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**Rome, 22–26 October 2001**

# **COUNTRY STRATEGY OUTLINES**

**Agenda item 7**

***For consideration***



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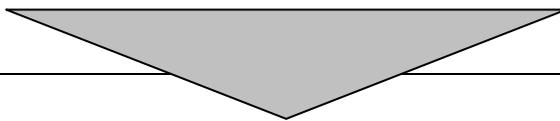
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## **COUNTRY STRATEGY OUTLINE— MALI**

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# Note to the Executive Board



**This document is submitted for consideration to the Executive Board.**

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

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# Executive Summary

Mali is classified both as a least developed country (LDC) and as a low-income, food-deficit country (LIFDC), and in 2000 it was ranked 165<sup>th</sup> out of 174 on the UNDP Human Development Index. In 1998, its annual per capita gross domestic product (GDP) was US\$267. The country is sparsely populated (about 7.5 inhabitants per square kilometre) and the inhabitants are mainly rural (71 percent). The GDP, which comes mainly from the primary sector (agriculture and mines) is particularly at risk from the natural disasters (mainly droughts) that regularly hit the country. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Mali's Household Food Security Index was 71.6 percent between 1993 and 1995, with a higher level of insecurity in rural (74 percent) than in urban areas.

The WFP mission in Mali in the period 2003–2007 will continue to help food-insecure communities reduce their vulnerability. This means helping them build up their capacity and means so that they are better able to develop survival strategies and thus contribute to the national objective of eradicating poverty. Interventions will focus primarily on three of the five strategic priorities of WFP's Enabling Development policy:

- Enable poor households to invest in human capital through education and training;
- Mitigate the effects of natural disasters, in areas vulnerable to recurring crises of this kind; and
- Enable young children and expectant and nursing mothers to meet their special nutritional and nutrition-related health needs.

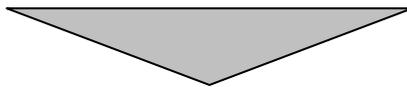
The balance of the various activities will be shifted towards the education sector (with the emphasis kept on girls) and the health/nutrition sector.

Future activities will target exclusively the poorest populations, whose access to food is constrained by economic and socio-cultural factors and among whom food aid has a comparative advantage as a development factor. The targeted regions will be Mopti, Gao, Tombouctou and Kidal, together with the northern parts of the Kayes and Koulikoro regions.

The present Country Strategy Outline (CSO) was developed through a consultative process in which a large number of beneficiary representatives, government bodies, United Nations bodies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and donors took part. The process was synchronized and harmonized with that of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for Mali, to be finalized in November 2001.



## Draft Decision



The Board endorses the Country Strategy Outline for Mali (WFP/EB.3/2001/7/3) and authorizes the Secretariat to proceed with the formulation of a Country Programme, which should take into account the comments of the Board.



