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COUNTRY STRATEGY OUTLINES

Agenda item 7

For consideration



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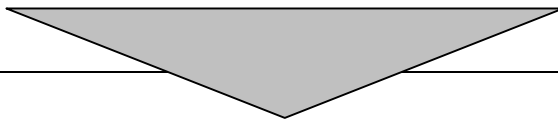
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COUNTRY STRATEGY OUTLINE— EL SALVADOR

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Note to the Executive Board



This document is submitted for consideration to the Executive Board.

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

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Executive Summary

The first-generation (1998–2002) Country Strategy Outline (CSO) and Country Programme (CP) for El Salvador were presented to the Executive Board in January and May 1998, respectively. The CP focused on addressing the needs of children and expectant and nursing mothers through health and education activities. The Government contributed significantly to the CP with a carefully staged plan for the Government to assume full responsibility for food assistance by the end of the period.

Two major disasters interrupted El Salvador's economic recovery, affecting the Government's phase-over plan. Hurricane Mitch in 1998 caused losses of US\$260 million, or 2.2 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP), and two major earthquakes in 2001 brought losses of US\$1,604 million, 5.6 percent of the GDP. There were damages at the household level and the number of poor, food-insecure people increased to 66.4 percent from 61.5 percent, primarily in rural areas. A recent WFP food needs assessment in the four departments most affected by the 2001 drought (Ahuachapán, Cabañas, Morazán and La Unión) estimated that 100,000 people live in food insecurity and 27.7 percent of the population has insufficient earnings to cover the costs of a basic food basket of 2,100 kcal per person per day.

An evaluation of the current CP found that the programme's strategy correctly identified the main causes of food insecurity and how to address them. It also concluded that the CP has made a significant impact on education and health policies and noted that its overall approach was coherent and complementary. The CP's improved geographical targeting has been efficient and effective, particularly in identifying areas with a high prevalence of child malnutrition.

El Salvador is the most densely populated country in Latin America and the Caribbean and has one of the lowest levels of educational coverage in Latin America. According to the World Bank, only 14.7 percent of children receive pre-schooling. The United Nation's Children's Fund (UNICEF) reported in 1998 that 15.8 percent of children and adolescents between ages 7 and 17 were illiterate.

In accordance with decision 1999/EB.A/2 of the Executive Board, WFP will focus its development activities on five objectives. This second-generation CSO, within the framework of the Government's New Alliance Plan and the ongoing Common Country Assessment (CCA) discussion, will address two of these policy objectives:

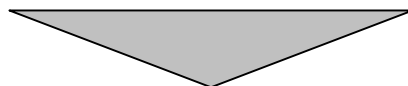
- to enable poor households to invest in human capital through education and training (Enabling Development policy objective 2); and
- to make it possible for poor families to gain and preserve assets (Enabling Development policy objective 3).

The CSO strategy emphasizes developing phase-over mechanisms to institute government-supported sustainable school feeding programmes with contributions from communities and parents.



The El Salvador United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) is being prepared and is expected to be completed by the end of 2002. The United Nations programme cycle is 2003–2007. According to this cycle, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) and WFP programmes will all start in 2003. Only UNICEF has announced that it cannot harmonize its current programme with the approved cycle. The new WFP Country Programme will be integrated within the CCA and UNDAF documents. As the United Nations programming harmonization process moves ahead, WFP will continue to seek opportunities for collaboration and coordination

Draft Decision



The Board endorses the Country Strategy Outline for El Salvador (WFP/EB.3/2002/7/3) and authorizes the Secretariat to proceed with the formulation of a Country Programme, which should take into account the comments of the Board.



FOOD INSECURITY AND THE HUNGRY POOR

Food Insecurity at the National Level

1. El Salvador's Middle-Income Country designation and the US\$2,000 estimated per capita GDP fails to reflect the country's deep poverty, divisive inequalities, and dense concentration of wealth. El Salvador has one of the highest levels of inequality in the world, which considerably worsened in the 1990s; the Gini coefficient shows an increase from 0.43 in 1992 to 0.52 in 1999. Lack of access to basic social services, low incomes, scarce employment opportunities and environmental degradation keep a large portion of the rural population in poverty, vulnerable to disasters.
2. Unacceptable disparities are clearly evident in urban and rural poverty levels. In 2000, 37.6 percent of the urban population lived in poverty compared with 61.2 percent in rural areas. Even more striking are the differences in extreme poverty: 12 percent of the urban and almost 31 percent of the rural population live in extreme poverty.
3. The 2001 Human Development Report ranks El Salvador 100th out of 162 nations, with a Human Development Index (HDI) of 0.71. This does not reflect the extreme lack of development in the poorest rural areas. For example, Morazán and Ahuachapán have an HDI of 0.619 and 0.626, respectively, highlighting the basic deprivations faced by many Salvadorans. Glaring disparities include poor access to basic health services and potable water: in Morazán, 55.6 percent of the population has no access to potable water, compared with 12.9 percent in San Salvador.
4. El Salvador's attempts at economic recovery were interrupted by two major natural disasters. Damages and losses from Hurricane Mitch in 1998 amounted to US\$260 million, about 2.2 percent of the GDP. The earthquakes of 2001 caused US\$1,604 million in damages, equal to 5.6 percent of the GDP, destroying 225,000 homes and displacing 150,000 families to temporary shelters. The effects of the earthquakes increased the number of poor from 61.5 percent to an estimated 66.4 percent in rural areas. More than 100,000 people have not recovered their livelihoods and still require support to meet food, shelter, and other basic needs.
5. The collapse of international coffee prices and the fall of up to 58 percent in coffee export values (18 percent of the GDP in 1999) has undermined the main income source for 135,000 Salvadorans. High levels of insecurity and violence in the country negatively affect growth and investment. With a population growth rate of 2 percent and an annual inflation rate of 4 percent (2000 World Bank), opportunities for quickly reducing poverty and achieving more equitable development are constrained.
6. El Salvador is the most densely populated country in Latin America and the Caribbean after Haiti. Internal migration has concentrated two thirds of the population in one third of the country. The situation of poor rural farmers is aggravated by the dense concentration of land, denying sustainable livelihoods to about 65 percent of farmers. On average, farmers hold an area equivalent to 7 percent of a hectare. By the end of agrarian reform (1990), only 3 percent of the rural population had benefited, and only 11.7 percent of title holders were women. Sixty-six percent of households in extreme poverty depend solely on agriculture to meet basic food requirements, yet lack access to land and other production inputs.



