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**Executive Board  
Second Regular Session**

**Rome, 24 - 26 March 1997**

## **BUDGETARY INCREASES**

Agenda item 7 b)



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### **MOROCCO 2288 (Exp.4)**

#### **School feeding in rural primary schools - second tranche: enrolment of rural girls**

	<b>Initial budget (dollars)</b>	<b>Increase (dollars)</b>	<b>Revised budget (dollars)</b>
Cost of commodities	14 923 482	12 289 640	27 213 122
Total cost to WFP	17 428 213	16 675 491 <sup>1</sup>	34 103 704

All monetary values are expressed in United States dollars, unless otherwise stated.

<sup>1</sup> Including indirect support costs as a percentage of direct costs (13.9 percent)

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## 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.

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## NATURE OF THE INCREASE

1. A three-year extension (from September 1997) is being proposed in the framework of a second budgetary tranche for project Morocco 2288 (Exp.4). It requires a commitment of 36,202 tons of wheat, 5,367 of wheat flour and 3,878 of vegetable oil.

### Background

2. WFP assistance to the school feeding programme (SFP) began in 1978. The project's long-term objective was to provide support to the Ministry of Education's (Ministère de l'éducation nationale (MEN)) policy, which seeks to guarantee access to basic education to all children up to the age of 15 by the year 2,000. This in a country where the average national enrolment rate is 60 percent, but drops to 41 percent in rural areas and to 26 percent with rural girls. The project's short-term objectives, which were chiefly aimed at rural areas, were to contribute to:
  - a) increasing the enrolment rate in primary rural schools, particularly for girls, in order to achieve boys/girls parity; and
  - b) improving school attendance rates and reducing absenteeism.
3. These objectives were reinforced in 1985 following a fundamental reform of the educational system aimed at improving the quality of teaching. Since 1978, the number of beneficiaries assisted by WFP has grown steadily, from 490,000 to 1.4 million at the end of the third expansion in 1992. Girls accounted for 34.7 percent of beneficiaries in 1993/94, 36.2 percent in 1994/95 and 36.7 percent in 1995/96. During the 1994/95 and 1995/96 school years, school enrolment by rural girls increased by 13.5 and 12.2 percent, while for boys it grew by only 6.0 and 5.6 percent, respectively. Total WFP assistance to the SFP between 1978 and 1992 amounted to 133.6 million dollars.

### Fourth expansion and phase-out plan

4. At its Thirty-fifth Session in May 1993, the Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes (CFA) decided that the total WFP budgetary outlay in the framework of the project's fourth expansion should be disbursed in two tranches, totalling up to 40 million dollars for a four-year period from 1993. A first tranche of some 20 million dollars was approved for the years 1993/94 and 1994/95 and covered the basic food needs of 840,000 and 800,000 beneficiaries, respectively.
5. The second tranche was to have been released only after the presentation by MEN of a plan for phasing out WFP assistance, this requirement being justified not only by the protracted length of assistance to the SFP, but also by the contraction of WFP's medium-term resources. The phase-out period was intended to enable MEN to prepare a gradual takeover plan with a view to guaranteeing the continuity of the programme's objectives by the year 2000.
6. In 1993/94 and 1994/95, MEN, in collaboration with the WFP office in Rabat, took a series of measures which resulted in a phase-out plan being drawn up in conformity with the CFA's request of May 1993. Provisions of the plan included



alternative financing and aid to community groups, school cooperatives and parent-teacher associations so as to encourage them gradually to take part in the management of the school canteens.

7. Although the second tranche's cover is well below the amount authorized by the CFA at its Thirty-fifth Session, current long-term financing policy requires the inclusion of indirect programme support costs (i.e., two million dollars). Should WFP prove unable to satisfy total food aid needs (15,000 tons per annum), several donors approached by the WFP bureau in Morocco have said they are prepared to support the project. The Government has, on its side, confirmed it intends to increase its own contribution.

