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de Alimentos

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## **SUMMARY OF THE WORK OF THE FIRST REGULAR SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD, 2003**

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 document WFP/EB.1/2003/10.

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## CURRENT AND FUTURE STRATEGIC ISSUES

### Current and Future Strategic Issues (2003/EB.1/1)

1. The Executive Director's presentation, which began with a short film, focused on the unprecedented challenges facing the Programme, which required more financial and human resources than ever before. The Executive Director expressed his wish that war could be avoided in Iraq. He described the current situation in southern Africa, the Horn of Africa, the Sahel, Afghanistan and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) as particularly poignant examples of crises, citing World Health Organization (WHO) findings that hunger was the biggest threat to life and health worldwide. The Executive Director lamented that the world was losing ground in the fight against hunger and implored the Executive Board and all United Nations member states to do more to save lives and meet the targets set at the World Food Summit. He emphasized that WFP would need US\$2.4 billion to address project needs in 2003, 28 percent more than last year.
2. The Executive Director's reflections on HIV/AIDS, its relation to hunger and the devastation these twin problems were having on families, communities and entire nations in southern Africa underscored his presentation on challenges. Drawing on his recent trip to southern Africa, which he co-led with Stephen Lewis, the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS, he provided sobering statistics and anecdotes on the impact of HIV/AIDS on children, women, families and government infrastructure. He cited success in preventing famine in the region—thanks to the generosity of donors, the cooperation of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the effectiveness of the inter-agency coordination structure and the important work of non-governmental organizations (NGOs)—but explained that much needed to be done. The Executive Director emphasized that there were serious funding shortages for agriculture, health, water and other interventions, and made reference to continued weather problems in much of the region. He explained that five of the six governments in the region now accepted food aid with genetically modified (GM) or biotechnical content and that WFP had successfully procured non-GM food to meet Zambia's needs.
3. Ethiopia, the Executive Director said, faced another serious crisis, with 11.3 million people needing assistance by the middle of the year. He explained that generous donor response had left WFP well placed to respond and emphasized the importance that longer-term activities could have in building community resilience to crisis. He cited an example of two nearby communities differentially affected by the drought. In one, WFP had made a small investment in disaster mitigation that showed enormous return in helping the community cope, while the other had not received such assistance and was in crisis. He also emphasized the urgent needs in Eritrea, where two thirds of the population were at risk and further resources were needed to enable WFP operations to continue beyond April. The Executive Director outlined the important role food aid was playing in sustaining the peace and recovery process in Angola, and described WFP's key role as the United Nations logistics provider there. He referred to the urgent requirement for more funding for WFP's efforts in DPRK and outlined WFP's current programme and contingency planning efforts in Iraq.
4. The Executive Director was optimistic that WFP would be able to rise to the challenge, provided that sufficient resources were made available. He pointed to a growing interest in WFP shown by the United Nations Security Council, the Secretary-General and by parliamentarians worldwide. He thanked traditional donors for their continued and generous support, which would need to increase further to keep abreast of needs, and welcomed new or



increased support from non-traditional donors such as Algeria, Cameroon, India, Kenya, Malaysia, Oman, Peru, Russia, South Africa and the Mormon Church.

5. The Executive Director underlined WFP's growing engagement with the private sector, including advocacy campaigns with Systems, Applications and Programmes (SAP) and Toyota, and the Programme's first corporate partnership with the Dutch company TPG. He invited Executive Board members to view the new statue in the lobby, which TPG had provided as a gift and symbol of this important partnership. He explained that WFP would be expanding the number of staff involved in mobilizing resources, particularly from non-traditional donors and the private sector.
6. The Executive Director introduced and welcomed the new Deputy Executive Director, Ms Sheila Sisulu, explaining that she would oversee strategy and policy, external relations and inter-agency coordination, and the Executive Board Secretariat. He outlined other senior staff changes including: the upcoming departure of Ms Jesse Mabutas, who would be seconded to the United Nations Secretariat, with Mr Mike Stayton taking on her responsibilities along with those of the Office of Budget; the return of Mr John Powell and Mr Michael Usnick to Rome to manage a new Resource Mobilization Department and a new Results-Based Management Division, respectively; and the return to WFP of Ms Judy Cheng-Hopkins as Director of the New York Liaison Office. The Executive Director closed by heralding the work of WFP's staff and the importance of support from United Nations member states to help WFP do its job. The President then opened the floor for comments.
7. The Board congratulated the incoming Bureau as well as the Executive Director and WFP staff for their efforts, and warmly welcomed Ms Sisulu. The Board stressed the importance of generous and continued support for both emergency assistance and longer-term activities to build national capacity and help reduce the vulnerability of people to crisis. Several members outlined their current and planned funding to prevent famine, address HIV/AIDS and respond to crises in Africa. The Board expressed its hopes for a peaceful solution to the problems in Iraq and welcomed WFP's preparedness efforts.
8. Several members raised region-specific issues, including their wish to hear more about the Programme's policies and strategies for Latin America and for a timely visit to the region by the Executive Director. One member expressed the wish to see qualified co-nationals fill suitable positions in the Programme.
9. The Board also highlighted the importance of results-based management and timely reporting in keeping donors informed and encouraging new contributions, welcomed WFP's efforts to broaden its donor base and emphasized the importance of viewing food needs within the context of overall needs and resources.