7. The rate of food dependency (food imports divided by total food availability) has steadily risen from the 1970s to 1997, from 9 to 25 percent for rice, from 5.7 to 9 percent for beans, and from 3 to 13 percent for maize. Food dependence is expected to increase according to the 1999 Situation Report of the Ministry of Agriculture, disproportionately affecting the rural poor.
8. During the 1990s, the agriculture sector grew at an annual average rate of barely 1.2 percent, well below the growth of other economic sectors and only 13 percent of total GDP. Slow growth contributed to rising levels of poverty in rural areas and declining economic opportunities for nearly 50 percent of the rural population. El Salvador also faces significant environmental problems related to deforestation, soil erosion, loss of biodiversity and water contamination.

Food Insecurity of the Target Population

9. Over 20 percent of the Salvadorian population—more than 1.28 million people—have insufficient earnings to cover the costs of the equivalent of the basic food basket (2,100 kcal per person per day). This percentage rises in the four poorest, most food insecure departments, those selected for this CSO. For example, 29 percent of the population in La Unión and 47 percent in Morazán cannot meet the cost of the basic food basket. Price increases of basic food items have not been accompanied by sufficient increases in minimum salaries. In 1998 the cost of the basic food basket in rural areas was 22.5 percent above the established minimum salary. By mid-2001 food costs had increased 31 to 36 percent in rural areas, with the recent earthquakes compounding difficulties rural households faced purchasing subsistence items.

Malnutrition and Vulnerability

10. There is a tendency for nutrition figures to be underestimated, reflecting restricted data-collection systems. Because there also is a tendency for under-registration in health centres, estimates should be considered conservative, especially in the poorest departments where WFP is working.
11. The Office of Statistics Multi-Purpose Family Household Survey (1998) shows striking malnutrition in children under the age of 5, with large geographical and socio-economic disparities. At the national level, 23.2 percent of children under 5 are chronically malnourished. This increases to 30 or 35 percent in the poor rural areas such as Morazán and Ahuachapán.
12. According to a 1998 Ministry of Health study, 9 percent of all babies born in El Salvador are underweight, placing more than 25,000 children at greater risk of death in the first year of life. This rate is higher in poor rural areas: in Morazán the rate is 14.2 percent. Nutritional anaemia is also prevalent among the under-5 age group, increasing from 23 percent in 1988 to 30 percent in 1998.
13. The results of the 2000 WFP/Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO)/USAID/UNICEF/Government height-age census found that one in five children between the ages of 6 and 9 are chronically malnourished. In the departments of Morazán and Ahuachapán, 28 percent in this age group are affected; in some municipalities the number rises to 50 percent.
14. More than 2 million people in El Salvador are without regular health coverage. The quality of service varies, depending on the availability of essential medicines and other supplies.



15. The National Family Health Survey found that the under-5 mortality rate is relatively high, at 42 deaths per 1,000 live births (1999). Intestinal infections are the second most common cause of mortality among infants in rural areas, after death resulting from insufficient medical attention at birth or in the prenatal period. The maternal death rate is also high, with 120 women out of every 100,000 dying in childbirth or from related complications.

Education

16. The World Bank reports that El Salvador has one of the lowest levels of education in Latin America, higher only than that in Guatemala and Haiti. UNICEF reported that in 1998, 245,478, or 15.8 percent, of children between the ages of 7 and 17 were illiterate. This survey also found that in 1997, 118,800 children worked without attending school; 36,000 of these were under the age of 14. Pre-school coverage is very limited, tending to be private and expensive. According to the World Bank, only 14.7 percent of children receive any pre-schooling.
17. Non-attendance, failure and desertion are common after the first three years of school. The rural-urban divide is apparent for literacy, attendance, grade repetition and drop-outs. In 1999, 32 percent of rural girls over 10 could not read or write, three times the estimate for urban areas. The drop-out rate for rural girls aged 13–15 and beyond is worrying: 83 percent of rural 10–12-year-old girls attend school, compared with 62.5 percent of girls aged 13–15 and 29 percent aged 16–18. Culture and economics affect the education, employment, nutrition and health status of those girls who leave school.

Gender Issues

18. The El Salvador National Fund for Studies on Human Rights (FESPAD) states, “Women do not have the same opportunities as men to attend school; they are less nourished than men; they are exposed to more disease; they have less access to credit, it is much more difficult for them to obtain goods and consequently to administer them. The patriarchal context of Salvadoran society has relegated women to circumstances of submission, devaluation and discrimination”.
19. El Salvador’s GDI ranking of 87 shows significant gender development gaps. Women represent about 11 percent of legal landowners and men 89 percent. Only 23 percent of women producers receive agricultural technical support, compared with 51 percent of male producers. Disparities between men and women, such as in access to land or agricultural technical assistance, are greater in rural than in urban areas.
20. The average woman’s salary is 73 percent of the average male’s. However, this figure masks the high number of women working in the informal sector due to lack of formal opportunities. Women’s micro-enterprises are generally of a subsistence nature, and women have limited access to credit, as banks show a clear preference for male borrowers.

