



Executive Board
Third Regular Session

Rome, 19 - 22 October 1998

COUNTRY PROGRAMMES

Agenda item 7



Distribution: GENERAL
WFP/EB.3/98/7/1
4 September 1998
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

COUNTRY PROGRAMME— MALI (1999–2002)

ABSTRACT

Mali is classified as both a least developed (LDC) and low-income, food-deficit country (LIFDC). In 1996 it ranked 171st on the UNDP Human Development Index (HDI) with a per capita gross domestic product (GDP) of 280 dollars, an infant (between 0 and 5 years) mortality rate of 238 per 1,000 and an Aggregate Household Food Security Index (FAO) of 71.6 (1993–95).

According to the recommendations made by the Executive Board when considering the Country Strategy Outline (CSO) at its Third Regular Session in October 1997, the Country Programme for Mali emphasizes strengthening food security by raising production, establishing national, regional and village-level food reserves, targeting the poorest and most food-insecure groups, and strengthening collaboration with WFP's partners.

According to the Government's Country Strategy Note (CSN), the WFP Programme for the next four years must coincide with the United Nations Funds' and Programmes' programming cycle in Mali. The programme's implementation will benefit from strengthened coordination and enhanced effectiveness of United Nations interventions following the establishment of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) in which the Bretton Woods institutions took part. WFP will be working closely with the World Bank and UNICEF, UNDP/UNESCO, FAO, IFAD, WHO and UNFPA.

The proposed programme hinges around the following: concentrating geographically on four regions rather than seven; expanding to sectors other than rural development in order to target better the populations most severely affected by food insecurity and malnutrition (school canteens, health centres and disaster preparedness); providing more effective tools for food management, and monitoring and evaluation; taking over the logistical organization down to the beneficiary level; and supporting community initiatives, mainly in cooperation with the most efficient partners.

The programme requires 29,788 tons of food, with the following breakdown: 38 percent for food-for-work (FFW) activities in the areas of agricultural production, environment, rural infrastructure, sanitation and training, taking into account the Government's priorities and their lasting impact on food security and combating poverty; 32 percent to school canteens; 14 percent for health care and nutrition, and 16 percent for food security and disaster preparedness.

The proposed country programme covers the period 1999–2002, during which WFP food assistance, subject to resource availability, will total 18.3 million dollars for basic activities; of this total, 14.5 million dollars accounts for all direct operational costs and 3.8 million dollars is for direct and indirect support costs, as the Board may determine. Of this amount, 2.2 million dollars has already been approved for projects Mali 5941.00 and 5942.00, which will be implemented during the period covered by the programme. This means that a balance of 16.1 million dollars remains to be approved.

NOTE TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

**This document contains recommendations for review and approval by
the Executive Board.**

Pursuant to the decisions taken on the methods of work by the Executive Board at its First Regular Session of 1996, the documentation prepared by the Secretariat for the Board has been kept brief and decision-oriented. The meetings of the Executive Board are to be conducted in a business-like manner, with increased dialogue and exchanges between delegations and the Secretariat. Efforts to promote these guiding principles will continue to be pursued by the Secretariat.

The Secretariat therefore invites members of the Board who may have questions of a technical nature with regard to this document, to contact the WFP staff member(s) listed below, preferably well in advance of the Board's meeting. This procedure is designed to facilitate the Board's consideration of the document in the plenary.

The WFP focal points for this document are:

Regional Director:	M. Zejjari	tel.: 066513-2201
Programme Coordinator:	L. Bjorkman	tel.: 066513-2244

Should you have any questions regarding matters of dispatch of documentation for the Executive Board, please contact the Documentation and Meetings Clerk (tel.: 066513-2641).

STRATEGIC FOCUS: FOOD INSECURITY AND POVERTY

1. The Country Strategy Outline (CSO) for Mali (document WFP/EB.3/97/6/Add.2) was submitted to the Third Regular Session of the Executive Board in October 1997. Account was taken of the Board's remarks regarding the CSO while the programme was being prepared, particularly as regards improving food security by raising production and establishing food reserves at every level, targeting the groups and regions most vulnerable to chronic food insecurity, and enhancing cooperation with other bilateral, multilateral and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

2. In order to improve their effectiveness and impact, the activities have been extended to include basic education, health care and nutrition, and food security based geographically around the four regions of Mopti, Gao, Timbuktu and Kidal, selected on the basis of the criteria of poverty and food insecurity (see Annex I). Particular emphasis has been placed on sustainability and the participation of women.

3. The WFP Country Programme will coincide with the last four years of the Country Strategy Note (CSN) (1998–2002) adopted by the Government in July 1997, and with the United Nations Programmes' and Funds' programming cycles in Mali (UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and WFP). It fits in perfectly with the national strategy to combat poverty and the sectoral plans and programmes drawn up by the Government in close coordination with its partners. The Country Programme is the result of close cooperation between WFP, the Government and representatives of the leading donors, with input from the results of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) (see paragraph 12).