### **Problems in project management**

8. In March 1995, a number of irregularities were noted in the management of the school canteens. As a result, WFP immediately suspended its assistance to the project. The Government took a series of urgent administrative measures: a judicial investigation was started, three general inspections (Finance Ministry, MEN and interministerial) were ordered and the Ministry of Education commissioned a private company to conduct an external audit.
9. Following two missions in May and July 1995, WFP recommended a number of changes in the project's management and bookkeeping systems. The following concrete proposals were implemented, in close collaboration with MEN:
  - a) creation of a specific working group consisting of MEN and WFP representatives;
  - b) establishment of a permanent ministerial commission at MEN exclusively charged with monitoring the school feeding programme and proposing improvements;
  - c) creation of a government service in charge of the project and responsible for the canteens' management and accounts;
  - d) printing and circulation of an organization manual and new supports needed to operate a modern and easily-verifiable bookkeeping system;
  - e) introduction of new documentation to ensure greater transparency in the movement of commodities;
  - f) preparation of specific management handbooks for the different categories of officials involved, and establishment of a system for the regular collection of data to be used in monitoring and evaluating the school feeding programme;
  - g) training of officials involved in the management of school canteens.<sup>1</sup>
10. In addition, information seminars are organized at the level of individual delegations for the provincial commissions responsible for school feeding. Other participants include representatives of parents' associations and school cooperatives.

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<sup>1</sup> The programme provides for the training of 20 instructors, 60 school feeding counsellors, 80 warehouse staff and close to 3,600 school heads.



11. Pending the outcome of the various administrative, financial and legal investigations, MEN and WFP decided by common agreement to suspend the request for approval of the second tranche of project Morocco 2288 (Exp.4) presented to the CFA in May 1995. A final phase-out plan was prepared and adopted by MEN, WFP, the Finance Ministry and community organizations in October 1995.
12. MEN's decisions concerning the various administrative, financial and judicial measures are summarized in a "Note on the management of the school feeding programme" sent to the Executive Director of WFP along with a covering letter from the Minister of Education on 10 November 1996. The note is attached as Annex I.

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## JUSTIFICATION FOR THE REVISION

13. Aware of the importance of school feeding in the process of promoting enrolment in rural schools, particularly for girls, MEN, with WFP's support, designed a strategy aimed at improving the performance of the school feeding programme. New management and supervision procedures were introduced, along with a new way of extending food aid to schoolchildren in rural areas, i.e., the distribution of dry rations to their parents.
14. The school feeding programme's new strategy features two complementary components:
  - a) the first is aimed at the gradual phase-out of WFP assistance to school canteens over two years, representing 14.5 percent of the total commodity costs of the project;
  - b) the second involves the distribution of dry rations to the parents of rural schoolgirls (85.5 percent of the project's total commodity costs). This is intended to encourage parents to send their daughters to school, thus increasing enrolment rates and reducing drop-out rates. The second component will last three years, from 1997 to 2000. The year 1996/97 is being considered an experimental, pilot phase.

Annual commodity requirements for the two components and the total cost to WFP are set out in Annex II.

### Gradual phase-out of WFP assistance to school canteens

15. The table below shows the gradual phase-out of WFP assistance to the school canteens programme and MEN's simultaneous takeover.



Year	Number of beneficiaries		
	Government	WFP	Total
1995/96*	396 500	616 000	1 012 500
1996/97*	396 500	616 000	1 012 500
1997/98	811 290	259 710	1 071 000
1998/99	991 560	132 440	1 124 000

\* Carryover years.

16. The years 1995/96 and 1996/97, marked by a limited WFP contribution because of the difficulties encountered by the project, are considered as carryover years. During this period, the canteens were run from available stocks and with funds recovered following investigations held in 1995 (roughly 1.4 million dollars), as well as with budgetary credits from MEN and shipments made under the WFP budget increase approved by the Executive Director in April 1996. In addition, 1996/97 is considered as a transitional year due to the gradual introduction, under the new strategy, of a second component.
17. As for the last two years of assistance, WFP has decided to target its aid to those provinces with the lowest enrolment rates among girls (around 26 percent). The number of provinces selected will be reduced from 23 in 1996/97 to 11 in 1997/98 and five in 1998/99. Within the provinces, targeting criteria will give priority to rural satellite schools, to small classes, to girls over boys and to those pupils who live furthest away from school.
18. WFP assistance to the school canteens programme will amount to some 1.8 million dollars in 1997/98, representing just 14.5 percent of the total funds earmarked by WFP for the project's two components (see Annex II). Girls will represent 44.6 percent of beneficiaries of school feeding in 1997/98 and 50 percent in 1998/99, although they account for less than one third of total schoolchildren.
19. Concrete measures to improve the running of the school feeding programme have already been taken in the framework of the phase-out plan. They include steps to improve the efficiency of project accounting, monitoring and supervision at all levels. In addition, information campaigns are being planned for community organizations, parents' associations and other citizens' groups to encourage their participation in the financing and management of the canteens.