Vulnerable Livelihoods and Groups

21. The general food and livelihood security context in El Salvador is characterized by:

⇒ Income Sources

- Fifty-five percent of the income for this group comes from agriculture, 64 percent of which is from casual agricultural labour and only 36 percent from own production.
- Of total income, 28.5 percent comes from casual non-agricultural labour.



- Average monthly income reaches US\$78.
- Remittances represent only 8 percent of total income in rural areas.

⇒ **Land Access**

- 81.6 percent own land, only 40 percent of which is cultivated.
- The average size of the land owned is 3.3 *manzanas* (2.1 ha) but only 1.2 *manzanas* are cultivated (0.7–0.8 ha).

⇒ **Characteristics of the Head of Household and Household Structure**

- Around 20 percent of households are headed by women.
 - The head of household has only 2.6 years of formal education on average.
 - The average household size is 6.7 people, with 3.3 (49 percent) of household members 15 years old or younger.
 - The dependency ratio (non-active:active members) is 2:5.
22. The geographical coverage of the current CSO has considered the recommendations of the Country Programme Evaluation by reducing the coverage of the previous programme, targeting the four poorest food insecure departments using chronic malnutrition as a major indicator, and concentrating activities.
 23. The four most vulnerable departments according to vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM) are Ahuachapán, Cabañas, Morazán and La Unión.
 24. Within these departments, the livelihood groups most vulnerable to food insecurity are:
 - women farmers who are heads of household (representing more than 20 percent of the households in these departments compared with an average 13 percent in the rest of the country);
 - small farmers (less than 0.7 ha cultivated per household);
 - farmers on marginal lands;
 - casual labourers (highly dependent on coffee markets); and
 - small traders (based on seasonal availability of products).
 25. Sources of income for these groups are very limited in the targeted rural areas. Twenty-five to 35 percent of the population lives in extreme poverty, job opportunities are scarce and salaries are 56 percent of typical urban wages. The most vulnerable groups in the targeted departments are casual labourers dependent on the coffee sector, especially in Ahuachapán, and small farmers in the drought-prone areas. Their plots are usually small and rented seasonally in exchange for a significant part (up to two thirds) of the expected production.
 26. Among these livelihood groups, the most vulnerable and therefore those who need particular attention during activity targeting and design are children under the age of six and schoolchildren aged 6–12.
 27. In the targeted areas, rural families regularly experience periods of food shortages—known as a lean period—from March to August. During this period, families cannot meet minimum daily food requirements and systematically reduce meals. Up to 70 percent of the livelihood groups interviewed eliminated one meal and 20 percent eliminated two meals a day. They also reduced the variety and quantity of the food consumed. These coping



mechanisms negatively affect children. In more than 40 percent of the livelihood groups surveyed, families reduced children's food intake and removed them from school. Nursing was interrupted in a number of cases.

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES AND POLICIES ADDRESSING POVERTY AND FOOD INSECURITY

28. The New Alliance strategy, introduced by the Government in 1999, emphasized the role of rural development and micro-enterprises in reducing poverty and generating employment. The stated goals included: (i) greater employment and income opportunities at the local level; (ii) improved basic services with respect to quality coverage; (iii) institutionalization of participatory processes; and (iv) improved personal and family development. The underlying requirements for the New Alliance are the consolidation of macroeconomic stability; strengthening of security; and matching development needs with environmental requirements.
29. The New Alliance clearly identifies the Salvadorans' food and nutritional security as a priority. Proposed actions included creating a food security and nutrition strategy with local governments and communities, and creating a National Committee for Food and Nutrition. Creating strategic alliances with the United Nations, the private sector, the media and local governments to support the National Programme for Food and Nutritional Education is also a priority.
30. The Salvadoran Constitution (1983), the Convention (1989) and General Education Law (1996) recognize the right of all inhabitants to education in general, and specifically to pre-school and primary school education. Further, the New Alliance states universal school feeding coverage as a policy objective for rural and peri-urban areas in 14 departments under the New Alliance. The objective is to facilitate access to education for the poorest populations and improve the general level of education in the country.
31. The Ministry has increased spending to pre-conflict levels. In 2000, 3 percent of the GDP was dedicated to education compared with 1.9 percent in 1994; however, this is still significantly short of the minimum 4.2 percent recommended by UNDP.
32. Legislative Decree in 1996 created the Salvadoran Institute for the Development of Women as a concrete step towards meeting the country's Beijing commitments. Among the institute's responsibilities is promoting women's rights and formulating the National Policy for Women. Domestic violence has been identified as one of the most serious abuses of women's rights, followed by lack of access to land, credit and technical support.
33. In the 1999 Regional Plan for the Reduction of Natural Disasters, the Government prioritized modernizing the National Emergency System and emergency response at the community level. Key initiatives include designing and implementing local emergency plans, establishing local emergency committees and strengthening municipalities to reduce local risks. Implementation was accelerated following the 2001 earthquakes. However, work is still at an initial stage, in particular incorporating risk management in policies and support actions.
34. The Agricultural Ministry has also defined a number of strategies to improve food security for the period 1999–2004: (i) developing improved varieties that will provide food with greater nutritional quality; (ii) promoting agricultural diversification to improve the basic food basket and producers' income through associations and agro-industries; (iii) constructing infrastructure, such as rural roads and food storage facilities, to reduce



post-harvest losses; and (iv) providing resources for agriculture rehabilitation following a national disaster.