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## POLICY ISSUES

### **Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001–2010: An Update (2003/EB.1/2)**

10. The Board welcomed the presentation by Mr Anwarul Chowdhury, Under-Secretary General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States. Mr Chowdhury stressed the importance of mainstreaming the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action within the programme of work of the United Nations system and in intergovernmental



processes. He commended the efforts of WFP to support least developed countries (LDCs) within its mandate.

11. The Board emphasized the importance of the effective implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action by WFP within its mandate and approved the draft decision with minor modification of the wording.

### **Programming in the Era of AIDS: WFP's Response to HIV/AIDS (2003/EB.1/3)**

12. The Board welcomed the policy paper, particularly given the current situation in southern Africa. The clearly stated principles of WFP programming for HIV/AIDS (paragraph 27) were especially welcomed.
13. Specific programming examples were cited as especially timely and relevant to the response. These included prevention-specific initiatives (paragraphs 68 and 69) and education-driven initiatives (paragraphs 38 and 39). Some members explained that although extensive HIV/AIDS prevention activities were carried out by their national governments, more such support and partnership activities were urgently needed. The importance of investing in educating children and young people on HIV/AIDS was stressed.
14. References in the document to the effects of HIV/AIDS on the agriculture sector, the dramatic decrease in food production and the declining labour force were of particular interest to the Board. It was recommended that farming communities adopt participatory approaches to mitigate the impact.
15. The Board welcomed the Secretariat's initiative to mainstream HIV/AIDS in all its programming categories, but also cautioned against duplicating the activities of other United Nations agencies. Members emphasized the need for WFP to focus on its comparative advantage (e.g. its logistics capacity; its expertise in vulnerability analysis and mapping [VAM]; and its operational reach). The Board welcomed the document's mention of VAM (paragraph 28), especially with regard to targeting and food security analyses. However, the Board sought clarification on paragraphs 30–34 concerning targeting.
16. The Board was unanimous in its support of WFP's working closely with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and greatly appreciated the participation of Dr Peter Piot (Executive Director, UNAIDS) at the Executive Board session.
17. There were discussions on the relevance for WFP of the recommendations of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board at its December 2002 meeting. The Secretariat agreed that it would look into the possibility of incorporating these recommendations during the implementation of the HIV/AIDS policy. Several members raised the issue of WFP's becoming a co-sponsor of UNAIDS. The Executive Director and Dr Peter Piot announced that WFP would move forward with UNAIDS co-sponsorship.
18. There was discussion about the necessity of collaborating closely with UNAIDS co-sponsors and with the members of the United Nations Theme Groups at the country level to carry out WFP's activities. A Memorandum of Understanding between WFP and UNAIDS was signed by the executive directors, which was strongly supported by the Board. Reference also was made to the Letter of Intent (LOI) signed by WFP and WHO in 2001, and it was noted that this collaboration was already making a difference in the countries where WFP and WHO were working together.
19. There was also discussion concerning the lack of emphasis in the document on developing strong partnerships with national governments in relation to linking WFP's activities with their national strategic plans. The Board was assured that WFP's programming took into



consideration in all of its operations synergies with national strategic plans and that HIV/AIDS would be no exception.