## FOOD INSECURITY AND THE HUNGRY POOR

### The Economic and Social Context

1. Mali, a vast landlocked country with 9.8 million inhabitants (1998), is among the least developed countries and is one of the poorest countries in the world, ranking 165<sup>th</sup> out of 174 in 2000, according to the UNDP Human Development Index. It is very sparsely populated (about 7.5 inhabitants per square kilometre), with a mainly rural population (71 percent). It is estimated that 69 percent of its inhabitants live below the poverty line, especially in rural areas (74 percent in 1998), with women being particularly affected.
2. The annual per capita GDP was estimated at US\$267 in 1998. The country is strongly dependent on international aid (15 to 25 percent of the GDP during the 1990s) and on agriculture sector production (almost half the GDP). From 1985 to 1999, the economy underwent a recovery, with an average GDP growth rate of about 3.5 percent. The average annual growth rate of the agriculture sector was 3.9 percent during the same period. The increase in production is in large part a result of the major reforms the country has implemented in the sector over the past 15 years, but also of the abundant rainfall in recent years—although the growth was a result of an increase more in cultivated areas than in productivity. Nevertheless, there is a danger that the growth rate will fall to 1.3 percent in 2001 because of a fall of 17.5 percent in cereal production and 50 percent in cotton production.
3. The agriculture sector employs 80 percent of the active population. Despite a huge agricultural potential (13.6 million arable hectares, 2.2 million of which—unevenly spread over the country—can be irrigated), less than 35 percent of the arable land is used, and a large proportion of the population suffers from food insecurity.
4. Agricultural production is heavily affected by climatic vagaries, and varies depending on the abundance of rainfall and its distribution over time and area, quite apart from the very real dangers of the natural disasters (drought, desert locust attacks) to which the country is prone. Rainfall deficits are regular occurrences in Mali, with more frequent dry periods in the north than in the south.
5. Cereal production is dominated by millet and sorghum (60 percent), followed by rice, maize, fonio and wheat. Between 1991 and 1998 this production covered 95 percent of the country's total needs, with imports accounting for between 3 and 5 percent. Part of this production (dry cereals) is exported to certain other countries in the sub-region. Although there are no precise data on the volume of trade in cereals with neighbouring countries, the most widely accepted estimates give an annual figure of between 20,000 and 25,000 tons.
6. The population is relatively young (50 percent under 15) and growing fast (2.9 percent annually), with a very high level of illiteracy (62 percent). The proportion of children receiving primary schooling is still low, despite some progress: from 39 percent in 1994 to 55 percent in 2000, always with a large gap between boys (60 percent) and girls (43 percent).
7. As far as health is concerned, the maternal mortality rate (577 per 100,000 live births) and infant mortality rate are very high. The demographic health survey for the period 1989–1996 indicates that the under-5 infant mortality rate is 252 per 1,000, the highest in the sub-region. Over 50 percent of these deaths are a result of malnutrition. In 1996, 30 percent of children between 3 and 36 months suffered from chronic malnutrition, and 23 percent from acute malnutrition, while malnutrition also affected 16 percent of women



(21 percent in rural areas). Only one third of children between 12 and 23 months have been fully vaccinated.

### Features of Food Insecurity

8. Mali has three very clearly defined agro-ecological zones: the desert zone in the north, the Sahelian zone in the east and centre, and the Sudanian zone in the west and south. Annual rainfall ranges from 100 mm in the north to 1,700 mm in the Sudanian zone.
9. The preliminary results of the vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM) carried out by WFP indicate that Mali faces two main types of problems: (i) it cannot ensure the necessary quantity and quality of food products at the household level (a problem of access); and (ii) households do not draw the full nutritional potential from the food they consume (a problem of utilization).

#### **Availability**

10. During the past ten years, per capita cereal production has had a modest annual growth rate (under 1 percent), so that in national terms the availability of food products per person can be considered adequate (217 kg per person in rural areas and 155 kg in urban areas). Despite this favourable overall picture, there are major differences among regions. Two regions (Sikasso and Segou), with 38 percent of the country's rural population, provide 55 percent of total cereal production, whereas in the Sahelian regions, cereal production is very sensitive to variations in rainfall, so that it is not sufficient to cover needs in the Kayes, Mopti, Tombouctou, Gao, Kidal and north Koulikoro regions.

#### **Accessibility**

11. In 1998, a survey of household consumption budgets indicated that 69 percent of the population was poor. This poverty has a direct effect on households' access to the food needed to meet their minimum consumption requirements.
12. In the northern regions of the country, households spend 91 percent of their income on food (77.6 percent in the southern regions). Nationwide, subsistence production covers 75 percent of total cereal consumption, with the remaining 25 percent being purchased. In the Kayes, Mopti, Tombouctou and Gao regions, subsistence production covers only 20 to 40 percent of needs. All this indicates that food insecurity affects particularly the poorest regions, where local agricultural production is also insufficient.
13. Possible income-generating activities are very limited for rural households. Remittances and animal husbandry are the main sources of additional income. In areas with a chronic cereal deficit, income from out-migration provides a large part of households' access to food products, and also allows them to meet non-food needs (clothing, health, etc.). Even so, such income is often insufficient to cover food needs, especially when out-migration is seasonal. Cash crops (cotton, sugar and groundnut) are concentrated mainly in the Segou, Sikasso and Koulikoro regions, in the south.



14. Animal husbandry plays a mainly social role in Mali, as a symbol of wealth, followed by its role as a food source, and finally, as an income source. If the potential income that each livestock-raising family could obtain from its livestock is estimated in terms of cereal availability, the semi-arid regions of the north (Tombouctou, Gao and Kidal) are those where animal husbandry plays a more important role than agriculture. However, as a result of the desertification process, pastoral activities have migrated southwards, in the search for better grazing and watering points, aggravating food insecurity in the northern regions.