Food Aid Policy

35. The Ministry of Education implements the most important food aid programme through the Healthy Schools Programme (PROES), which reaches the rural and peri-urban areas through its pre-school and elementary school programmes. The Government features school feeding as a cornerstone of its strategy to increase attendance and reduce drop-out rates.
36. The Government has a well-defined phase-over strategy, developed jointly with WFP. In 1998, two WFP-assisted departments were brought under government financing, and two departments were added in 2000 and 2001 for a total of 6 departments out of 14. Of the remaining eight, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) covers four departments and WFP will cover four. Financing has been guaranteed by revenues generated through the privatization of the state telephone company. Since 1998, the government has covered 100 percent of all in-country logistical responsibilities and costs for the WFP-sponsored school feeding operation.
37. The Ministry of Health also supports food and nutritional security through a number of programmes, including nutritional education for mothers and the provision of fortified basic foods such as salt, sugar, and wheat flour to all the population. In 2002, the Government made a small allocation from the national budget for food fortification under the latter programme. WFP will seek complementary resources, such as cash, non-food items and technical assistance, in support of these programmes.

ASSESSMENT OF WFP'S PERFORMANCE

38. The WFP basic agreement with El Salvador was signed in 1971. Since then WFP has provided US\$182 million, of which US\$100 million has been for development projects and US\$82 million for emergency operations. A Country Programme was approved in May 1998 to cover 1998–2002. It stipulated that WFP would provide US\$21.5 million to support basic and supplementary activities. A total food aid requirement of US\$29.4 million was estimated for the planning period 1998–2002. Of this amount, US\$14.3 million are core funds from commitments to ongoing projects. An additional US\$15.1 million was programmed according to WFP resources availability. A new regional protracted relief and recovery operation (PRRO) is being prepared, to begin in early 2003.
39. The WFP strategy supports government efforts in peace consolidation and reconstruction, helping to achieve sustainable human development for the poorest and most food insecure groups affected by Hurricane Mitch and the 2001 earthquakes. The CP sought an increase in women's participation in activity implementation and decision-making, including short-term social protection measures (such as the mother-and-child feeding programme), longer-term investments in human capital development (such as the Healthy School Programme); and medium-term initiatives to protect and promote rural livelihoods through food-for-assets activities.
40. The 2002 evaluation of the CP considered that the programme's strategic orientation correctly identified the main causes of food insecurity and the relevant and necessary remedies. Three basic activities were outlined in the 1998–2002 CP. The CP has made a significant impact on two: education and health policy issues; however, the third activity,



creation of productive assets for vulnerable groups, was not implemented. According to the evaluation team, this has weakened the CP's coherence. Asset-creation activities were, however, successfully integrated into the PRRO.

41. The evaluation noted coherence and complementarity in the overall approach and between the various activities, particularly with respect to geographical and beneficiary targeting, the use of common indicators, and monitoring. The mission also commended efforts to create links between the PRRO and development activities and the identification of phase-over mechanisms. It also noted that due to a number of natural disasters, the implementation of these mechanisms was delayed.

Basic Activity 1: Community-Based Primary Education and Preventive Health Care

42. WFP's school feeding activity has been a main pillar of the Healthy School Programme, providing integral care to thousands of children. A significant achievement of the WFP programme has been the phasing down of WFP support with a simultaneous increase in government and community funding.
43. Coordinating with the Ministry of Education, WFP aims to improve pre-school and primary school children's diet, enrolment and attendance levels. By the end of the activity, 36,865 tons of food will have been allocated, reaching a cumulative total of 1,580,000 children with nutritional support and 70,000 parents or teachers through training. The programmes have benefited approximately 194,000 primary and pre-primary schoolchildren per year.
44. The activity promotes the use of food aid as part of an integrated approach that includes training in personal hygiene, nutrition and waste management, thus increasing the impact of food. The activity also promotes women's role in the community by encouraging their participation in decision-making committees. WFP support has also facilitated training in health, sanitation, nutrition and environment-related programmes.

Basic Activity 2: Social Compensation Programme for Pre-School Children

45. This activity (1995–December 2001), with a food allocation of 23,700 tons, benefited children under 5 and expectant and nursing mothers. Its immediate objectives were to: (i) increase the health coverage of beneficiaries; (ii) increase poor families' access to food; (iii) avoid deterioration in the nutritional status of children; and (iv) introduce adequate hygiene and nutrition practices. The activity provided fortified blended foods to malnourished children through health centres; food to prepare two daily meals for children under 5 attending child welfare centres; and training in and production of educational materials on health and nutrition practices.
46. Activity results have been greater than planned, reaching a total of 425,000 beneficiaries with nutritional supplements compared with the target of 141,600. More than 40,000 parents and health volunteers/staff were trained. The activity has had a positive impact, particularly with respect to child nutrition, since the family rations were shifted to a specific supplement, fortified flour, designed for children.

General Lessons

47. Concentrating activities in the same geographical area has been one of the main priorities of the country office. Improved geographical targeting, in particular identifying areas with a high prevalence of child malnutrition, has substantially contributed to efficiency and effectiveness.