20. Unease was expressed about recommendation *d* in the document, which concerned the use of HIV/AIDS as a basis for a PRRO. Moreover, the idea of targeting households rather than entire communities (paragraph 31) required some explanation; also some members thought this idea was not as clearly presented in the document as it might have been.
21. The Board endorsed the document with the understanding that modifications would be made in its Recommendations section. The Board asked the Secretariat to present a progress report on the implementation of the policy during 2005.

### **Exit Strategies for School Feeding: WFP's Experience (2003/EB.1/4)**

22. The Board welcomed the document and agreed that it was important to have a clear outline of the necessary elements for successful phasing out of school feeding projects. However, the Board also agreed that the document concerned strategies for sustainable programming and project design rather than for phasing out.
23. The Board expressed the view that not only school feeding programmes but all of WFP's programmes needed such strategies. Members underlined the need to embed school feeding programmes and their proposed exit plans in countries' national education-sector strategies. The Board emphasized that both government and community ownership and participation in all school feeding programmes were necessary in order to ensure that benefits would be maintained after WFP had left the country.
24. The Board also highlighted the need to ensure that the elements of the strategy as outlined in the document were incorporated into all currently implemented school feeding programmes and were part of all new programmes. The Secretariat was requested to ensure that this was done and that the decision was amended to reflect the need for a progress report to the Board.
25. Several members expressed the view that WFP should engage in closer dialogue with the World Bank on heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC), poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs) and other mechanisms related to long-term school feeding undertakings. It was pointed out that the examples in the document regarding private-sector involvement required more detail, and there was a call for clear and transparent principles of engagement for private-sector involvement.
26. Members underscored the need to build capacity during the life of a school feeding programme and stressed the need for WFP to engage in technical assistance in order to achieve this. Various members expressed reservations about the appropriateness of the expression "exit" to indicate project sustainability.
27. The launch of an independent Latin American school feeding network was announced. The objective of the network was to improve and expand sustainable school feeding programmes in Latin America. All members of the Board were invited to join.
28. The draft decision was modified to reflect the discussion.



### **Comparison Study of WFP and Non-Governmental Organizations (2003/EB.1/5)**

29. The President introduced this agenda item by explaining its genesis as a study proposed in the context of the Final Report on the Analysis of the indirect support cost (ISC) rate (WFP/EB.3/2002/5-C/1). Explaining that the final product was quite different from what had been anticipated—i.e. that a cost comparison was not deemed possible—he asked members for their views on whether it was worth having a discussion of the study or whether it would better serve as a background paper for future discussions of financial or strategic issues.
30. Members took note of the study, agreeing that the Board could refer to it as a source of information, as appropriate, in the context of future discussions.

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## **RESOURCE, FINANCIAL AND BUDGETARY MATTERS**

### **Programme of Work and Annotated Outline for the 2003 Review of Resource and Long-Term Financing Policies (2003/EB.1/7)**

31. The Board expressed its appreciation for the quality and comprehensiveness of the document, noting with approval that the outline and the proposed methodology should ensure that all the issues considered important by the Board were comprehensively reviewed.
32. Several members also expressed their satisfaction that the comments made at the informal meeting of the Board on 14 January and the general feelings expressed at that meeting had been included in the updated document.
33. The issues to be reviewed were considered by the Board to be of such fundamental importance to the organization that the comprehensive, consultative approach proposed in the document was felt to be essential to ensure proper resolution of the issues.
34. However, the Board also expressed concern that the ambitious scope and complexity of the review would place an unreasonable burden on the Secretariat and that, especially in light of the departure of the present Assistant Executive Director, currently responsible for the review process, there might be difficulties in completing the review as outlined.
35. The Secretariat reassured the Board that significant work had been done by working groups throughout the organization during the preparation of the current document and that there was therefore a broad understanding of the issues in the Secretariat. Moreover, the skills required to complete the review were available.
36. In addition, in order to allow a more comprehensive review of these complex subjects, the Secretariat emphasized that the review would be conducted in two phases. In the initial phase—for the Annual Session of the Board in May—priority would be given to a high-level review of the policies and issues affecting the Management Plan and budget for 2004–2005, and issues associated with the Strategic Plan.
37. Although discussion focused on the process that should be followed, the scope of the review and its time frame, some members also expressed their views on the substantive issues to be reviewed. The following issues were of particular interest to them: full-cost recovery; harmonization of financial regulations and procedures with other United Nations organizations; the multilateral nature of the Programme and the effects of donor conditions on the flexibility needed for the implementation of programmes and projects; the handling of associated costs for non-traditional donors; and monetization.
38. Several members expressed their intention to submit further written comments to the Secretariat on the substantive issues outlined in the document.