### 📌 Utilization

15. Every region of Mali is affected by poor utilization of the food that is potentially available and consumed by households. Even in the south (Sikasso and Segou), where food is widely available, children and expectant mothers are particularly affected by malnutrition. This situation is a result of the population's poor dietary practices—e.g. household diets have very little variety, being composed basically of cereals, which provide about 75 percent of the calories consumed—and of poor nursing and weaning practices for children of 0–36 months. Second, limited access to drinking water and to sanitation and health services has led to a very disturbing health situation, with high incidences of malaria, respiratory infections, diarrhoeal diseases and malnutrition (anaemia in expectant mothers and micronutrient deficiency in children).
16. Given this, it can be concluded that, in nationwide terms, food availability is good on the whole. However, short-term deficits occur as a result of either climatic vagaries or natural disasters. On the other hand, the main problems of food security in nationwide terms lie in the accessibility of food to households and the use households make of the food available to them.

### Target Population

17. The analysis indicates that two major types of areas are at risk: (i) agro-pastoral areas with a very low, irregular rainfall and limited natural resources; and (ii) pastoral areas with seasonal migration, heavy environmental degradation, and little capacity to develop income-generating activities.
18. To improve the food security of inhabitants of the most vulnerable regions, WFP food aid can contribute to solving problems linked to food accessibility and utilization. It can also encourage an improvement in the performance of production systems.
19. Food insecurity affects the following social groups in the zones identified as vulnerable by WFP:
- households with limited access to land and livestock (households headed by women);
  - households with little capacity to develop income-generating activities (households not receiving remittances); and
  - children and expectant mothers.



## GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES AND POLICIES ADDRESSING POVERTY AND FOOD INSECURITY

### Overall Policies

20. Mali's Poverty Eradication Strategic Framework (CSLP) for the period up to 2015 was drawn up in the context of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative and with the involvement of the World Bank. It sums up the Government's poverty eradication strategy and was the subject of broad consultation within and between the Government, civil society and donors. It is based on an integrated approach that places poverty reduction within a long-term overall economic development strategy. Apart from policies of a structural nature, the following are some of the sectorial policies to be pursued by the Government:

- **Rural development.** The policy of hydro-agricultural schemes will be continued, with a view to improving food security and increasing the income of the poor.
- **Education.** The proportion of children receiving basic education will be increased from 55 percent in 2000 to at least 62 percent in 2002, and in the adult literacy rate, from 31 to 36 percent over the same period.
- **Health, drinking water and sanitation.** The Government intends to raise the proportion of fully vaccinated children to 80 percent, halving deaths from malaria, acute respiratory disease and diarrhoeal disease among children 0–5 years and reducing the prevalence of HIV/AIDS from 3 to 2 percent.
- **Nutrition.** The Government has the objectives of reducing the incidence of disease and death linked to micronutrient deficiencies in the target groups, and bringing about a 30-percent reduction in the level of protein-energy malnutrition in children under-5 and schoolchildren aged 6–12;
- **Environment.** The Government will implement projects in such areas as natural resource conservation, and siltation and desertification control.

21. All these policies will be integrated with implementation of the decentralization programme, which shares authority and responsibility with the central Government and local administrative units. The institutional development programme will also provide the framework for administrative devolution in coordination with the decentralization process.

### Food Security Policies

22. In 1981 the Government and donors set up a consultation, coordination and joint action structure in connection with the Cereal Market Restructuring Programme (PMRC), with WFP coordinating donors and acting as permanent secretariat. The PMRC, which was set up at the height of the food crisis and financed by programme aid counterpart funds, had the main objective of improving the food security of the population by focusing basically on the liberalization of cereal markets and the positive effect of this on food production.

23. The PMRC also facilitated the creation of a good security system with the following mechanisms: an early warning system, an agriculture market observatory, and a national security stock. This system is financed by the Government and donors through the PMRC and managed by Mali's Agricultural Produce Office. Sustainability of the PMRC will be ensured by the Government's progressively taking over the running costs of its structures.