### Distribution of dry rations

20. Despite the size of the credits allocated to it, the regular school feeding programme will not be able to overcome obstacles to school enrolment in rural areas, particularly as regards girls, most of whom drop out of primary school as early as in the third year. Girls fail to enrol in school or drop out in order to help with domestic work and, generally speaking, to contribute to household income. It is therefore important to make rural populations aware of the advantages of educating girls and the need for them to complete the whole of the first cycle of primary schooling (six years).



## Long-term objective

21. The long-term objective is to reduce disparities in school enrolment rates between boys and girls in rural areas (see Annex III). It is part of MEN's strategy to generalize access to education and ensure that pupils remain in school at least up to the end of the first cycle of basic education.

## Short-term objectives

22. These are as follows:

- a) contribute to increasing enrolment rates from the first year of the first cycle of basic education in rural areas;
- b) contribute to the improvement of school attendance rates and the lowering of drop-out rates among girls in rural areas.

In order to attain these objectives, it was considered necessary to:

- a) cover part of families' educational expenses;
- b) in rural areas, make up for the income lost by parents as a result of their daughters attending school;
- c) bring schools closer to the population; and
- d) make parents and community organizations aware of the benefits of schooling for girls.

## Strategy

### *Experimental phase*

23. This new component of the second tranche of project Morocco 2288 (Exp.4) is being executed on a pilot basis in 1996/97 in four of the 13 poorest provinces identified by the Government's social priorities programme (BAJ1). The programme, designed in collaboration with the World Bank, aims to improve access to basic social services for the poorest sectors of the population. The first of the four priorities covered by the programme specifically involves improved access to basic education and will be targeted, within the 13 poorest rural provinces, to communities where only one girl out of three attends school.
24. At the end of the experimental phase, a field survey will be conducted in June 1997 at the same time as the regular monitoring and evaluation missions, to determine the impact on enrolment and attendance levels for girls. If the results are positive, this component will gradually be extended to all of the 13 provinces over the next three school years (see Annex IV).
25. With a view to optimizing the impact of food aid, the products to be distributed have been selected on the basis of the beneficiary families' food habits. Wheat and oil are essential components of a Moroccan rural household's normal diet. The contribution per family (and per girl attending school) was fixed at 150 kilograms of wheat and 15 litres of vegetable oil a year, equivalent in monetary terms to 133 dollars (1.2 dollars a day). Total requirements for the 1996/97 experimental phase amount to 2,647 tons of wheat and 265 of oil.



26. Dry rations in 1996/97 will be distributed to 17,650 beneficiaries, broken down as follows:
- a) in the four provinces targeted, dry rations will be distributed to parents of 15,672 girls attending 960 rural institutes not yet covered by the school feeding programme. The objective is to ensure that they continue their studies until the end of the first basic education cycle (see Annex IV);
  - b) dry rations will also be distributed to parents of 1,978 girls attending 198 schools already covered by the programme (793 girls in Chefchaouen province and 1,185 in Taroudant province). Differentiated distribution will help evaluate the impact of the simultaneous implementation of the two food aid delivery systems (canteens and dry ration) on girls' enrolment and attendance.

### **Expansion phase**

27. During the experimental phase, provincial delegations in those provinces not covered by the scheme will be called upon to prepare plans for the project's implementation in their own areas. The committees will determine, in collaboration with other partners, points of distribution, storage facilities and distribution modalities at the various provincial levels concerned.
28. In every school, a list of beneficiary children will be drawn up at the beginning of each school year by a local committee chaired by the school head and comprising teachers, parents and a local councillor. An individual ration card will be delivered to each beneficiary and will be signed by their parents each time a ration is issued. A register of commodity movements will be kept at each distribution point by a person specifically appointed to the job by the provincial committee. Distributions will take place once a quarter. Beneficiaries' attendance records will be checked before any distribution is made.
29. More than 83 percent of the monetary value of WFP assistance to the project's two components will be devoted to girls. They will be the sole beneficiaries of dry rations. Looking at the project as a whole, the proportion of girls will reach 77.9 percent in 1998/99, since the phasing out of beneficiaries of the school canteens programme will be achieved solely by reducing the number of boys in the provinces covered by WFP.

