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INFORMATION NOTE ON THE PROGRESS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WFP GENDER POLICY (2003–2007)

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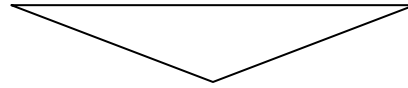
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DRAFT DECISION*



The Board takes note of the “Information Note on the Progress of Implementation of the WFP Gender Policy (2003–2007)” (WFP/EB.A/2005/5-C).

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



A. MID-TERM REVIEW OF THE GENDER POLICY (2003–2007)

Overview

1. A mid-term review by two external consultants of the Gender Policy (2003–2007), conducted between December 2004 and March 2005, involved a desk review on implementation of the Gender Policy and extensive interviews with staff at Headquarters and regional and country offices.¹
2. The review (i) examined progress in implementation of the four programme-support pillars of the Gender Policy: guidelines on the Enhanced Commitments to Women (ECW), baseline and follow-up surveys, the Training and Learning Initiative and qualitative good practice field research – case studies of women’s control of food relief, (ii) assessed changes related to the ECW on Administration Division Human Resources (ADH) and communication and advocacy activities, (iii) outlined perceptions of the operational feasibility of new features of the Gender Policy and (iv) reviewed institutional implementation mechanisms of the current Gender Policy with a view to making recommendations for full implementation by 2007.
3. Considerable progress has been made in implementing the four programme-support pillars and strengthening institutional implementation mechanisms and related efforts to mainstream gender. Most of the recommendations have been incorporated into unit workplans, because the review was carried out in a participatory manner; a management matrix will be prepared to reflect these actions.

MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Guidelines for Implementing ECW

4. The *Guidelines for the Implementation of the Enhanced Commitments to Women* were very detailed, but they contained valuable information and identified linkages between ECW, WFP’s Strategic Priorities (SPs) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The review recommended (i) developing a checklist to facilitate implementation of the ECW, (ii) expediting dissemination through the intranet and (iii) mobilizing resources to translate the guidelines into the official United Nations languages.

Enhanced Commitments to Women Training and Learning Initiative

5. The Training and Learning Initiative carried out in regional and country office workshops, underpinned by WFP’s strategic and management priorities, were adapted to regional issues and country-specific operations. By the end of 2004 the following had been carried out: one training of trainers for country office workshops, two regional workshops and 16 ECW country office workshops. WFP staff members were not always available after their training to facilitate country office training, so external trainers were used instead; lack of training, particularly in sub-offices, was a constraint. The review recommended that ECW workshops should be organized in all country offices by 2007, targeting WFP sub-offices and cooperating partners, and that the action plan for training of trainers should be revised to ensure that staff were released for the training workshops.

¹ Full report available on request from the Executive Board Secretariat.



Workshop evaluations revealed appreciation of the participatory approach used; the trainings were perceived as valuable investment, because issues raised during the workshops were incorporated into country office workplans.

Baseline Surveys

6. The schedule for implementing the ECW called for baseline surveys at the outset on implementation of the Gender Policy. The 2004 baseline surveys, a principle in line with results-based management (RBM), were conducted in two stages: first, 48 countries were involved in a self-assessment on the status of implementation of the ECW; second, 28 countries conducted on-site surveys that identified information relating to programme implementation. According to the review, the baseline surveys captured the situation at the outset of the Gender Policy and constituted benchmarks for follow-up surveys to measure results. The review recommended the baseline survey process should be documented for future reference and for timely analysis of results (see section B).

Qualitative Good Practices Field Research Case Studies

7. These case studies were carried out in six countries to determine ways to implement some of the ECW in diverse local socio-cultural environments. The studies identified factors constraining WFP's ability to implement some of the ECW, including inadequate funding, insufficient staff, lack of training and socio-cultural barriers, and described a number of good practices. They revealed the importance of access by WFP staff and partners to information on implementing the ECW (see section C).