## Food Aid Policies

24. The Government's food aid policies are basically reflected in the approach of the PMRC. The food security system's steering and coordination committee is the main consultative and steering body for the PMRC. It is under the authority of the Ministry for the Economy and Finance, which is also in overall charge of the PMRC, and holds regular meetings of all the ministers involved in food security and the heads of PMRC partners' diplomatic missions. The PMRC acts through free distribution or subsidized sales.
25. As far as project food aid is concerned, it is basically apportioned by WFP within the framework of its Country Programme. The permanent consultation system established for the PMRC provides a coordination framework and a guarantee that project aid and programme aid granted by the various partners will be in line with government policy. The size of the national security stock (NSS) allows the country to cope with short-term and localized food crises or, in the case of major crises, to organize immediate assistance while it awaits the large-scale importation of food stocks.

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## ASSESSMENT OF WFP'S PERFORMANCE TO DATE

### The Current Country Programme and Its Components

26. The first Country Programme (1999–2002) had four basic activities intended to allow WFP food aid to help meet its objectives: assistance to school canteens, to rural development, to health and nutrition, and to a food security and contingency planning system.
27. An external evaluation of the Mali Country Programme, carried out in January 2001, concluded that the CP had a strategic orientation targeting the zones and groups most at risk, while also aiming at disaster prevention and mitigation, and that it was extremely coherent. However, the objectives of the CP as a whole were much too general, and the logical ties between the immediate objectives and the more general objectives that the activities were intended to meet were poorly defined. This meant that it was difficult to establish if the activities undertaken were effective.
28. The mission observed that although the four basic activities had some complementary aspects, they did not seem to have been designed to complement one another, except geographically. In terms of strategy, the mission noted that all the activities were consistent with the country's development strategy and also seemed well integrated with the programmes of their respective executing ministries. The mission suggested that a country programme approach be adopted when designing the next CSO and CP, rather than viewing the CSO and CP as a juxtaposition of compartmentalized projects. The CP objectives and components should also be clearly defined, and as far as possible quantified. It should be noted that although almost all the activities were conceived before WFP drew up its Enabling Development policy, the country office has made adjustments to make them compatible with that policy.
29. The mission concluded that there were three areas where food aid to Mali had an undeniable comparative advantage: (i) support to the education sector in order to increase enrolment and attendance rates, with special emphasis on girls, with a view eventually to bringing about equity between girls and boys; (ii) support to programmes for hydro-agricultural development, soil and water conservation and regeneration, and arable land protection; and (iii) prevention of and preparation for food crisis management (assistance to the PRMC). The evaluation mission also concluded that special attention



should continue to be given to measures aimed at correcting gender imbalances, and at contributing to regional economic development within the intervention zones.

## FUTURE ORIENTATION FOR WFP ASSISTANCE

30. This second-generation CSO for Mali takes account of the lessons drawn from implementation and evaluation of the current Country Programme. It was formulated within the context of the CCA and the second UNDAF, both currently being drawn up. It is also the end result of a participatory process, by means of workshops and seminars, involving representatives of the Government, other United Nations bodies, bilateral donors, community-based organizations, NGOs and beneficiaries. In these discussions on food policy issues, a consensus emerged on strategic objectives as well as on the extent and nature of the future activities that WFP could undertake with regard to development assistance. Continuation of this participatory approach will allow synergies to be found between the various activities of the next CP.
31. The long-term objective of WFP assistance is to reduce the vulnerability of very poor households to food insecurity, and hence establish the conditions indispensable for undertaking a long-term development process. The WFP strategy, which aims at reducing the seasonal and chronic hunger of poor households by building up their capacity to cope with the effects of natural disasters, will also contribute to the national objective of poverty reduction and the elimination of gender imbalances.