48. WFP has significantly contributed to strengthening the Government's implementing and monitoring capacity. A database has been created that facilitates monitoring, evaluation and management of education activities. In addition, technical assistance has been provided to the Ministries of Health and Education, supporting the establishment of technical units to mainstream monitoring activities. Systematic monitoring has improved transparency and accountability and should remain an integral part of the new CP. The evaluation recommended that monitoring, targeting and vulnerability analysis continue to be strengthened.
49. The achievements of PRRO Hurricane Mitch (6089) and the three emergency operations (EMOPs) have also reinforced the strengths of the El Salvador Country Programme. In particular, strengthened strategic alliances with international and national non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the Government and other donors have helped pool a considerable level of resources, providing complementary financial resources and technical capacities. This has increased the overall impact of food-for-work (FFW) activities, created a large number of assets, and facilitated and strengthened NGO/Government coordination.
50. PRRO activities also made advances in key Enabling Development elements (participation, gender, prevention and mitigation of disasters), which were incorporated in all aspects of the El Salvador programme. CP activities have demonstrated a high level of compatibility with Enabling Development principles, and food aid plays a key role in enabling vulnerable groups to take part in development.
51. WFP Commitments to Women have been given due attention in the CP's implementation, as in other operations. Training and guidelines have been disseminated among WFP partners and the percentage of women with direct access to food aid has increased. However, more can be done to increase the percentage of women in decision-making roles.
52. The mission noted that prospects for medium- and long-term sustainability are encouraging and recommended greater attention to phase-over mechanisms in the new CP. The Government covers the full cost of school feeding in 6 of the 14 departments. (WFP covers four, a decrease from seven in 1998). There is a strong interest by communities in activities, as seen by their substantial financial and human contributions contributing to lasting sustainability.

FUTURE ORIENTATION OF WFP ASSISTANCE

53. This second-generation CSO complements directions set out in the New Alliance to promote rural development and reduce poverty, improve both the quantity and quality of basic services, and promote participatory processes, in particular at the local level.
54. As outlined in this CSO, WFP will: (i) continue to support school feeding in both pre-school centres and elementary schools; and (ii) reorient its strategy for institutionalizing school feeding phase-over mechanisms. For elementary school feeding, the approach will build on the successes of parent participation in the current CP by strengthening the capacity of parents and communities to sustainably support school feeding programmes. In pre-schools WFP will support Community Food Funds (CFF) for asset creation, enabling parents and communities to help operate the CFFs by providing complementary food items and wood for cooking.



55. Future WFP assistance to El Salvador will work with the Government and communities to initiate phase-over mechanisms, providing long-term solutions to ensure that WFP-assisted programmes do not end with WFP. This support would help to reduce food insecurity at the community level; to strengthen human capital through an integral development approach to education for pre-school and elementary school children; and to introduce and pilot test community-based approaches for asset creation.
56. Pilot testing phase-over mechanisms will address programme sustainability issues: sufficient human and financial contributions from parents and communities to support elementary school feeding; community responsibility in operating pre-school centres; community ownership and participation in activity design; and community contributions to food fund activities. Demonstrating phase-over mechanisms is expected to have significant impact in El Salvador and in other countries where school feeding is increasingly integrated with government and community programmes.
57. The CSO consolidates WFP's experiences in development, building on the importance of community organization and participation and the empowerment of women, men and children. These areas are in direct support of *Secretaría Nacional de la Familias (SNF)*—National Secretariat for the Family—activities, including: creating a culture of vegetable consumption; minimizing the nutritional risk of pre-school children; improving the diet of the student population; mitigating the rural population's vulnerability to natural disasters; and supporting the development of community projects to protect the environment, with a gender focus.
58. Other crucial elements of WFP's support to the government strategy in El Salvador are: coordination and complementarity among WFP-assisted activities as outlined in this CSO and in the proposed PRRO; complementary targeting with the government, CCA and PRRO strategies; coordinated partnerships at the local level; women's empowerment, particularly in decision-making; and capacity-building of community organizations.
59. Based on the analysis of food insecurity in the country, and selecting effective and reasonable options to address the situation, the CSO provides clear orientation and phase-over mechanisms to ensure termination of WFP food assistance to El Salvador by 2007.

Target Groups and Geographical Targeting

60. This CSO aims to consolidate WFP's reach with respect to geographical coverage and target groups. WFP will work in the poorest, most food insecure departments: Ahuachapán, Cabañas, Morazán and La Unión.¹ The selection of departments was based on chronic malnutrition and other food security indicators (see Table 1).
61. Food insecurity is a problem mainly of food access. Extreme poverty, lack of income-generating opportunities, malnutrition, particularly high chronic rates among children, and underdevelopment (illiteracy, limited access to water and health facilities access, high children morbidity and mortality rates) exacerbate the food security situation. Adult illiteracy has a direct effect on income-generation potential, and consequently on access to sufficient and nutritious food.

¹ These departments were identified through an initial VAM in El Salvador, which analysed secondary data at the department level and the main risk factors affecting the different zones.



TABLE 1: POVERTY AND FOOD INSECURITY INDICATORS

Departments	People in extreme poverty (%)	Adult illiteracy rate (>15) (%)	Infant mortality rate (per 1 000)	Height for children 3-59 months (%)	Height for children 6-9 years (%)	Prevalence of respiratory illness in children 0-5 years (%)	Prevalence of diarrhoea in children 0-5 years (%)
Ahuachapán	43.6	67.00	33	33.4	27.18	41.6	17.8
Cabañas	46.8	60.70	39.3	26.8	21.82	35.5	26.3
La Unión	29.0	63.90	36.1	22.1	16.94	33.8	29.3
Morazán	33.0	58.90	41.1	27.8	28.11	25.4	22.8
Average	26.80	26.89	33.55	25.63	21.22	33.42	22.26

62. Data in Table 1 reflect the prevalence of poverty and food insecurity in the four departments. Of particular concern is the critical condition of children, as seen in nutritional indicators, among the highest in Latin America.
63. School feeding, at both the pre-school and elementary school levels, is the main activity to be implemented in the targeted departments of Ahuachapán, Cabañas, Morazán and La Unión. Future school feeding WFP activities will reach the poorest households in rural areas with high food insecurity and will directly target chronically malnourished children under 6 in pre-school centres and aged 6-9 years in elementary schools.
64. Preference will be given to the following groups when implementing CFF activities:
- women heads of household;
 - poor, food-insecure farmers;
 - ◇ farmers with no land; and
 - ◇ small farmers (less than 0.7 ha cultivated).
65. To ensure appropriate targeting of the planned activities, further VAM analysis will profile livelihood groups to identify criteria for CFF.