THE HUNGRY POOR: PRIORITY IN ADDRESSING THEIR NEEDS

Food insecurity, poverty and vulnerability

4. Mali is a vast land-locked country, classified as a least developed country (LDC). In 1996 the per capita gross domestic product (GDP) was 280 dollars, the Human Development Index (HDI) was 0.315, the human poverty index (HPI) was 63 percent, and the Aggregate Household Food Security Index (1993–95) 71.6 percent. About one half of the population spread over 75 percent of the territory suffers from chronic food insecurity despite the country's huge agricultural potential and food self-sufficiency that has become consolidated over the past 10 years or so. Cereals make up the staple diet, but they are greatly affected by climatic vagaries, particularly as regards the quantity of rainfall and its distribution between regions and between different periods of the year. The country is highly prone to natural disasters (drought, locusts, floods). Moreover, the regional cereals balances suffer from a structural deficit throughout the country, particularly in the regions of Kidal, Gao, Timbuktu and, to a lesser degree, Mopti. Furthermore, the civil unrest in these regions from 1991 to 1994 further worsened food security and caused about 200,000 people to flee the country. Most of them have recently repatriated, and receive assistance from WFP and other partners to enable them to become socially and economically reintegrated.

5. According to the results of Mali's 1994 economic survey, about 69 percent of the Malian population is poor (or extremely poor in the case of half of them) compared with 41 percent in 1989, an increase of 28 percent in only five years. Qualitative surveys on the perception of this phenomenon show that the most important shortcomings are in the area of food, followed by health care. The impoverishment of the population can be seen in terms of the average household expenditure on food, which rose from 54 percent in 1989 to 77 percent in 1994, and to 83 percent in 1997. Over the same period, the nutritional situation, particularly of expectant mothers and children, has deteriorated seriously: chronic malnutrition (the height-for-age index) among children under three years of age has risen from 27.1 percent in 1989 to 40.9 percent in 1994, while the acute malnutrition rate (the weight-for-age index) rose from 31 percent in 1987 to 42.9 percent in 1994.

6. According to recent studies, poverty is concentrated mainly in rural areas (in which 90 percent of the poor live) and particularly affects women, the young and the old. Vulnerability levels also vary depending upon the socio-economic groups in an at-risk zone, especially in the regions targeted by WFP. The "medium and over" level affects at least 10 percent of the total population every year (see Annex I). Generally speaking, the vulnerability level is very low among the flood recession crop farmers, weak or low among the rainfed crop farmers on the dry lands, the agro-pastoralists and the fishermen, and medium to high among herdsmen.

Government strategies to combat food insecurity, poverty and disasters

7. Food security is one of the main concerns of the Government, and is the global objective assigned to the rural development sector as defined by the Rural Development Master Plan and the Plan of Action of the Ministry of Rural Development and Water, drafted and implemented in 1992. These plans are

currently being updated, and will then be used to draw up the Rural Sector Support Programme (PASR), a National Rural Infrastructure Programme (PNIR) and a Rural Financial Sector Support Programme (PASFR). The Government has also drawn up a National Accelerated Sustainable Development Growth Strategy (1998–2007) which takes rural development as a priority sector, particularly with regard to public investment.

8. In order to address structural and cyclical food insecurity, the Government and the donors put in place the Cereals Market Restructuring Programme (PRMC) in 1982 for which WFP acted as the permanent secretariat, and donor coordinator. PRMC's main objective was to enhance the food security of the people, mainly by liberalizing the cereals markets, and exploiting the positive effect that this would have on food production. It has facilitated the establishment of a food security system whose main tools are the Early Warning System (EWS), the Market Information System (MIS), the National Security Stock (NSS) and the restructured Office des Produits Agricoles du Mali (Office of Agricultural Produce of Mali—OPAM). PRMC is now in its fifth phase (1997–99), which is mainly designed to enhance food security and guarantee the sustainability of the programme's structures.

9. The Government has confirmed the absolute priority given to combating poverty by adopting, in 1998, the National Poverty Control Strategy (SNLP) which defined eight strategic areas of intervention including: promoting income-generating activities and self-employment, promoting the development of agrifood crops, improving access to education and training, and fostering access to primary health care, nutrition, drinking-water and sanitation.

Government food aid policy

10. The Government's food aid policy is set out mainly in the framework of PRMC. NSS, totalling 35,000 tons of donor-financed millet/sorghum, is managed by OPAM which operates through free distribution, intervention sales and invitations to tender on the basis of the indications supplied by EWS after consultation with other reliable sources (SIM, Famine Early Warning System—FEWS, Diagnostic permanent sur les cultures—DIAPER, etc.). The system of ongoing coordination between the Government and the donors under PRMC provides a coordination framework, and guarantees that the various forms of food aid (emergency, project and programme) are in line with government policy. NSS is sufficient in volume to address local cyclical food crises, and in the case of serious crisis they will be able to make an initial response while awaiting implementation of an emergency intervention plan which still has to be formulated.

Integration with the UNDAF Country Strategy Note (CSN) process

11. In July 1997 the Government approved the Country Strategy Note (CSN) defining the policy framework for United Nations operations in Mali over the next five years. According to the national priorities, the mandate, powers and responsibilities of each agency, support has been sought to combat poverty and to establish sustainable development in five main areas:

- good governance and democracy;
- developing the social sectors: education, health and human resources;
- developing production in agriculture, mining and industry;
- developing basic infrastructure: transport, energy and housing; and
- strengthening institutional capacities and economic management.

12. The activities of the WFP Country Programme are in line with the CSN, of which it covers the final four years. All the United Nations Funds, Programmes and organizations, in cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions, have been involved in drawing up the UNDAF plan for Mali which complements the CSN and which has made it possible to strengthen the complementarity and effectiveness of the programmes of the United Nations system.

Cooperation with the United Nations system, and other donors and NGOs

13. Considering the very low level of human development indicators for Mali, all the development projects and programmes of all Mali's partners concentrate on combating poverty and strengthening food security. Concerted action and cooperation between the assistance agencies are a reality, and are improving daily, particularly in drafting and implementing sectoral or transversal programmes (the Cereals Market Restructuring Programme—PRMC, the Ten Year Education Programme—PRODEC, the Ten-Year Health Development Plan—PDDSS and the National Strategy to Combat Poverty—SNLP).