Institutional Mechanisms

8. Various institutional mechanisms such as gender focal teams (GFTs) and an expanded Gender Unit were put in place, but a higher-level task force was not established as anticipated. The review recommended that the recently created Programme Quality Assurance (PQA) committee should assume this role, because gender mainstreaming is a crucial part of programme quality. With regard to budget, the review found that although budget-related guidelines on gender activities existed, there are no mechanisms for tracing gender-related expenses in WFP's Programme Information Network and Global System (WINGS). Country offices were increasingly held responsible for mainstreaming gender into their budgets. The review commended the increased financial support from WFP for implementing the Gender Policy, which reflects substantial institutional commitment; the challenge is to maintain the level of funding.

Gender Mainstreaming

9. The review indicated that although the process is incomplete, WFP has made impressive progress in mainstreaming gender; in many cases, this reflects the coordination provided by the Gender Unit. Gender has been mainstreamed in vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM); it is being incorporated in the guidelines for emergency food-security needs assessment and there are plans to incorporate it in contingency planning. Gender issues formed part of the auditing and inspection processes. Emerging issues relevant to the Gender Policy were identified as strengthening efforts to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse of beneficiaries and guidance to country offices on gender-related HIV/AIDS issues. The review recommended that the Gender Unit seek expert advice in developing a comprehensive advocacy and communications strategy.



10. ADH statistics for the last two years showed a mixed trend, indicating that promoting gender equality in human resources continues to present challenges despite the rapid improvement since the early 1990s. The review recommended an in-depth study to identify factors that have contributed to slow progress in achieving gender balance in various staffing categories over the last two years.

B. THE 2004 BASELINE SURVEY ON THE ECW – SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS OF THE SELF-ASSESSMENT

11. The main objective of the 2004 country office self-assessment survey was to find out how the ECW are reflected in WFP project documents and partner agreements, and how far ECW were actually implemented in operations for which WFP is providing food assistance. According to the results of 48 country office self-assessments, 70 percent of 128 active country-level agreements signed with governments included an outline of ECW-related priorities.

MAIN FINDINGS

- **ECW I: Meet the specific nutritional requirements of expectant and nursing mothers and adolescent girls, and raise their health and nutrition awareness**

Nearly 90 percent of nutrition interventions provided micronutrient-fortified foods to pregnant and lactating women; the same percentage offered information sessions on nutrition, health and caring practices. About 70 percent of nutrition interventions offered sessions on HIV/AIDS prevention.

- **ECW II: Expand activities that enable girls to attend school**

At least half the WFP-assisted students were girls in 40 percent of the countries with school feeding programmes.

- **ECW III: Ensure that women benefit at least equally from the assets created through food for training (FFT) and food for work (FFW)**

In 67 percent of FFW activities, a gender-sensitive situation analysis was undertaken during the programme design phase to ensure that the asset to be created was based on the needs of women and adolescent girls from food-insecure households, and that women and girls derived at least 50 percent of the benefits from the asset.

Women accounted for 65 percent of FFT participants.

- **ECW IV: Contribute to women's control of distributions of household rations**

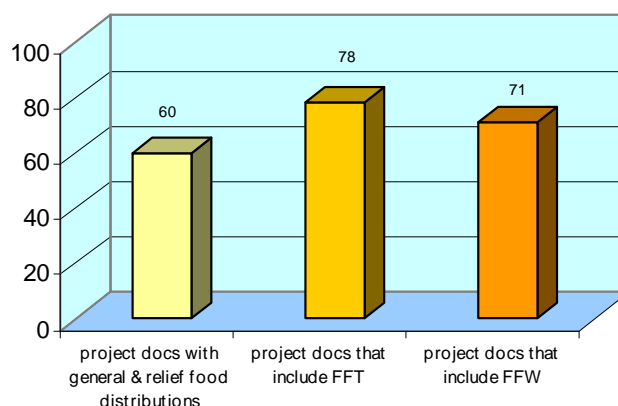
Women were encouraged to collect the food rations in 90 percent of relief activities and were designated as food entitlement holders in 67 percent of relief/general food distributions.