Identification of Key Areas for Assistance

66. Within the framework of the Government's New Alliance Plan and the ongoing CCA discussions, WFP assistance will address two Enabling Development policy objectives: to enable poor families to invest in human capital through education and training (Enabling Development policy objective 2); and to make it possible for poor families to gain and preserve assets (Enabling Development policy objective 3).
67. WFP's intervention will require complementary food and non-food resources and technical assistance to support two core activities: human capital development through assistance to the education sector (60 percent of resources) and a CFF for productive assets and emergency response (40 percent of resources). WFP will seek to secure resources for school feeding through local resource mobilization and by leveraging both government and community resources.



⇒ **Basic Activity 1: Human Capital Development**

68. Within the framework of Enabling Development policy objective 2, WFP food will support:
- integral education of children in kindergarten through the grade 6;
 - integral social development of pre-school children under 6; and
 - skill development and empowerment of women, men and children.
69. In addressing these objectives, programme activities will also help meet nutrition-related health needs (Enabling Development policy objective 1).

Modalities

70. WFP's support to education in El Salvador will reach both pre- and elementary-school-aged girls and boys in the poorest rural areas. Under the direction of the SNF, the Government's integral approach to improving the general condition of children in rural areas links education with health by establishing baseline information; carrying out both preventive and curative health activities, including vaccinations, deworming, sanitation and micronutrient supplements; and awareness-raising, community organization and capacity-building of parents.
71. WFP will provide the basis for one daily meal in both pre-school and elementary schools, using a standard food basket with fortified foods. In pre-schools, meals will meet the objective of improving or maintaining children's nutritional status by providing a sufficient and balanced diet.
72. In elementary schools, dietary support will help to stabilize attendance, reduce drop-out rates, and strengthen the involvement of communities and parents in their children's education.
73. Required capacity will be developed in part through the close linking of human capital development activities with CFF activities (described in the next section). It will also include specific training, in particular for mothers, in areas such as management, food storage, health topics and child protection, and gender awareness for parents.

Phase-over Mechanisms

74. **Elementary Schools:** The participation and contribution of parents is a crucial element of school feeding implementation and the phase-over and withdrawal of WFP support. Parents and teachers will jointly share in the management of school feeding through parents' participation in food assistance committees. Mothers share the cooking of school meals and families contribute either in cash or in kind to ensure the inclusion of fruits, vegetables and other nutritious foods to complement the WFP food basket.
75. A crucial element of the strategy is building and strengthening the capacity within school systems, communities and families gradually to assume greater roles and financial responsibility in managing school feeding programmes. Many schools are already introducing school gardens and small tree lots, obtaining parent contributions and involving different partners to secure cash and food resources. WFP food assistance to schools will gradually be reduced during the five-year period. In accordance with government takeover plans, local mobilization of resources and collaboration with the private sector will be essential for ensuring continuation of the school feeding programmes. The proposed phase-over plan is for La Unión to be the first department brought under government support. A joint WFP-Government evaluation will confirm the plan.



76. **Pre-schools:** In line with government phase-over strategies, children in targeted pre-school centres will receive full WFP rations through year three, at which point communities and partners will increasingly absorb greater responsibility for the centres' management and financing. Implementation modalities and activities to enable communities to successfully assume full responsibility for the provision of food to these centres are outlined below in Basic Activity 2.

⇒ **Basic Activity 2: Productive Assets**

77. Productive assets would be created through a CFF mechanism meeting Enabling Development policy objective 3. These activities would also contribute to Enabling Development policy objective 5 through improved natural resource management practices that reduce the impacts of natural disasters.
78. In accordance with the Government's National Alliance Plan, the longer-term objectives of SNF, the CCA, and with government decentralization policies, communities will increasingly need to create their own development capacity. With this aim, WFP will support the establishment of CFFs in the most food insecure rural communities where WFP supports child care centres (CCC), according to the Government's phasing strategies for CCCs and where capacity exists to manage food funds and implement asset-creation activities.
79. The objectives of the CFFs are to:
- support the continuation of school feeding programmes in pre-school centres following WFP and government plans;
 - strengthen community capacity in organizing and initiating responses to solve local development problems;
 - support asset-creation activities that replenish the food fund either directly through income-generation activities or indirectly by improving the productivity of the natural resource base; and
 - support training and capacity-building for food fund management and implementation activities.

Modalities

80. The SNF, NGOs and local school committees will establish mechanisms for community organization and CFF management. These include strengthening the local community committee, which comprises an equal number of women and men, to assume responsibility for managing the CFF, and allocating a pre-determined quantity of food to serve as a base stock and food reserve for asset-creation activities.
81. Community involvement in designing and implementing specific CFF modalities (activity selection, food conservation and fund accountability) will be crucial for community ownership and fund viability. NGOs will provide technical assistance. Communities, partners and counterparts will conduct feasibility studies and establish priorities in selecting activities. The phase-over of management responsibilities to communities will rely heavily on technical assistance and training from NGOs, giving special attention to activities that provide women greater opportunities for decision-making and management.
82. Mechanisms governing food fund use will ensure that poor female heads of household and at-risk mothers participate and benefit from its assets, and that women take a lead role in managing the CFF. Other mechanisms include productive and income-generating



activities that allow families to help replenish the CFF and will strengthen family food security. Activities will be identified per individual community priorities and the availability of partners to provide the required technical, financial and training inputs. The CFF may provide rations to families or individuals to cover the initial investment period. Activities could include:

- Community agriculture-based activities, including producing basic cereals, fruits and vegetables for CCC food funds and fuelwood for CCC kitchens and family income. In view of declining resources for supplementary feeding and the demand for day care centres, the CFF may provide an alternative means of support for needed activities.
- Training that provides communities with the knowledge and skills to organize, plan and manage a CFF. These activities would support the school feeding committees' role in coordinating and approving fund activities, prioritizing activities that give women opportunities for decision-making and management roles. Food storage and post-harvesting techniques will also be taught.