14. Close cooperation has been established between the World Bank and WFP, particularly in the area of food security and combating poverty through a pilot project to assist grass-roots initiatives (PAIB), the Natural Resource Management Project which is also supported by German cooperation (KfW), UNDP and

Norway, the Health Care, Population and Rural Water Management Project (co-financed by the European Development Fund—EDF, USAID, UNICEF, the German Reconstruction Credit Institute—KfW, Fund for Aid and Cooperation—FAC and Belgium). KfW and the German Technical Cooperation Office (GTZ) are implementing an integrated rural development project with WFP support—the Mali-Nord programme, combining emergency and development aid. The NGO CARE is a major WFP partner in the Timbuktu region for the construction of classrooms with the financial support of Netherlands Cooperation. UNHCR is cooperating with WFP to reincorporate the repatriated people in the north of Mali into the socio-economic environment. IFAD, with help from WFP, is participating in implementing the Food Security Project in the Kidal region (PSARK), and the project for the Lake areas in the Niafunké area.

ASSESSMENT OF WFP ASSISTANCE TO DATE

15. WFP assistance to Mali, which dates back to 1964, totals 189 million dollars with the following breakdown: 78 percent for development projects, 15 percent for emergency operations, and seven percent for a protracted operation for refugees and displaced persons. In this portfolio, project Mali 2231—Multipurpose project for the development of rural and natural resources, which was implemented over more than 20 years (1976-1997), has institutionalized the food-for-work principle. A specific directorate has been established within the Rural Development Ministry, which also indicates the importance which the Government attaches to WFP activities. Over the past four years, WFP aid has accounted for about 30 percent of the total annual volume of all food aid to Mali (6,400 tons out of a total of 21,000, including the distribution of food financed by PRMC donors).

Rural development

16. The performance of this project has been amply described in the CSO in paragraphs 41 to 54. However, it should be emphasized that while the large number of requests for assistance for micro-projects (averaging 2,000 each year) has been one of the strong points of the project, it has also been its main weakness. The project has been operating in seven of the eight regions, inevitably causing a scattering of resources which only better targeting could resolve in the future. Two serious shortcomings have been noted: technical supervision (because of the scarcity of the physical and financial resources of government technical services) and resource management by the national counterpart.

17. The corrective measures introduced in July 1997 have benefited project Mali 2231.04 and PRO 5804.00. These include: training for the different categories of counterpart personnel, particularly the monitoring and evaluation agents; decentralization and increased responsibility vested in the regional branches for resource management and programming; the joint management of food by counterpart and WFP personnel; use of a new method for a fairer calculation of rations, linked to the different phases of implementation of the activities instead of standard rations; the establishment of different control procedures, including the drafting of a project cycle; systematic identification of all the microprojects being assisted; the introduction of transport contracts and waybills managed by WFP; and a more accurate system for monitoring the use of food through monthly reports (rather than the former quarterly reports) on food commodity movement, storage and use by shipping instructions, locality and donor, etc. Furthermore, WFP has stopped distributing the food from the stores and has undertaken the organization and management of secondary foodstuff transport, and no longer reimburses the costs which the Government finds it difficult to finance in advance. Lastly, WFP and the Government have decided to considerably cut direct support to applications for grass-roots initiatives, giving priority to those submitted through NGOs, governmental services, and bilateral and multilateral agencies.

18. The integration of women into the project has been comparatively limited in scope, as evidenced from available data which have been confirmed by the results of an impact assessment. To effectively enhance the role of women, several project components should have been further developed and new FFW activities identified. But the new activities which the women themselves want relate principally to small-scale trading and handicrafts which require direct financial assistance. This is why WFP and the Government decided, in July 1997, to give priority to certain activities in which women were heavily involved, such as market gardening, vocational training (particularly management and professional apprenticeship), reforestation and dune fixation.

Food security, price liberalization and the restructuring of the cereals trade

19. According to the CSO (paragraphs 37 to 40), one might agree that WFP has played and continues to play an essential role in PRMC as a donor (15 percent of the total donors' contributions), as the coordinator of the donors, and the co-administrator of the counterpart funds. PRMC has proven its effectiveness in solving crucial marketing problems in order to enhance food security. As a coordination mechanism it has now become a benchmark. Its effectiveness and originality are based upon the following: using food aid

compatibly with the use of local cereal output; making available substantial, programmable and mobilizable resources to go with agreed decisions and readjustment measures; regular concerted action and coordination between donors; ongoing dialogue with the Government; and controlling data on the agrifood situation. Nevertheless, the food security system as it stands would be ineffective in the event of a serious food crisis.

Protracted operation for refugees and Mali repatriates

20. The implementation of the regional protracted relief operation for refugees and Mali repatriates and displaced persons since mid-1997 (PRO Regional 5804.00), which is a model of the emergency-development continuum in the northern region of the country, has enabled WFP to blaze the trail in the north of Mali and pave the way for other operations of the same type to be implemented, thanks to its geographical targeting and strategies. It has been able to meet the short-term food requirements of the repatriates during the resettlement phase, while involving them in medium- and long-term development activities with the support of other partners. This project, which is geographically restricted to the regions of Timbuktu, Gao, Kidal and Mopti, is exploiting the lessons learned from project Mali 2231.04 (requiring greater WFP participation in the management, monitoring and supervision of foodstuff utilization, taking responsibility for certain functions which are guaranteed and refunded by WFP to the Government, training the counterpart personnel, cooperating more closely with other partners to improve the impact of food aid on the beneficiaries). This project has therefore been implemented under the best possible conditions, particularly in terms of monitoring and evaluation in which the counterpart agents are playing a decisive role. They have accordingly been trained on the application of the new project cycle, project identification, to calculate standards and make a quick evaluation of a project's impact at least once a month (see paragraphs 18, 19 and 31).