- **ECW V: Ensure that women are equally involved in food distribution committees and other programme-related local bodies**

Project documents generally focused more on women as members rather than executive-level members. The target of women accounting for at least half of the executive-level members on food distribution committees is stated in 60 percent of project documents that include general food distributions, in 71 percent of project



documents that include FFW and in 78 percent of project documents that include FFT (see Graph).



➤ **ECW VI: Ensure that gender is mainstreamed in programming activities**

Programme reviews and evaluation exercises that analysed sex-disaggregated data were thoroughly or partially carried out in 95 percent of country offices; 84 percent of country offices identified gender issues related to vulnerability at the national or local levels.

➤ **ECW VII: Contribute to an environment that acknowledges the important role women play in ensuring household food security and that encourages both men and women to participate in closing the gender gap**

Nearly 80 percent of country offices developed and highlighted awareness-raising messages to promote the understanding that households and societies advance as a whole when women are better nourished, educated and skilled, and that women participate more in economic activities and have a stronger voice in decision-making.

➤ **ECW VIII: Make progress towards gender equality in staffing, opportunities and duties, and ensure that human resources policies are gender-sensitive and provide possibilities for staff members to combine their personal and professional priorities**

More than half the country offices identified special recruitment initiatives to balance the gender gap for positions and functions where the gap was greater than 25 percent.

C. WOMEN'S CONTROL OF FOOD IN RELIEF CASE STUDIES

12. Between June and September 2004, case studies were completed in Colombia, Indonesia, Kenya, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Zambia to assess implementation of the ECW related to women's control of food in relief distributions and their participation in decision-making (IV and V). In Kenya and Sierra Leone, the study was conducted jointly with UNHCR to assess the extent to which implementation of its own Commitments to Women complements that of WFP. The purposes of the study were to identify good practices and shortcomings in implementation of the commitments on the basis of perceptions of beneficiaries and their communities, and to formulate recommendations to facilitate implementation of the commitments.



MAIN FINDINGS

13. The main conclusion of the case study project is the validation of ECW measures in terms of their importance to beneficiaries and their impact on the lives of women.
14. Four major findings were reported:
 - Women felt empowered by the fact that they are food entitlement holders. They said that it increases their sense of value and makes them feel that they have a role to play in their community and that it helps them to have control of the food. Women in leadership roles have gained men's respect, and men's attitudes towards women in general are slowly changing.
 - Handing over responsibility for feeding refugees to WFP is facilitating its cooperation with UNHCR in strengthening women's control of food and participation in decision-making.
 - Promoting women's control over food may add to their many chores and put them at risk to a certain extent. Some women found collecting food rations comparable to their daily chores of carrying water or wet laundry over considerable distances; others found it difficult to collect food rations when the distance to distribution points is great. Women sometimes run the risk of assault when collecting food and carrying it home.
15. WFP's advocacy and coordination in implementing the ECW at the country and regional levels is very important.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Ensure that there is cultural sensitivity in designing ration cards; consultation with communities, men in particular, is crucial to gain their support for initiatives aiming at empowering women.
- Establish dialogue with women on the different aspects of food distribution logistics, and take action to guard against overburdening women and putting them at risk.
- Define better strategies to mobilize funding for implementing the Gender Policy.
- Improve collaboration with governments and cooperating partners on advocacy and capacity-building to strengthen their ability to implement the ECW.
- Create "social safe spaces" for women to empower them and allow them to participate in programme planning and implementation, and increase opportunities for them to express themselves in public.



ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

ADH	Administration Division Human Resources
ECW	Enhanced Commitments to Women
FFT	food for training
FFW	food for work
GFTs	gender focal teams
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
PQA	Programme Quality Assurance
RBM	results-based management
SPs	Strategic Priorities
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
VAM	vulnerability analysis and mapping
WINGS	WFP's Programme Information Network and Global System