39. In response to members' questions, the Secretariat made it clear that the scope of the review would include a high-level evaluation of the full-cost recovery principle and possible alternatives to the application of this principle, as outlined in the document.
40. Because of the importance of the issues, many members wanted a clearer description of the consultation process and expressed their willingness and desire to be involved in the review. The President suggested that the Board instruct the Bureau to determine the most appropriate method of consulting members and the timing of the Programme of Work. The Board agreed and the draft decision was revised to reflect this.

**Programme of Work of the External Auditor for the 2002–2003 Biennium: A Paper by the External Auditor for the Executive Board, February 2003 (2003/EB.1/8)**

41. The External Auditor introduced the document WFP/EB.1/2003/5-B/1. He said it was an honour and a privilege to have assumed this responsibility and thanked the previous auditors, the French Cour des Comptes, for a successful audit handover. He welcomed the opportunity to address the Board at this early stage and emphasized that the auditors were independent in their function but would welcome any comments or suggestions from Board members. The Executive Director welcomed the External Auditor and gave assurances of WFP's full cooperation.
42. A number of countries made interventions. The main issues raised were:
- the independence of the External Auditor;
  - work with the Oversight Services Division;
  - clarification of the External Auditor's review of operational planning and logistics;
  - clarification of the follow-up to the work of the previous External Auditor;
  - the extent of the review of corporate governance; and
  - clarification of the interim reports to be presented by the External Auditor.
43. Many countries welcomed the External Auditor's plan to review support costs. Also suggested for review, were:
- the transparency of the WFP Information Network and Global System (WINGS);
  - cost containment across field offices and at Headquarters;
  - competitive tendering procedures;
  - commodity losses;
  - landside transport, storage and handling (LTSH);
  - other services provided by WFP to United Nations bodies; and
  - the relationship between WFP and other stakeholders in matters of corporate governance.
44. The External Auditor was pleased with the Board's response to the paper and confirmed that all comments had been noted and would be addressed during the course of work.
45. With regard to operational planning and logistics, the External Auditor confirmed that they would look not only at planning but also at implementation to confirm whether the methodology used was correct. They confirmed that the make up of the National Audit Office (NAO) staff allowed a variety of audit tasks to be addressed by specialists where necessary. They pointed out that this approach had been used by the NAO in the audit of other United Nations organizations. It was suggested that consideration be given to the possibility of working more closely with the FAO Finance Committee.



46. On the External Auditor's relationship with Internal Audit, they confirmed their independent status and pointed out that liaison with Internal Audit was merely to increase understanding of the organization. The audit would take account of Internal Audit's work programme and activities, to ensure an effective use of resources. The External Auditor praised the work of the Office of Internal Audit but considered that more staff was needed.
47. Asked whether the External Auditor accepted a larger margin of error for difficult assignments, it was explained that its starting point was not to seek out errors but to look for the conditions of success and promote best practice.
48. With respect to the work performed by their predecessor, the External Auditor confirmed that they would not re-perform their predecessor's work but would follow up the Secretariat's response to earlier recommendations, seeking to learn from and build on those recommendations.
49. On the choice of countries to be visited, the External Auditor explained that the selection was based on a need to cover vital programmes and ensure that the full range of activities was reviewed.
50. On the proposed interim reports, the External Auditor clarified that they would deliver a complete management report on Human Resources in October 2003. This would include a progress report on other issues.
51. Finally, the External Auditor invited the Board to contact their resident staff if they had further questions or issues that they wished to raise.