STRATEGIC ORIENTATION OF THE COUNTRY PROGRAMME AND TARGETING

21. Despite the fact that for several years production as a whole has been sufficient, food security in Mali is still very fragile because of the sensitivity of agricultural production to climatic vagaries and natural disasters, the spiralling population growth rate (3.7 percent a year), increased poverty and malnutrition, particularly among the most vulnerable groups, and the return of the displaced people in the north of the country. The objectives of the programme fit in perfectly with the National Strategy to Combat Poverty and the sectoral plans and programmes drawn up by the Government with its partners. WFP food aid will contribute, in particular, to strengthening food security in the short, medium and long term, to combat poverty and foster human resource development.

22. To enhance the impact of WFP aid and guarantee better monitoring, the programme will cover the poorest regions which have substantial structural cereal deficits and among the lowest human development indicators, such as the regions of Mopti, Timbuktu, Gao and Kidal (see Annex I and the Map in Annex III). Part of the population in these four regions, who were displaced in 1991–92, are now being reincorporated, but the impact of the 1984/85 drought has not yet been superseded. Particular efforts must be deployed to target the poorest beneficiaries in the intervention area, particularly the women, in conjunction with the technical ministries involved, the regional coordinators for the advancement of women and the implementation partners (see paragraph 19).

23. The FFW and food for training (FFT) activities will enable WFP to enhance agricultural production and make it secure, raise the living standards of the rural population and train the adults, particularly women. Aid for basic education through school canteens will target young rural children, nomads or the deprived in order to raise the general school attendance levels, particularly for girls. The health and nutrition activities will encourage expectant and nursing mothers to attend the health care centres together with their children aged between six and 36 months, and will contribute towards perfecting and disseminating a supplementary food. The food security and disaster preparedness activities will finance the instruments to be used in the targeted regions to strengthen the country's capacity to cope with a serious food crisis, together with alternatives to free food distribution such as setting up village granaries and grain banks, and FFW or FFT.

24. To facilitate management and monitoring and mobilize the necessary supplementary contributions, the bulk of the aid will be delivered within the framework of governmental projects (Food and Incomes Security Project for the Kidal Region (PSARK), Lake Horo) or under the supervision of NGOs, bilateral and multilateral international organizations, and state technical services (Water and Forests for reforestation). The NGOs include CARE and Association Française de Volontaires pour le Progrès (the French Association of Volunteers for Progress—AFVP) for the school canteens in the Timbuktu, Gao and Kidal regions, World Vision for the construction of micro-dams and rural tracks at Kidal and Gao; Action contre la Faim for sinking wells in the Gao region.

25. At the level of international organizations, WFP aid will be incorporated into projects financed by IFAD (rural development and food security projects in the Saharan and Sahelian regions); the United Nations

Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) in the framework of the hydro-agricultural projects being developed in the valley and the project for the advancement of the pastoralist populations in the Timbuktu region; the EDF for dune fixation and reforestation in the Kidal and Gao regions; the World Bank in every area, including education (support for nutritional education in the elementary schools and rural infrastructure through the PAIB, the Agence de travaux d'intérêt public (AGETIPE), the Rural Sector Support Programme (PASR), the National Rural Infrastructures Programme (PNIR), Belgian Cooperation (a hundred equipped wells in the Gao region); the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) (developing the wheat sector at Diré); GTZ and KfW (the Mali-nord project at Timbuktu and the construction of classrooms at Mopti); while cooperation is planned with UNICEF (school canteens at Mopti and the construction of health centres), FAO for the rehabilitation of the paddy fields (Special Programme for Food Security), UNDP/UNESCO (school canteens in the Mopti region) and WHO for the construction of health centres.

COUNTRY PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES

Resources and country programme preparation process

26. The Country Strategy Outline made provision for 44,000 tons of food over four years, equivalent in direct operating costs to approximately 28.6 million dollars. In view of the projected level of WFP resources, the proposed programme will only cover basic activities whose direct operating costs have been estimated at 14.5 million dollars. This requires a volume of 29,788 tons of food, with the following breakdown: 38 percent for FFW activities in agricultural production, environment and rural infrastructure, sanitation and vocational training, taking account of the Government's priorities and their sustainable impact on food security and combating poverty; 32 percent to school canteens; 14 percent to health and nutrition and 16 percent to food security. The contributions from the Government and other partners will be estimated during pre-assessment missions.

27. The proposed activities stem from the recommendations made by a programme evaluation mission carried out by WFP headquarters and the country office in March 1997. A preparatory mission to study activities in education and health led by the Regional Director and composed of officers from headquarters and the country office and a nutrition consultant was carried out in October 1997 following a joint WFP/WHO identification mission. Logistical issues, which are extremely important in a country like Mali, were examined by two missions of regional logistics experts from West Africa and the Sahel. Lastly, the vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM) Regional Unit provided technical support in preparing the proposed programme.