83. Modalities will be defined during programme appraisal.

Phase-over

84. During the first three years WFP food will be used to establish the CFF in communities where WFP provides food to CCC's. WFP support will cover up to five years, giving communities greater opportunity to gain fund management experience. Modalities for phasing over the CFF include:

- selecting communities in poor municipalities where there is NGO and community capacity to manage fund activities;
- increasing contributions from communities to support food fund activities, starting in year two; and
- initiating phase-over in year three with the staged reduction of WFP commodities.

Scope for Joint Programming

85. WFP seeks opportunities for collaboration and coordination as the United Nations programming harmonization process continues. WFP is an active partner in CCA, supporting the common objectives of narrowing income inequality, combating food insecurity and reducing disaster risk. WFP has ensured that the CCA will include gender issues as one of its main focus areas.

86. Since Hurricane Mitch, the United Nations and in particular WFP have been active in defining a common contingency planning mechanism that supports joint risk analysis and relief response, using common resources such as a single disaster information centre or common damage assessment teams. WFP would support this common mechanism by constructing assets that improve natural resource management and reduce the impact of natural disasters.

Modalities of WFP Assistance and Operational Aspects

⇒ Logistics

87. Government counterparts will be responsible for managing and financing all logistics operations, from point of entry in El Salvador to distribution. Food will be stored at three government warehouses and under the coordination of SNF moved to approximately 80 distribution centres. From there school committees will transport commodities to



elementary schools. SNF will oversee the distribution of food to pre-school centres from the central warehouses. In communities where CFFs implement asset-creation activities, WFP will channel food assistance through the food fund to local food committees who will be responsible for delivering food to children in pre-school centres.

88. In the start-up phase of the CFFs, exchanges may be required to ensure that children receive a balanced diet at school, especially at pre-school centres. WFP, with NGO support and participatory training on food storage and handling at the community level, will oversee this process and establish clear guidelines for exchange practices.

⇒ *Local Purchases*

89. WFP El Salvador will promote local or regional purchase of basic food items, in particular beans and oil and other commodities with appropriate alpha values, to reduce logistic costs and stimulate local production. Local purchases will also favor food acceptability and local preference. Food buying will follow WFP standards and will be competitive and transparent using tenders. Commodity exchange will be considered only if cash is not available. WFP will examine the feasibility of fortifying local food with micronutrients, which would require a cash component.

⇒ *Targeting*

90. WFP will use rigorous targeting criteria to help ensure a staged and balanced reduction in the food commodities it supplies to schools. Aggregated vulnerability indicators for food insecurity would rely heavily on indicators for chronic malnutrition and would be linked to monitoring indicators, giving an initial baseline. Ongoing monitoring will assess the appropriateness of the pilot food funds and the extent to which they will be able to supply food commodities, and the effectiveness of WFP phase-over mechanisms.

⇒ *PRRO*

91. The CSO proposes that the new programme have close coordination with the regional PRRO (January 2003–December 2005). The targeting strategies between the CSO and the PRRO seek complementarity and continuing assistance to communities as they attempt to cope with and recover from natural disasters and economic shocks.
92. The specific targeting strategies of the CSO and the PRRO allow for varied responses.² A new CP would support those communities suffering from structural and chronic problems, primarily by support to school feeding, while the PRRO would respond to distinct shocks and situations of acute malnutrition. The PRRO emphasizes efficient emergency response and preventing acute malnutrition. The assistance provided through the development programme should reduce the level of assistance required through relief and recovery activities. The CSO contributes to providing universal coverage to elementary schools and pre-schools in rural and peri-urban areas in the poorest, most food insecure departments.

² PRRO geographic targeting indicators that may trigger a relief response are areas affected by a distinct shock, below-average rainfall distribution and crop production that is 50 percent less than normal.



⇒ **Contingency Planning**

93. The CSO, like the PRRO, proposes to support contingency mechanisms under the National Emergency Plan to help ensure immediate food availability and distribution. Strengthening community storage facilities in schools will increase the efficiency and effectiveness of local emergency responses. VAM updates also will help the National Emergency Committee and Civil Defence to strengthen municipal and local responses.

⇒ **Capacity Strengthening**

94. The phase-over of school feeding activities requires that WFP counterparts intensify human capacity building, in particular the SNF, Ministries of Health and Education, and NGOs. Mothers' established participation in school feeding activities would serve as a base for community organization. Community involvement in designing and implementing specific food fund modalities (management, targeting, activity selection, fund accumulation mechanisms and accountability) will be crucial for community ownership and fund viability. These modalities and training activities will be carried out with the Government, NGOs, and United Nations partners.

⇒ **Monitoring**

95. WFP has an active monitoring system that will incorporate new indicators for CFF monitoring. Monitoring will be carried out with technical support from WFP, in coordination with the Ministry of Education and the SNF/Food Assistance Directorate (DAA). WFP, MINED (Ministry of Education) and DAA will jointly perform field monitoring to ensure overall quality, using a monitoring format processed in a standardized single monitoring information system. Data will be systematically collected and analyzed using school attendance, drop-out, and advancement indicators. Monitors will be trained to follow key aspects of food fund management and WFP's Commitments to Women.