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## OPERATIONAL MATTERS

### **Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation for Executive Board Approval— Afghanistan 10233.0 (2003/EB.1/9)**

52. The Board approved the PRRO, commending the quality of the document and welcoming the timely move from relief to recovery and rehabilitation. The strong emphasis on targeting, especially in drought-affected areas and areas of agricultural surplus, was noted and appreciated. The focus on education, especially for girls and women, was also noted, although several members were concerned about teachers being paid with food. In response, the Secretariat acknowledged that this was an issue and that civil-service reform was being pursued by the Government. However, the Secretariat emphasized that food for teachers was a salary supplement, not a salary substitute, and was intended as an incentive to attract teachers to work in remote areas. One member noted that the Government had indicated a preference for cash for work, and hoped that the food-for-work component had been discussed with the Government.
53. The Secretariat reassured the Board that the PRRO had been designed with the full involvement of the Government, other United Nations agencies and NGOs. Given that cash resources were expected to be available to fund cash-for-work programmes for reconstruction, the plan was to implement food-for-work activities for only 50 percent of the vulnerable rural population. The monitoring of actual food needs and the adjustment of requirements would be based on VAM information; quarterly reviews with the Government and other implementing partners were scheduled into the PRRO. In response to one member's concerns about high LTSH rates, the Secretariat informed the Board that LTSH had been reduced significantly since the previous operation, and regular reviews would be carried out. In response to a concern, the Secretariat indicated that initiatives had been taken to discourage opium cultivation.



### **Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation for Executive Board Approval— Nepal 10058.2 (2003/EB.1/10)**

54. The Board approved PRRO Nepal 10058.2, having expressed deep concern over the cases of sexual exploitation that had occurred in the refugee camps and frustration with the lack of any substantial progress to resolve this 12-year-old humanitarian crisis. One member drew attention to the need to ensure that WFP food aid did not undermine efforts to seek permanent solutions for the Bhutanese refugees.
55. The Secretariat informed the Board that the composition of the food basket was satisfactory and thus lack of food was not a cause of prostitution or other forms of sexual and gender-based violence. The actions taken by WFP immediately after the Inspector General of UNHCR had revealed cases of such violence were explained and it was pointed out that no WFP staff member had been implicated in any of these cases.

### **Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation for Executive Board Approval— Tajikistan 10231.0 (2003/EB.1/11)**

56. In approving the PRRO, the Board expressed appreciation for the quality of the document and noted the focus on food-insecure households in marginalized areas. One member underlined the importance of adhering to targeting criteria, adding that activities in Ngorno Badakshan should be undertaken only in vulnerable areas and with the full participation of village committees. The Secretariat informed the Board that targeting was done at the village level and that in many villages, WFP had been responsible for the establishment of the first village committees. In Ngorno Badakshan, WFP activities were confined to vulnerable districts identified through VAM and in close coordination with the Agha Khan Foundation.

### **Budget Increase to Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation— Democratic Republic of the Congo 06274.0 (2003/EB.1/12)**

57. The Board approved the budget increase and recognized the security concerns under which WFP operated; it recommended that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General continue his efforts to ensure a peaceful and safe environment for humanitarian workers to do their work.
58. The Board welcomed the recent approval by the Security Council of additional troops for the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

### **Budget Increase to Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation— Sudan 10122.0 (2003/EB.1/13)**

59. The Board approved the budget increase and noted that the root causes of refugees fleeing from Eritrea no longer existed following the end of the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea, thereby facilitating the return of refugees to their countries of origin.
60. It noted and encouraged the continued legal screening by UNHCR to determine the number of refugees who wished to retain their refugee status.



## OTHER BUSINESS

### **External Evaluation of the Effectiveness and Impact of the Enabling Development Policy of the World Food Programme (2003/EB.1/15)**

61. When presenting this agenda item, the President indicated that a member would present a “non paper” and asked that no discussion be held or decision be taken on it. The member concerned stated that since May 2002, eight countries had joined the German initiative to undertake an independent and external evaluation of the effectiveness and impact of WFP’s Enabling Development policy. The member hoped that more countries would follow, particularly from Lists other than List D. The evaluation would be undertaken in three phases and would include up to eight country case studies. The member hoped that work would start in June 2003, and the process would conclude in about July 2004.
62. The member further indicated that the management structure for the evaluation would be based on a steering committee to be made up of representatives of interested WFP Member States and the WFP Director of Evaluation. One of the committee’s main tasks would be to select the consultants through tenders and competitive bidding.
63. After this introduction, representatives from several Member States not in List D raised a point of order, requesting time to give more thought to their responses to the information. The President decided that the item would be included in the agenda for the next meeting of the Executive Board Bureau.