28. The programme's activities will help to strengthen and redeploy the WFP office personnel in the field beginning in March 1998 (setting up an operational office/logistical base at Mopti, increasing the personnel in the auxiliary offices), enhancing the facilities of the country office (logistics and communication) and the national counterpart (evaluation and training of the personnel responsible for warehouse management by the regional logistical expert; training in computers, monitoring and evaluation and gender issues; logistical equipment and computers to use the data collected in the field) and lessons learned from past operations (see paragraph 18). Furthermore, the auxiliary offices have been equipped with software to enable them to gather and use data collected by application, locality, and to be fed into the "JULIA" system. The partners will be responsible for monitoring the execution of micro-projects by submitting monthly reports and to taking part in joint evaluations.

Overview of activities

29. Below is a summary of programme activities. Details are provided in Annex II.

Programme component	Tonnage	Direct operational costs (million dollars)	Number of direct beneficiaries (per year)
Basic activities			
1. FFW activities	10 569	4.1	421 000
2. School canteens	11 199	5.9	36 000
3. Health-nutrition	4 020	2.6	47 000
4. Food security and disaster preparedness	4 000	1.9	—
Total	29 788*	14.5*	504 000

* These figures do not include the PRO Mali 5804.00 resources. This project will continue to be

implemented until mid-1999.

COUNTRY PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES

Basic Activity 1: FFW/FFT

30. WFP operations in the form of FFW and FFT fit into the framework of the development strategies and priorities drawn up by the Government of Mali to raise the living standards of the people. This work relates to the following sectors: agricultural production, environment, rural infrastructure, sanitation and vocational training.

31. WFP aid will be used to encourage the village communities to take part in highly labour-intensive work and training sessions. In addition to the strategy described in paragraph 26, WFP assistance will support core initiatives, particularly those submitted by women or those which are for their benefit. In order to reach 40 percent participation by women in FFW activities, WFP will provide training (functional literacy) for such activities as market gardening, reforestation and dune fixation which are generally carried out by women. In order to mutually strengthen the various country programme activities, some components such as water-supply, market gardening and social infrastructure will be targeted to schools, the health centres and the surrounding communities which already benefit from other activities of the programme (school canteens, and health and nutrition).

32. The long-term objective is to help improve food security, raise incomes and living standards of the target population and to train the members of the beneficiary communities, particularly women, to give them the qualifications they need to be able to take control of their own development. The expected outputs are: increased agricultural land productivity, the management of new production units for irrigated agriculture, a decline in wind-borne and water erosion, an increase in the forested area and an improvement in the village living standards thanks to basic socio-economic infrastructure and improved health and hygiene conditions. The training of the villagers will cover leadership and extension and management techniques, and functional literacy.

33. Each person taking part in a FFW activity will be entitled to a family ration for each working day, equivalent to five individual rations in the case of agricultural, environmental, social infrastructure and sanitation work. The family ration will comprise three individual rations in the case of attendance at the training sessions (see Annex II).

34. The total food required for this activity is 10,150 tons of cereals and 419 tons of vegetable oil, whose direct operating cost is estimated at 4.1 million dollars.

Basic Activity 2: School canteens

35. The indicators on Mali's education system are among the lowest in the world. Over 80 percent of the active population have never received any education whatsoever. The school attendance rate in the first years of primary school was 42 percent in 1995/96, with a large gap between boys and girls (51 percent and 33 percent, respectively). This is three times lower in rural areas (27 percent) than in the towns (80 percent), with the lowest values in the regions of Kidal (19 percent), Timbuktu and Mopti (23 percent) and Gao (31 percent). A survey published in 1997 by the Direction nationale de la statistique et de l'informatique (National Directorate for Statistics and Informatics—DNSI) showed that the proportion of pupils from poor households aged between seven and 12 fell sharply as one moved higher up the education system. The difficulty of finding food and lodging at school, when it is a long way from the place of residence, is one of the reasons why the pupils from poor families drop out. The need for girls to perform domestic chores and the high cost of schooling are further constraints on girls' school attendance and on their good academic performance.

36. WFP's assistance to school canteens is designed to support PRODEC which aims to do the following by the year 2008:

- a) raise the school attendance rate to a minimum of 75 percent and reduce the differences between regions, and between the urban and rural areas;
- b) raise girls' gross school attendance rate from 33 percent in 1996 to 70 percent;
- c) improve the quality of primary teaching; and
- d) guarantee an income transfer to the poor and at-risk populations of the targeted areas.

37. WFP support over the period covered by the programme will target 30,000 day students in primary schools, and 6,000 boarding pupils. Priority will be given to the nomadic and community schools, to those situated in areas with high food insecurity and those covering large geographic areas. Each day, a meal will

be served to the pupils, but in the boarding facilities for the children of nomads, two meals will be served. To encourage or aid the school attendance of girls in the areas where this level is still too low, in addition to the food served in the canteens, the girls will be given a four-litre can of oil every month if they have attended at least 80 percent of the class days per month (see Annex II). Implements and equipment such as wheelbarrows or mills to facilitate the women's work (collecting and carrying water, carrying young children to school, milling grains) will also be supplied to certain communities on an experimental basis.

38. Before any WFP assistance can begin the school partners (the pupils' parents, educators, civil society) will be questioned to see whether they are aware of and trained in food management and organizing the operation of the canteen. The canteens must also have a minimum of infrastructure (warehouses, water points) and agree to pay a larger share of the operating costs. To do this, school gardens and other activities within the surrounding community will be encouraged through FFW activities.

39. The quantities needed to operate the school canteens have been estimated as 7,800 tons of cereals, 1,449 of oil (of which 810 tons are for the special rations for girls) and 1,950 of pulses.