### Targeting

32. On the basis of the preliminary conclusions of the VAM carried out in Mali, WFP food aid should continue to target the rural population of the Sahelian zone (Mopti, Tombouctou, Gao and Kidal regions), where the very low, irregular rainfall makes natural resources extremely limited and fragile, and where pastoral activities dominate. The analysis also concludes that the northern parts of the Kayes and Koulikoro regions should be targeted, because despite the possibility they offer of combining pastoral production with rainfed agriculture, they also fall within the Sahelian zone and suffer from the same type of limitations (see map in the annex).
33. As already noted, vulnerability to food insecurity in these regions is marked mainly by problems of access and utilization. Income sources are particularly limited, both because of the scant surplus that poor rural households can spare from their production, and because of the almost total lack of alternative sources of employment and income-generation. The use of food—always very limited in quantity—is also inefficient because of poor dietary practices (especially in children under 36 months, and expectant and nursing mothers) and a very high incidence of disease.
34. Based on the above, the conclusion is that the groups for whom WFP assistance can reduce the risk of food insecurity are school-age children, malnourished children under 5, expectant and nursing mothers threatened by malnutrition, and very poor households that need to develop other means of subsistence. The criteria for selecting beneficiaries will be developed more fully when the Country Programme is put into execution and on the basis of the more detailed VAM that has recently been completed. A certain flexibility will be maintained in the targeting of food aid, in order to allow coordination or joint planning with the other United Nations bodies currently defining their lines of action within the context of the UNDAF.



## Identification of Key Areas for Assistance

35. Bearing in mind the food insecurity situation in Mali, WFP food aid can also help fight short-term hunger (among school-age children), encourage the recovery of malnourished children and, thanks to school attendance and health services, help bring about a change in practices closely linked with at-risk groups' diet and health. The CP's assistance can also make a significant contribution to improving access to food, by encouraging training, especially of women, in income-generating activities, as well as in better management of natural resources.
36. The strategy therefore envisages that the food resources available under the next CP would be devoted to three basic activities: assistance to the primary education sector (45 percent); assistance aimed at increasing the capacity to cope with natural disasters and reducing their effects (35 percent); and assistance to mother and child health programmes (20 percent). On the basis of data gathered during the previous VAM, higher priority will be given to the social sector (65 percent).
37. It should be noted that owing to the still unstable political situation in some areas of the north of the country, WFP has set up a protracted relief and recovery operation (PRRO). Although this operation should end in 2003, the conditions underlying its original implementation will probably continue beyond this period, a point to be kept in mind during the design of the next CP.

### ✦ *Support to Basic Education*

38. Assistance to primary education will allow poor families to invest in human capital through education and training, which is one of the priorities of WFP's Enabling Development policy. This activity will be integrated with the country's Ten-year Development and Education Programme, which aims at facilitating access to education and improving the quality of teaching.
39. The immediate objectives of WFP aid will be:
- to increase the school attendance of children living in targeted rural zones where attendance is low;
  - to ensure and increase attendance at beneficiary schools;
  - to provide children with adequate dietary intake, thus improving their learning capacity;
  - to encourage particularly the enrolment and regular attendance of girls aged 6–14.
40. Food aid will be provided in the form of a daily meal for all children in the selected schools. Children from nomadic populations will be given two meals per day, since these children spend more time at school and generally lodge with families who have agreed to keep them while their parents follow their flocks in transhumance. Regular school attendance by girls will be specifically encouraged with the monthly distribution of a dry take-home ration.
41. This activity will be possible only if the Ministry of Education, the regional and local authorities and the beneficiary communities work in close cooperation to ensure the supply of the other resources essential to improving the coverage as well as the quality of teaching (e.g. teachers and additional classrooms). With the support of donors and other United Nations bodies, the Ten-year Education Development Programme will be the institutional framework responsible for ensuring complementarity between the different parties involved.



42. The sensitization, mobilization and organization of communities will also be needed. NGOs with the necessary know-how will encourage the training of local committees to manage school canteens and to participate in implementing the strategy planned under the ten-year programme. At the community level, special attention will be given to girls' school attendance.

