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INFORMATION NOTE ON SCHOOL FEEDING

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INTRODUCTION

1. WFP has been active in school feeding for 38 years. In 2000, there were WFP school feeding activities in 54 countries, reaching 12.3 million children.
2. In 2000, former United States Ambassador George McGovern called for a global effort to ensure that every child in the world had a meal at school. The United States Government committed US\$300 million (in food, transportation and overhead costs) as a first contribution to the Initiative.
3. The United States Initiative supports WFP's long-standing efforts in school feeding and is consistent with WFP's Enabling Development policy. In addition, it contributes to the accomplishment of the global goals of "Education for All" (Jomtien Declaration of 1990 and the Dakar Framework of April 2000) and of the goal of halving the number of hungry people by the year 2015 (World Food Summit, 1996).

STATUS OF UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT DONATION

4. A total of 189,405 metric tons has been resourced through the United States donation, supporting school feeding in ongoing development projects, protracted relief and recovery operations (PRROs) and emergency operations (EMOPs) in 23 countries: Bhutan, Bolivia, Cambodia, Cameroon, Chad, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Honduras, Kenya, Mozambique, Nepal, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Peru, Tajikistan, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania. Kenya is receiving a small amount for ongoing development activities and a larger amount as part of the drought emergency operation. Nine of these —school feeding in Bhutan, Chad, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Guinea, Mozambique, Nepal, Pakistan and Tajikistan—are expansions.
5. As at the end of September, out of the 189,405 metric tons contributed, 137,557 have been delivered, while an additional 44,368 will be delivered by the end of December 2001. All of the donations are confirmed except for 7,480 metric tons.

WFP SCHOOL FEEDING SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

6. In September 2000, a School Feeding Support Unit (SPF), comprising two professional staff, was established within the Strategy and Policy Division. The unit immediately began to: conduct a survey of national school feeding programmes worldwide; develop a standard approach to conducting baseline studies for school feeding activities; develop a new approach to monitoring school feeding; and provide materials for advocacy purposes, for field offices, for governments and for other partners. The unit also coordinates technical assistance and training for school feeding efforts worldwide, and develops, maintains and provides electronic access to a repository of global statistics and resource materials related to school feeding. The unit is establishing new partnerships to implement these activities, as is explained in more detail in the following sections.



Specific Activities

📌 **Surveys of National School Feeding Programmes**

7. Between 30 May and mid-October 2001, WFP conducted surveys in more than 60 countries. Approximately 90 additional countries will be surveyed before the end of the year. To conduct the surveys, WFP recruited and trained 69 graduate students—representing 44 nationalities—from universities around the world to serve as “Survey and Advocacy Associates”.
8. Trained in late May, the first group of Associates conducted surveys in 39 countries and assisted with other WFP school feeding activities in the first three months of the programme. A second group was trained in late August and a third group in late September. There are currently some 20 teams working to complete the surveys in the remaining countries before their scheduled de-briefing in Rome, 3–7 December, 2001. The survey results are being compiled in a central database and will be made available on WFP’s website.

📌 **Baseline Surveys**

9. WFP has begun to use standardized baseline surveys in each country that will receive school feeding resources. The baseline survey’s design is very basic, and the survey process was streamlined in order to ensure that the survey data could be gathered prior to the distribution of commodities to the recipient schools. The survey was pilot-tested in El Salvador and Uganda in August, and modifications were made based on that testing. Briefing sessions were then held in September in El Salvador, Nepal and Uganda. Participating in those sessions were two WFP staff from each of the 23 countries that are expected to conduct the survey prior to distributing food to schools. Country offices may add to the survey, but they are asked not to modify or subtract from its basic template. It is expected that the 23 countries will complete the data-gathering phase by the end of November.
10. WFP is now investigating the potential of using hand-held computer devices for performing survey fieldwork. In a pilot programme involving the Resources and External Relations Division, the vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM) unit and the Microsoft Corporation, the use of these devices for conducting the survey will be tested in two or more countries. The baseline survey template will be transferred to the devices so that individual enumerators and interviewers can enter their data directly into them. The data will then be automatically included in the database and the framework required for analysis and reporting. This will facilitate future work for pre-implementation school feeding baseline surveys and periodic follow-up surveys to measure the results and the changes that occur in implementation. If the pilot is successful, the hand-held devices will be used for this type of survey work, greatly reducing the time and effort required for conducting the surveys, entering data and producing reports. Because the software supports easy modification of existing questionnaires and the creation of new survey instruments, this technology will be of assistance to many other WFP data-gathering efforts in addition to the school feeding applications.