Basic Activity 3: Health and nutrition

40. In Mali the health situation is affected by the lack of infrastructure (31 percent of health care coverage in 1996), the quality and low level of use of the available services. An analysis of the nutritional and food situation has raised the following priority problems: the high prevalence of a protein-energy deficiency among pre-school-age children (retarded growth, reflecting chronic malnutrition, affects 30.1 percent of children under three, and wasting, which indicates chronic malnutrition, affects 23.3 percent of children in the same age group), an energy-protein deficiency among schoolchildren, and the high frequency of micronutrient deficiencies (Vitamin A, iodine and iron) as well as a high rate of low-birth-weight babies.

41. Among babies, the malnutrition rate rises sharply after the age of six months from five percent while the child is still being breast fed to 14 percent between six and 11 months, when the mother's milk is supplemented with more solid food, and then to 40 percent between 12 and 24 months when solid food is the primary source of food for the child.

42. Since 1993 the Government has been implementing a health care development strategy based on the concept of primary health care and the principles of the Bamako Initiative. This strategy is based on the concept of health areas and the partnership between the community and the Government. It has been the basis of the Ten-Year Health and Social Development Plan 1998–2008 and the Five-Year Health and Social Development Plan 1998–2002 drawn up by the Government with the active and effective support of the people themselves and the donors.

43. Under this plan each "cercle", divided up into health areas, draws up a five-year programme. Each health area comprises between seven and 10 villages with a population of 10,000 people within a radius of 15 kilometres, and a community health centre (CSCOM) or a "revitalized health centre" (CSAR), which provides a minimum package of activities (MPA). MPAs comprise health care and prevention activities (pre- and post-natal consultation, the vaccination of expectant mothers and children, family planning, monitoring the growth and psychomotor development of the child, etc.) and promotional work mainly using information-education-communication (IEC) sessions on different issues.

44. The northern regions were late in implementing the health care policy. Over two thirds of the people have no access to a CSCOM or a CSAR. Preventive work by these health care centres is highly unsatisfactory and the low attendance level is a real problem for their sustainability. The gradual takeover of health care and child care and adult health care is therefore not guaranteed.

45. WFP assistance in this sector will contribute to disseminating supplementary food; it will also raise the nutritional status of the population, particularly of babies and expectant and nursing mothers, encouraging their access to primary health care services.

46. Following the example of a similar project assisted by WFP in a neighbouring country, the maize-soya blend will be used while awaiting the design of supplementary food made from local products. The diet will be tested during the period 1999–2000, covered in part by the rapid health care and nutrition action plan. Moreover, WFP support to IEC training in the areas of health and nutrition will raise attendance at the health centres in the targeted communities, and FFW activities will encourage the construction and rehabilitation of health care centres and sanitation infrastructure.

47. WFP will also act within the framework of PRODESS in close cooperation with the Government, partners and the local population. Assistance to this component will draw on the experience partly acquired during the implementation of the quick action project in the same sector, and the support of the organizations which take part in funding and providing equipment for the community health centres (UNICEF, WHO, KfW) and AGETIPE as regards sanitation.

48. It is estimated that in the four years of the WFP programme 47,000 expectant and nursing mothers, and babies between six and 36 months of age will receive 3,240 tons of supplementary food over an average period of 180 days; the total quantity of food to be distributed will reach 4,020 tons, for a direct operating cost of 2,579,820 dollars.

Basic Activity 4: Strengthening the food security and disaster preparedness system

49. PRMC is playing a fundamental role in the food security system in Mali. It has made it possible to raise considerably the level of food security in the country by liberalizing the markets, leading to increased production and the establishment of an effective national early warning and cyclical food crisis management system. In accordance with the objectives set out in the PRMC 1997–99 Medium-Term Action Plan, it is proposed that, in close synergy with other partners' contributions (Canada, France, United States, the Netherlands, European Union, Germany) and government aid, WFP will contribute to:

- a) putting in place new instruments to respond to the food crises, namely, the Food Intervention Plan, the OPAM-based monitoring unit and the Food Security Fund;
- b) improving the collection and analysis of information on the food situation of the population in order to enable the SAP to more finely tune targeting and extend the range of its recommendations; and
- c) implementing alternative actions to free distribution, particularly by setting up village level food reserves.

50. All the actions to be financed from the WFP contribution will be defined using the usual PRMC procedures involving total coordination between all the external partners and the Mali Government. The Management Committee on which all the donors sit, together with the World Bank, the IMF, UNDP, FAO and soon Belgian Cooperation, will draw up an operational plan to be financed by the donors each year. The annual plan of action is drawn up by agreement with the government, which defines the framework and the amount it contributes to the programme. WFP's contribution throughout the life of the programme will take the form of a global contribution of 4,000 tons of wheat flour. The counterpart funding from wheat sales will be paid entirely into the PRMC Common Counterpart Fund. The direct operating costs to place this quantity of wheat flour at the disposal of the country are estimated at 1.88 million dollars.

KEY PROBLEMS AND RISKS

51. A serious food crisis stemming from a natural and wide-ranging disaster such as drought could destabilize the country programme and lead to a predominance of emergency operations and massive imports of food exceeding the capacities of the food security reserve and funds. WFP will continue to play an important role within PRMC, jointly with the Government and the other programme donors, and the PRMC structures will be used to manage and attenuate a crisis of this kind. Through its long experience in managing food aid to Mali, its presence in the field (four auxiliary offices) and its coverage of risk-prone areas, WFP will play a decisive role in evaluating the needs and setting the objectives and strategies to be implemented to overcome the crisis.