⇒ **Complementary Resources**

96. The Government will contribute to the CP at the municipal and departmental levels, and will provide personnel for activity implementation, monitoring and evaluation, technical assistance and training. The actual cost to the Government for project implementation at the departmental and municipal level is estimated to be US\$5.5 million, including internal transport, storage and handling costs.
97. Selecting communities for CFFs will be contingent upon support from partners and counterparts, who will contribute non-food items, staff support and commitment to the community in its initial years.

⇒ **Decentralization**

98. Considering the increasing role of municipalities in promoting rural development, WFP should ensure their active participation in the definition and management of the local Food Fund for Productive Assets activity. WFP will advocate for resource-sharing at the municipal level as outlined by the National Assembly, which assigned 6 percent of public revenue to municipalities for infrastructure works and local development initiatives. These resources will be associated with food fund activities for greater reach and sustainability according to the Government's school feeding phase-over strategy.



⇒ Programme Phase-over

99. The CP (2003–2007) will be the second and last Country Programme for El Salvador. WFPs support for the introduction and testing of phase-over mechanisms is critical for the long-term sustainability of school feeding in both pre- and elementary schools in El Salvador. The CFF will be used as a flexible mechanism, supporting the SNF in expanding the reach of both pre- and elementary school feeding programmes, along with increasing community management and financial responsibility. Asset-creation activities and family participation in school management will also reduce the Government's financial burden. Establishing trigger mechanisms will be important for ensuring a synchronized transfer of responsibility.

Harmonization Implications

100. WFP has helped prepare the CCA that supports the objectives of: narrowing income inequality in El Salvador; combating food insecurity and proneness to natural and man-made disasters; and focusing on gender inequalities and food insecurity. Food aid will remain a key component in facilitating the Goals set out in the UNDAF.
101. The El Salvador UNDAF is being prepared and is expected to be completed by the end of 2002. The United Nations programme cycle is 2003–2007. According to this cycle, UNDP, UNFPA and WFP programmes will all start in 2003. Only UNICEF has announced that it cannot harmonize its current programme with the approved cycle. The new WFP Country Programme will be integrated with the CCA and UNDAF documents. As the United Nations programming harmonization process moves ahead, WFP will continue to seek opportunities for collaboration and coordination.

PARTNERSHIPS

102. WFP will continue to collaborate with UNICEF to fight malnutrition. A joint nutritional survey was carried out in late 2001 in conjunction with WFP drought assessment to better coordinate targeting and activity implementation. UNICEF is providing assistance to vulnerable groups within areas targeted by WFP through distribution of fortified maize flour.
103. Under the leadership of WFP, a Letter of Agreement was signed in 2000 with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and World Health Organization (WHO)/PAHO to support vulnerability mapping and food security analysis. This inter-agency national food security effort assists in collecting strategic data. For example, a national height-age census has been completed, and a food consumption census is being prepared. FAO and WHO/PAHO are supporting the creation of backyard orchards in schools where WFP provides rations. In addition, FAO provides training and tools to teachers while WHO/PAHO promotes basic healthcare services in coordination with the Ministry of Health and local authorities.
104. Using soft loan packages, the World Bank is supporting the construction of new schools in rural areas of Ahuachapán, Cabañas, Morazán and La Unión. The World Bank is partially financing the costs of new posts for teachers, plus the training sessions associated with the health and nutrition components delivered by WFP, and the production of the training materials used during the sessions.
105. WFP will continue to develop strong partnerships with international NGOs such as CARE International, Catholic Relief Service, CARITAS, Plan International, World Vision,



Save the Children, Feed the Children, Action Aid, World Lutheran Federation and national NGOs. Contacts with a number of these NGO partners have already been made early in the WFP programme cycle to coordinate CFF activities. NGO partners will provide technical expertise for asset-building activities, including crop advice, post-harvesting and vocational training. Alliances will be sought with NGOs that can provide micro-credit assistance for income-generation activities.

106. Many other community-based organizations will help implement CFFs through these larger partners. The ongoing exchange of ideas and lessons will lead to dynamic and diversified programmes.

KEY ISSUES AND RISKS

107. Food aid, including fortified foods and balanced nutritious meals, will help prevent a decline in children's nutritional status. The strategic shift towards phase-over, while in accordance with both WFP and Government policy, is a relatively innovative operation. In El Salvador, like most other countries in which WFP supports school feeding programmes, there are no tested phase-over models. New approaches like the community food funds imply uncertainties, and WFP and the Government intend to learn from these pilot activities before applying them widely.
108. Risks will be reduced by introducing phase-over pilot activities in communities (i) with experience in participatory activities; (ii) already contributing cash and human resources to ongoing school feeding and other development activities; (iii) with experience in food storage and management; and (iv) where partner capacity is sufficient to support pilot mechanisms. WFP's support to the Government will, when possible, minimize the risks associated with introducing phase-over mechanisms that may not be sustainable.
109. Strengthening VAM capacity in El Salvador through the PRRO will benefit strategic activities, in particular understanding the root causes of food insecurity.
110. Demonstrating the results of the new programme and proving the effectiveness of CFFs as a phase-over strategy will be challenging. Results will only be measurable with clear and realistic objectives and indicators and a practical and energetic monitoring effort. This programme will require extra support for monitoring, both technical and monetary.



ANNEX



The designations employed and the presentation of material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the World Food Programme (WFP) concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its frontiers or boundaries.



ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

CCA	Common Country Assessment
CCC	Child Care Centres
CFF	Community Food Fund
CSO	Country Strategy Outline
DAA	Food Assistance Directorate
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FESPAD	El Salvador National Fund for Studies on Human Rights
HDI	Human Development Index
LOA	Letter of Agreement
PAHO	Pan-American Health Organization
PROES	Healthy Schools Programme
PRRO	Protracted relief and recovery operation
SNF	National Secretariat for the Family
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population Activities
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
VAM	Vulnerability analysis and mapping
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organization