### **Monitoring, evaluation and coordination**

30. A MEN/ WFP central committee, comprising all partners involved in implementing the project, will be set up to look after monitoring and evaluation. It will meet at least once a quarter. Results of the committee's work will be made available to other donors involved in promoting girls' schooling in rural areas.
31. Aside from WFP, other donors involved in supporting MEN's strategy on girls' schooling in rural areas include: UNDP (El Kelâa Sraghna province), UNFPA (national programme), UNICEF (17 provinces), USAID (five provinces), the World Bank (the 13 poorest provinces) and The European Union (Northern Provinces). WFP assistance is aimed at complementing the efforts of MEN and other donors to reach the objectives set for girls' education. Cooperation between all the donors on the one hand, and with MEN on the other, will be institutionalized in the framework of a central coordination committee which will hold regular



meetings. Moreover, the coordination committee will carry out joint evaluations to measure the impact of the sum of donors' aid on school enrolment in rural areas in general and on that of girls in particular. Joint seminars will also be organized to make parents' associations and elected representatives aware of the benefits of girls' education, and should result in their closer and more active participation in school feeding activities.

32. Lastly, the programme's two components will be submitted to internal inspection by MEN, and specifically to regular controls by regional inspectors familiar with both bookkeeping and nutrition procedures.
33. In order to facilitate the running and monitoring of the programme's two components, and with the agreement of MEN, WFP has secured the cooperation of two United Nations volunteers (UNVs), who will assist MEN in implementing the programme.

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### **RECOMMENDATION OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

34. The present three-year extension, which comes under the budget set for the second tranche of project Morocco 2288 (Exp.4), is recommended for approval by the Executive Board.



## ANNEX I

Kingdom of Morocco  
 Ministry of National Education  
 Cabinet  
 Translation of original text

### NOTE ON THE MANAGEMENT OF THE SCHOOL CANTEENS PROGRAMME

1. As early as March 1995, the Ministry of National Education took several initiatives which made it quite clear that it had broken off with the former management of the school canteens programme and which sought to bring full light on the frauds and misappropriations that had marked it. The measures were also aimed at reorganizing the programme along efficient and transparent lines, and they include various kinds of initiatives:

#### **I - Administrative investigations and audit:**

2. Three separate investigations have been launched:
  - a) an investigation headed by the inspectorate-general of the Ministry of Finance and Foreign Investments;
  - b) an audit to be performed by a private organization, which has also been asked to take part in organizing a new school canteens system;
  - c) an administrative investigation undertaken by an interministerial team made up of inspectors from the Ministry of Finance and Foreign Investments, the Ministry of Agriculture and Agricultural Development, and the Ministry of National Education.
3. The investigations confirmed that strongly suspected irregularities had taken place, involving not only mismanagement, but also misappropriation and illicit trading in commodities.
4. On the basis of the information and results obtained, MEN has brought charges against the project's former managers. This was followed by a judicial inquiry which resulted in the suspension of a number of MEN officials and in legal investigations being started against them and a number of individuals from the private sector. Government authorities are pursuing the matter with energy and determination, as neither misappropriation nor mismanagement of the project can be tolerated.

#### **II - Reorganization of project management:**

5. The school feeding programme's audit brought to light a number of malfunctions and resulted in a set of recommendations being made on how to redress the situation and improve management. All draft reports filed by the audit company have been forwarded to the WFP Director in Rabat and I shall shortly let you have the final version.



6. In order to follow up on the audit and provide answers to the questions raised in the framework of the work plan proposed by WFP on 6 June 1996, a task force comprising senior officials from the Ministry of National Education and WFP representatives has been set up. A number of steps have been taken by the group to resolve the urgent problems facing the school feeding programme and to fill the gap created by the suspension of the programme's top officials.
7. With a view to capitalizing on the work carried out during the audit and by the task force, and in order to support the improvements implemented by the school feeding division, the Ministry of National Education has also set up a permanent ministerial committee charged with monitoring the school feeding programme and formulating possible alternatives regarding its future. The committee, grouping central government representatives and a large number of delegates, nutrition experts and economic services inspectors, has put forward a set of proposals aimed at improving management and supervision. Workers from the field have also been involved in redesigning the programme's management structure. Summaries of the committee's work, of the Murphy report and of the auditors' comments have been published in a document which currently serves as the handbook for the school feeding programme's management, bookkeeping and supervision.
8. At the same time, a new form of cooperation has been initiated with the WFP office in Rabat, which has been invited to visit warehouses and school canteens and make any evaluations it wishes. It has also been decided to manage the bank accounts opened for the school feeding programme on a joint basis, and to involve WFP representatives in all activities and studies regarding the system's reorganization.
9. In addition, the permanent interministerial committee has prepared an action plan on the creation of a new organizational structure. The plan's main points are as follows:
  - a) publication and circulation of an organization manual and of the documents needed to keep the project books in a standardized, auditable way;
  - b) preparation of guides on procedures for managing, monitoring and supervising the school feeding services;
  - c) organization of a training programme for those involved in school feeding activities.
10. All these initiatives are currently underway.