📁 **Study of Phase-out Countries**

11. There are more than ten countries where WFP provided and then phased out of school feeding assistance. SPF has undertaken a desk study of available documentation regarding these past operations. The study has been supplemented by reviews of the current situation in three countries. Conducted by a consultant, these reviews involved interviews with relevant officials, partners, parents and children in Paraguay and Swaziland, where WFP phased out of school feeding some years ago, and in Cape Verde, where the Programme recently reversed a decision to phase out. WFP has called upon non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to share their experiences and lessons learned in phasing out of school feeding programmes, and SPF has identified a consultant to perform reviews of three to four additional countries over the next few months.

📁 **Special Studies**

12. On 6 August 2001, WFP convened a Stakeholders Meeting in London to discuss priorities for special studies involving school feeding. In attendance were representatives from three donor countries (Denmark, Germany and the United States), two recipient countries (Kenya and Nicaragua), three NGOs (World Vision, Save the Children and German Agro-Action), the World Bank, and a facilitator from the United Nations University. One of the invited recipient country representatives was unfortunately unable to attend, and there was no time to invite another to replace him.
13. Notes taken on that discussion are now being circulated to other stakeholders to ensure adequate consultation prior to WFP's selecting the key two to three topics to be addressed by further research. In December, WFP plans to hold an Experts Workshop. Experts in the selected topics will be invited to the Workshop to advise the Programme on how to proceed with designing and implementing research to address those topics. Denmark has offered to host the workshop.

📁 **New Approach to Monitoring**

14. SPF is currently testing a new approach to monitoring school feeding activities. The approach is designed to facilitate and augment each participating national government's ability to gather accurate and timely information from schools. It involves using devices installed at the school level that transmit monthly school data via the Argos satellite. The data will be collected at the *Collecte Localisation Satellite* (CLS), the main Argos "data collection centre", located in France. It will then be made available to the participating national governments through either a website, electronic mail or hard copy, as appropriate. Only users pre-approved by the national government and provided with an access code will have access to country-specific data.
15. The Argos satellite system was established in 1978 and is run jointly by France and the United States to collect environmental and weather data. Brazil, the European Community and Japan are recent partners in the system. Current commitments call for the system to be active through at least 2015.
16. For WFP's current pilot-testing phase, CLS has arranged for two companies to build prototype devices. Ten devices—five of each of the two companies' models—were made available in early October. These devices are portable and do not actually transmit, but are in all other ways true prototypes. They are currently being demonstrated and evaluated in the many WFP country offices that have expressed interest in being involved in the pilot phase.



17. An additional five devices were delivered in mid-October. These devices are complete transmitting models. One will be installed at WFP Headquarters in Rome, one at CLS' main office in France and the other three in countries where WFP has active school feeding operations and an agreement with the national government to test the devices and their transmitting capability.
18. One donor has expressed interest in pilot-testing the devices for use in a bilateral school feeding activity, and WFP has also offered to demonstrate the devices to interested NGOs that are implementing school feeding programmes.
19. In addition to consulting extensively with involved national governments, WFP will perform a formal evaluation of the devices, covering the transmission and reporting capability of the system and installation, training, repair and cost implications. The Programme plans to complete this phase by the end of November 2001. Only after this test phase is complete will any decision be taken regarding purchasing and implementing the proposed system.

📌 *The Interrelated Nature of These Activities*

20. The survey of national school feeding programmes, the baseline studies and the traditional and new monitoring systems are all designed so as to correlate with and cross-reference one another, so that the same definitions and formats are used throughout.

📌 *Technical Advisory Group*

21. WFP has approached the United Nations University to establish, and manage on the Programme's behalf, a Technical Advisory Group. This group would review new food products proposed for use in WFP programmes and advise WFP regarding product suitability vis-à-vis nutritional value, wholesomeness, food safety and health. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has also agreed to participate in the Technical Advisory Group. The current plan is for the group to be formed by January 2002.