52. Another risk element will be to gear the strategies and facilities of the country programme to the decentralization process which is designed to improve coordinating the peoples and encouraging them to participate more broadly. The new decentralized communities have substantial powers regarding food security, education and healthcare.

Pre-assessment

53. The country programme will cover the period 1 January 1999 to 31 December 2002. The first six months will coincide with the implementation of PRO Mali 5804.00 and the Education and Health/Nutrition quick action projects appraised in October 1997. The pre-assessment of the proposed country programme activities will benefit from the mid-term evaluation of PRO Mali 5804.00 planned in September/October 1998, and the evaluation of the aforementioned quick action projects which will provide useful lessons to more finely tune objectives and strategies.

54. Once the country programme is approved, the WFP office in Mali will initiate missions for the preliminary assessment of the scheduled activities with the technical support of the headquarters' Regional Bureau, and with national and outside consultants. These missions will be made up of representatives of WFP's major partners, such as AGETIPE for the sanitation work, FAO for the management of hydro-agricultural facilities, the World Bank for nutrition, and AFVP and CARE for school canteens.

COUNTRY PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

Capacity-building

55. The Government has the necessary personnel to implement the country programme through the technical directorates of the ministries and governmental agencies, and grass-roots associations. The Government will select the most competent officials to supervise the WFP programme. Training and refresher courses for the supervisors will be provided by WFP. The WFP office in Mali will commission a nutrition and food technology specialist to design and disseminate the supplementary food. The limited resources of WFP to build capacities will be complemented by funds resourced locally or provided by multilateral and bilateral donors and NGOs in the framework of the institutional support given to the decentralization process. This capacity-building will mainly cover social mobilization, techniques for identifying and evaluating needs, and management techniques.

56. WFP will provide training to national counterparts in a number of fields: data analysis, gender issues, commodity management, monitoring and reporting. It will also be essential, through NGOs with the necessary experience and skills, to train the members of the village associations (associations of pupils' parents or community health associations) who will be required to manage substantial quantities of food within the framework of one or other programme activity. In the same way these associations will liaise to sensitize the people to other programme activities and the procedures for implementing them.

Logistics

57. In view of the geographical re-targeting of the programme's activities around the four northern regions of the country, in March 1998 WFP redeployed part of its staff to Mopti and to the sub-offices. The logistical base at Mopti will be used as the storage, transit and re-channelling centre for imported food or food bought locally through to other regions, depending upon requirements. According to the local availability of cereals, WFP will strengthen its local food commodity purchasing policy (cereals and niébé) subject to resource availability. Other commodities will also be imported through Abidjan and no longer through Dakar because the railway transport system is inadequate and antiquated.

58. During the period covered by this programme, the subsidy to cover landside transport, storage and handling (LTSH) will continue to cover 100 percent of the costs in consideration of Mali's status as an LDC. It will also be more economical and effective for WFP to organize and pay for secondary transport directly and entrust it to the private sector or commission it to NGOs.

Coordination, implementation and reporting

59. An inter-ministerial WFP country programme coordination committee will be set up, comprising the representatives of the following: Ministries of Rural Development, Health, Basic Education, Foreign Affairs, and Planning and Economy, and of the local government. The mandate of the mission will be to examine policy issues, to coordinate and implement the programme at the national level, and approve annual targets and resource allocation. The representatives of the main NGOs involved in the activities being assisted by WFP and the representatives of the leading donors will also sit on this committee.

60. A technical coordination unit already exists at the level of the ministries responsible for the areas of interest to WFP. Its task is to examine planning, programming issues, and the implementation and financing of activities. The technical coordination unit is also responsible for collecting information at every level, preparing and submitting regular reports on the resources and progress reports on each activity.

61. At the regional level a steering committee made up of regional representatives of the various ministries involved and the official of the WFP country office will be responsible for the operational aspects and the implementation of the recommendations of the inter-departmental committee. The committee will also draft the reports on the programme's activities in the regions based on information collected and supplied by the technical officials. Coordinated by the Mopti Operational Office and through its sub-offices, WFP will be responsible for managing and organizing the transport of food to the beneficiaries and providing the methodological and technical support needed for the implementation of activities.

62. In the context of UNDAF, a number of structures have been set up (steering committee, thematic work groups, monitoring committees) to strengthen the coordination and concertation capacities of the United Nations system in Mali. In the framework of the implementation of the sectoral programmes, steering and coordination committees will monitor the activities, including WFP's activities, in each sector.

63. To improve the system for drafting reports, institutional arrangements regarding monitoring procedures and the auditing of all the resources allocated to each activity will be detailed for each programme component.

Adjustment and complementary measures

64. The WFP office in Mali will closely supervise the results of all the activities under the country programme. To do this, it will rely on an analysis of the project reports submitted by the Government or produced by the office itself regarding the conclusions of the monitoring and evaluation missions submitted by the WFP personnel during their field visits, and the observations made by the other operating partners. The office will summarize the conclusions of its evaluation in its six-monthly programme reports which will be drafted in close cooperation with the national counterpart, the development partners and the interministerial WFP programme coordination committee. The committee will also analyse the reasons for any problems that arise and propose improvements where necessary, and any corrective measures needed.

Beneficiary participation in planning activities, and the advancement of women

65. The country programme forms an important part of the sectoral programmes drafted by the Government with the participation of the beneficiaries. At the implementation level, and particularly the implementation of the FFW/FFT activities, WFP's assistance will mainly be designed to mobilize the beneficiaries to meet their own needs. All WFP's operating partners use the participatory approach which makes the beneficiary populations agents and promoters of their own development—an essential condition for sustainability.

