited by conditions imposed. There were shortfalls; food stocks still needed to be revolved in 2006. The Regional Director reiterated the importance of untied multilateral cash donations.
98. In response to questions from the Board, the Regional Director affirmed that WFP worked with the Government of Sudan at the federal, regional and state levels, and with 60 national and international NGOs; WFP engaged in capacity-building of national NGOs and joint national/international NGO ventures. WFP collaborated with UNICEF in health and education; school feeding activities took place in state capitals and IDP camps. The Regional Director added that the Nuba Mountains were an important area for WFP where relief access and movement had improved; one third of returnees in 2006 would be returning to the Nuba Mountains. He also urged the Board to make untied cash contributions as soon as possible.



99. The Regional Director emphasized that WFP's EMOP in Sudan was seriously under-funded: it needed funds by April in order to start pre-positioning food before the rainy season. In the worst-case scenario, only 900,000 of the targeted 5.9 million beneficiaries would receive food in July.

ADMINISTRATIVE AND MANAGERIAL MATTERS

Reports of the Joint Inspection Unit Relevant to WFP (2006/EB.1/17)

100. In presenting the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) reports relevant to the work of WFP, the Secretariat asked the Board to consider presentation of the recommendations in a simpler, narrative form rather than as matrices. It explained that the JIU reports not included in the document were specific to other agencies, and did not include issues that applied to WFP. The most challenging recommendations were those related to the implementation of results-based management and improving United Nations performance at the country level.
101. It was agreed that the presentation of the recommendations would be reviewed, and that a decision would be reached before the next document was submitted. The Board took note of WFP's actions on the recommendations.

OTHER BUSINESS

Report on the Joint Meeting of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP

102. The President reported on the Joint Meeting of the Executive Boards, which covered four themes: capacity-building and capacity development led by UNICEF; HIV/AIDS led by UNDP; simplification and harmonization led by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and transition from relief to development led by WFP. The meetings were to reconvene in January 2007.

Update on Avian Influenza

103. The Secretariat presented an update of the report presented at the Second Regular Session in 2005. There had been no change in the pandemic level because there was still no human-to-human transmission. The virus was suspected to be spreading via migratory birds, but transmission to humans occurred principally through close contact with affected domestic poultry.
104. The Secretariat presented WFP's plans for both the avian influenza and a possible pandemic. This included minimizing impacts on staff, maintaining operations continuity and developing capacity for the food-security needs of possible new beneficiaries. The plans took into account the possible effects of outbreaks and culling on the nutrition and livelihoods of affected populations. It was considering how WFP would participate in United Nations efforts to prepare for, prevent and combat a pandemic, and drew attention to the dedicated website maintained by WFP on behalf of the United Nations system.
105. The Secretariat emphasized that FAO had the lead on animal health and was working with World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), WHO had the lead on human health and UNICEF was working on a communications campaign. WFP had a support role. An FAO speaker also made a brief presentation emphasizing the need for compensation for those who need to cull affected animals.



ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

ACABQ	Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions
AIDS	acquired immuno-deficiency syndrome
CERF	Central Emergency Revolving Fund
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
ECHO	European Community Humanitarian Office
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council of the United Nations
EMOP	emergency operation
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FITTEST	Fast Information Technology and Telecommunications Emergency and Support Team
HIV	human immuno-deficiency virus
IDP	internally displaced person
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IRA	Immediate Response Account
ISC	Indirect Support Costs
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit
LoU	Letter of Understanding
MCN	mother-and-child nutrition
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NGO	non-governmental organization
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODD	West Africa Regional Bureau
ODJ	Southern Africa Regional Bureau
ODK	East and Central Africa Regional Bureau
ODPC	Latin America and Caribbean Regional Bureau
OEDE	Office of Evaluation
OIE	World Organization for Animal Health
PRRO	protracted relief and recovery operation
PSA	Programme Support and Administration
SENAC	Strengthening Emergency Needs Assessment Capacity
SO	special operation
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VAM	vulnerability analysis and mapping
WINGS	WFP Information Network and Global System
WHO	World Health Organization