### **III - Identification of new management formulae:**

11. In the framework of attempts to identify new forms of cooperation with your organization, the permanent ministerial committee's action plan foresees several possible avenues for the development of the school feeding services and for the definition of a strategy to implement them. A number of initiatives are being undertaken in this direction:
  - a) the creation of an autonomous government service (service de l'Etat géré de manière autonome (SEGMA)) to run the school feeding programme. This formula, characterized by more flexible and tighter financial management, allows funds generated by the sale of WFP commodities to be deposited into a



jointly-managed account with a commercial bank. The new arrangement enables the Ministry of Finance and the Court of Accounts to run standard checks on operations. Regulatory texts turning the school canteens division into an autonomously-run government service (SEGMA) have been approved and are currently being implemented;

- b) measures, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Agricultural Development, to resolve problems arising from outstanding commodities stocks; commodities still fit for consumption will be distributed while perished stocks will be analysed and if necessary destroyed;
- c) a study of the possibility of sub-contracting the management of school canteens to NGOs or small enterprises on a clearly defined basis.

#### **IV - Experimental trial of a new sub-project:**

12. In the framework of the reorganization of the school feeding programme, a new experiment will be conducted this year, involving the distribution of dry rations directly to the parents of girls attending schools in rural areas. The project, intended to encourage the enrolment of girls in schools and their continued attendance, will be executed in close collaboration with WFP officials in Rabat. The action programme is now being finalized. It will be executed at the same time as the school canteens project and will cover four provinces in the course of the school year (Taroudant, Sidi Kacem, Tiznit and Chaouen) and 17,650 girl beneficiaries. Initial deliveries are being planned for the beginning of the holy month of Ramadan (late December).
13. The planned extension of this formula over the next four years depends on the results of the experiment now underway.
14. It should be stressed that the action plan which MEN intends to submit to the Executive Board of WFP at its next session includes the new variant and conforms to the agreed phase-out plan.
15. While implementing a strategy aimed at the development, improvement and promotion of school enrolment for girls, the Ministry of National Education is in even greater need of your assistance in its different forms. It would be wise for WFP to support our efforts to improve the school feeding programme during the year 1996-1997 and for any decisions on future forms of cooperation with the Ministry of National Education to be postponed until the conclusion of the current works. Closer cooperation has already been initiated by the appointment of a representative of your Rabat office to participate in the permanent ministerial commission charged with implementing the pilot project of food distribution to pupils' parents. Your representative will henceforth be associated with all study, evaluation and implementation activities involving the school feeding system.



**ANNEX II**



**ANNEX III**



## ANNEX IV

## ESTIMATED NUMBER OF GIRLS BENEFITING FROM DRY RATIONS

No.	Province	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	1999/2000
1	Taroudant	6 645	9 220	11 610	12 530
2	Tiznit	3 026	5 770	7 430	8 020
3	Chichaoua	0	2 520	3 700	3 990
4	Alhaouz	0	5 450	7 520	8 110
5	ElKalaasraghna	0	3 470	3 860	4 240
6	Essaouira	0	2 740	4 520	4 750
7	Ouarzazate	0	6 940	10 490	11 050
8	Azilal	0	2 660	4 380	4 590
9	Safi	0	4 240	6 380	6 770
10	Sidi Kacem	4 400	7 330	9 080	9 570
11	Chefchaouen	3 579	6 190	9 050	9 710
12	Taza	0	3 580	5 810	6 100
13	AlHoceima	0	2 450	2 660	2 870
<b>Total</b>		<b>17 650</b>	<b>62 560</b>	<b>86 490</b>	<b>92 300</b>
<b>Overall total</b>		<b>259 000</b>			





**NET SCHOOL ENROLMENT RATES 1996/97 IN RURAL AREAS**

Provinces	School-age children (7-12 years)			Schoolchildren (7-12 years)			Net enrolment rate ( <i>percent</i> )			Difference
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Between G to B
Chefchaouen	33 59	32 273	65 863	19 350	11 176	30 526	57.6	34.5	46.0	23.1 points
Sidi Kacem	35 67	34 274	69 947	28 772	16 578	45 350	80.7	48.4	64.5	32.3 points
Taroudant	46 82	46 910	93 734	34 341	17 515	51 856	70.3	37.3	53.8	33.0 points
Tiznit	26 27	25 240	51 511	18 284	9 816	28 100	69.6	38.9	54.2	30.7 points