66. As far as the school canteens are concerned, the parents and the representatives of the students will play a full part in running them and in seeking out the solutions required to ensure that the canteens are taken over more fully by the community. The beneficiaries of the health and nutrition component will be identified by the community itself through the Community Health Association (ASACO). The FFW activities will be based on grass-roots initiatives submitted by village associations. The training requirements for the people will be identified by partners during the implementation of the WFP programme to enhance beneficiary participation in designing and managing programme activities.

67. In the country programme, the aim will be to reach a proportion of at least 50 percent women beneficiaries in all the activities. To do this, and drawing on the lessons learned from the survey carried out by the WFP office on the impact of the aid provided by the Programme for Women in Mali, some activities will be designed specifically for them. In the framework of FFW activities and in order to achieve 40 percent of beneficiaries being women, the activities which mobilize the participation of women will be given priority assistance. To this end, WFP expects to strengthen cooperation with the regional coordination units for the advancement of women and the women's NGOs. In the school canteens girls will be given a special ration, in addition to what they eat in the canteen itself, in order eventually to reach gender equality (from 40 to 50 percent) as far as resource allocation is concerned.

68. The health and nutrition activity will relate solely to women and young children. Non-food items provided through the various activities will be allocated as a matter of priority to women. The WFP office will continue to be a member of the United Nations Gender Task Force and will continue to provide training on the subject for the personnel involved in implementing the programme.

Evaluation

69. During the implementation of the country programme and continuing the process already set in motion within the framework of PRO Mali 5804.00, evaluation will become a tool for managing and steering WFP work. This evaluation already forms part of the duties of the sub-offices and the monitoring and evaluation agents. Evaluations will be carried out jointly with the donors, United Nations agencies and NGO partners as well as the beneficiaries themselves. They will be particularly important and necessary, because WFP has only recently begun operating in two of the three areas concerned. To do this, it will be necessary to organize regional and national workshops in order to sensitize the people concerned.

70. The mid-term review of the implementation of the programme will provide an opportunity to acquire an outsider's view of the programme's performance. Its main task will be to make it possible, in the light of the development of the risk elements, to redirect and improve the implementation of the programme during the second half of the implementation period. To do this, and subject to available resources, nutritional surveys or studies will be carried out in the framework of the school canteen and health and nutrition components.

ANNEX I

ANNEX II

SOCIO-ECONOMIC INDICATORS BY REGION

Region	Population 1996 ¹		School attendance 1995/96 ²			Infant/juvenile mortality ³	Malnutrition 0-3 yrs ⁴	Vulnerability to food insecurity in 1996 and 1997 ⁵				Recommended free food aid 1988/95 ⁶
	1 000 h.	percent	Total percent	Boys percent	Girls percent			Extreme/high percent		Medium percent		
								96	97	96	97	
Kayes	1 287	14	35	45	24	259	38	0	0	10	0	10
Bamako	810	9	131	135	127	149	29	0	0	0	0	0
Koulikoro	1 443	16	44	56	31	232	41	0	0	0	0	26
Sikasso	1 599	17	38	48	28	232	44	0	0	0	0	0
Segou	1 624	18	37	45	28	274	41	0	0	6	0	13
Mopti*	1 481	16	23	28	18	325	41	10	34	23	3	38
Timbuktu*	515	6	23	27	19	237	41	28	56	24	25	32
Gao*	362	4	31	39	22	237	41	61	17	14	8	40
Kidal*	70	0	19	25	13	237	41	83	33	17	13	79
Total	9 191	100	42	51	33	238	40	7	10	8	2	

Sources:

¹ DNSI (Direction nationale de la statistique et de l'informatique) Commissariat au plan

² Report on the analysis of the situation in Mali. UNICEF, 1996.

³ Population and health survey 1995-96.

⁴ Idem.

⁵ FEWS data for 1996 and 1997.

⁶ Recommended free food aid, 1988/95, SAP.

* Region targeted for WFP country programme activities.

MALI—COUNTRY PROGRAMME (1999–2002)

Activity	Product	Volume (in tons)	Value (in dollars)	Transport by sea (in dollars)	Transport over land (in dollars)	TIEM (in dollars)	Total costs (in dollars)
1. Food for work	Sorghum/millet ¹	10 150	3 045 000	0	0	609 000	3 654 000
	Oil	419	291 205	73 325	58 660	25 140	448 330
Subtotal		10 569	3 336 205	73 325	58 660	634 140	4 102 330
2. School canteens	Sorghum/millet ¹	7 800	2 340 000	0	0	468 000	2 808 000
	Oil	1 449	1 007 055	253 575	202 860	86 940	1 550 430
	Pulses	1 950	926 250	253 500	273 000	117 000	1 569 750
Subtotal		11 199	4 273 305	507 075	475 860	671 940	5 928 180
3. Health and nutrition	Sorghum/millet ¹	750	225 000	0	0	45 000	270 000
	Oil	30	20 850	5 250	4 200	1 800	32 100
	Weaning foods	3 240	1 208 520	421 200	453 600	194 400	2 277 720
Subtotal		4 020	1 454 370	426 450	457 800	241 200	2 579 820
4. Security systems	Wheat flour	4 000	920 000	400 000	560 000	0	1 880 000
Subtotal		4 000	920 000	400 000	560 000	0	1 880 000
TOTAL		29 788	9 983 880	1 406 850	1 552 320	1 547 280	14 490 330

¹ Local millet and sorghum purchased at an average price of US\$ 300/ton delivered.