📌 *Deworming*

22. Based on successful collaborative experiences in individual countries (especially in Nepal), the World Health Organization (WHO) and WFP have collaborated to design and deliver a multi-country model for deworming schoolchildren. The first joint multi-country deworming workshop was held in late April in Uganda for representatives from the ministries of health and ministries of education of seven Anglophone African countries. The participating ministries' representatives were trained and given materials on implementing a deworming programme. They participated in an actual treatment of schoolchildren at a local school, and then were assisted in drafting country-specific strategies for implementing deworming in their own countries. They then returned to their countries to consult and refine their plans.
23. Upon WHO and WFP approval of each country's plan, up to US\$50,000 was allocated to implement treatment programmes for the children in schools assisted by WFP school feeding activities. All seven plans were approved for funding. Most of the funding for the workshop and for the subsequent initial treatment was provided by Canada, through a Canadian International Development Assistance (CIDA) grant to WFP. In the longer term, it is expected that most of the participating governments will be able to pay for the treatment through funds from other sources, especially those designated for school health activities within World Bank education loans.



24. WFP, WHO and the World Bank are now planning to host deworming workshops for Francophone Africa, beginning in late November. WHO and WFP will also conduct pilot studies and provide follow-up assistance to countries from the Uganda workshop to ensure successful implementation.

INTER-AGENCY COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIP ACTIONS

25. WFP has extensive experience working with a number of other United Nations and NGO partners. Specifically within the context of the School Feeding Initiative the Programme has taken steps to expand this collaboration, while still respecting the central role of the national governments of the recipient countries. WFP invited UNESCO, the World Bank, UNICEF, the United Nations University, WHO, FAO, the International Food Policy Research Institute, the United States Department of Agriculture and the *Centre National d'Etudes Spatiales* of France to collaborate on relevant aspects of WFP's school feeding activities. In addition, the Programme has held preliminary discussions with two foundations. The following information updates the last Information Note (WFP/EB.A/2001/4-E), where several of these new partnerships were described in more depth:
- **The World Bank** is working with WFP and WHO in support of deworming and iron supplementation activities in Africa. WFP and the World Bank are pursuing other opportunities for collaboration, especially in the areas of school feeding and take-home rations for HIV/AIDS and war orphans; school infrastructure; and child health and nutrition.
 - **WHO** and WFP are discussing future collaboration, building on the deworming model, to implement additional school health measures. WHO hosted a meeting of a new Partnership in Parasitic Disease Control Group in June. WFP was actively involved both in presenting successful models and in volunteering to assist with follow-up to that meeting. Other partners invited included the World Bank, UNICEF, two NGOs, key WHO regional officers, and the Harvard School of Public Health.
 - **UNICEF**, already an important partner—particularly for pre-school feeding efforts, health and sanitation measures, and educational inputs—is assigning a staff member to work with WFP's School Feeding Support Unit for 12 months, with the goal of bringing about more concrete cooperation. It is expected that the UNICEF staff member will be selected by the end of December 2001, to begin work in 2002.
 - WFP will expand collaboration and continue to work with **international and local NGOs and foundations** that support the education sector in ways complementary to WFP and school feeding. Three NGOs participated in the WFP-hosted Stakeholders Meeting on 6 August 2001. During the WFP-NGO consultations held 4 and 5 October, WFP invited the participants to comment on the priorities identified in the Stakeholders Meeting and to consider being active partners in subsequent studies. WFP also invited NGO participation in the reviews of school feeding phase-outs, in testing the Argos monitoring device, and in HIV/AIDS-related school feeding activities.



FUTURE FUNDING

26. WFP is encouraged by the high level of interest being expressed by donor governments and the private sector.
27. The Governments of France, Italy and Switzerland have all confirmed new contributions to WFP school feeding operations in the past few months. In addition, the Cargill Corporation has contributed, and Canada has stated that it will continue to support the deworming effort.
28. On 3 May 2001, legislation was introduced in both houses of the United States Congress to establish a longer-term School Feeding Initiative, beginning in 2002. The legislation would establish annual funding levels for the Initiative, arriving at a maximum level of US\$750 million proposed for school feeding in any given year. A similar proposal has been introduced in other legislation. This concept has strong bipartisan support and is receiving media attention in the United States.