### 📌 *Disaster Prevention and Mitigation*

43. WFP's assistance in this area is in line with the Enabling Development policy priority of reducing the effects of natural disasters in regions at risk of recurring crises of that kind.
44. The immediate objectives of this activity will be:
- rehabilitation and better management of productive natural resources controlled by the beneficiaries, particularly water and soil;
  - filling of households' seasonal food deficits;
  - development of the capacity to manage productive resources, and diversification of income sources; and
  - strengthening of the national disaster mitigation system.
45. This activity will have two components. The first will aim at creating the basis needed for poor households to become less vulnerable to food insecurity—especially the capacity to cope better with the effects of natural disasters. The second will be an intervention mechanism to be brought into operation in the case of food crises and intended to reduce the effects of such crises for the families most at risk.
46. Food-for-work (FFW) activities will focus mainly on the creation and preservation of assets directly linked to the two main productive resources to which poor households can have access, namely soil and water. Food aid will support such activities as soil protection, lowland irrigation schemes and the construction or rehabilitation of small irrigation works. WFP will continue to provide special support to the management of water, a key resource for the target regions. Food aid will also be provided—for the same beneficiaries, especially women—within the framework of food-for-training (FFT) activities aiming at functional literacy and income-generation. Another major training area will be the management of productive assets through the adoption of improved production methods. FFW and FFT activities will be carried out in coordination with the Ministry of Rural Development.
47. The national decentralization policy currently being implemented will allow WFP and its partner NGOs to work directly with local administrative units.
48. The disaster mitigation component will be integrated into the national food security system, thanks to the participation of WFP in the country's PRMC. Each year, a direct contribution in cereals will be deposited in the national security stock, which allows the country to cope with short-term or localized food crises during the lean period, generally in the traditional pockets of food insecurity in the Sahelian zone. Depending on how serious a crisis is, this programme's contribution to the national security stock can be used for free distribution or to extend FFW activities in areas affected by the crisis. In the latter case, apart from making up the temporary household food deficit, food aid will facilitate the creation of productive assets with a view to improving people's capacity to cope with such crises.



### ✧ *Food Supplements and Support to Community Health Services*

49. Assistance in the health sector will have the objective of enabling young children and expectant and nursing mothers to meet their special nutritional and nutrition-related health needs, WFP's Enabling Development policy priority 1. The immediate objectives will include the recovery of malnourished children by means of food supplements, and a change in the practices adopted by mothers with regard to the diet (particularly when weaning) and health of their children. The actions to be supported must have the long-term result of reducing the malnutrition level of children aged 0–5 in the targeted regions.
50. This activity is integrated with the Government's Five-year Health and Social Development Programme, which pursues a strategy of developing a decentralized health service based on community structures. It will be carried out in coordination with the structures of the Ministry of Health and channelled through NGOs with the necessary know-how and operational capacities. It will seek to develop a weaning formula that can be produced at the community level from locally available foodstuffs.
51. The issue of HIV/AIDS and its prevention will be included in awareness-raising and training sessions for mothers on health and dietary care.

### Scope for Joint Planning and Partnerships with Other Agencies

52. As explained above, the present strategy was drawn up through a consultative and participatory process with representatives of the Government and other potential partners. The process was enriched by the discussions that took place during preparation of the UNDAF, in which WFP played a very active role. The possibility of joint planning with other United Nations system bodies was explored during this process, but has not yet moved beyond the conception stage. The bodies interested in collaborating with WFP are still preparing their programmes' internal planning, institutional framework and budgets.
53. In the area of education, collaboration is already planned with UNESCO, UNDP and WHO. There are also possibilities of joint planning with UNICEF, UNDP and UNAIDS in the area of health and nutrition. The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and FAO have indicated their willingness to cooperate within the framework of FFW/FFT activities. On the basis of lessons learned from the current CP concerning partnership with NGOs, all future activities will be executed through NGOs. New operational agreements will be made with a small number of carefully selected NGOs, as recommended by the current CP evaluation.

### Modalities of WFP Assistance

54. As in the past, WFP will continue to purchase cereals locally, if local market conditions are favourable. The remainder of the foodstuffs making up the different rations to be used for each activity will be imported. As far as assistance to the health sector is concerned, a weaning formula requiring the purchase of very small quantities of local cereals will be designed and then produced on a pilot basis. The traditional ration will be replaced by flour where, technically and financially, community production allows.

### Operational Implications

55. At the local level, the decision as to the type and amount of food assistance to be supplied will be made in coordination not only with regional authorities and the implementing partner (an NGO), but also with the local administrative units, representing civil society. The needs and plans of these local administrative units—integrated into regional plans for development and poverty eradication—will be fundamental for



identifying and organizing WFP assistance. Plans drawn up at the local administrative level will also provide the necessary basis for ensuring complementarity among the various activities in the next CP.

56. The information system on which the monitoring and evaluation of each CP activity is based will give special attention to gender-disaggregated result indicators, wherever this type of information is significant and available.
57. The planned strategy will focus on the integration of women as beneficiaries of WFP assistance. In the area of primary education and FFW and FFT activities, over 50 percent of the beneficiaries will be girls and women, while assistance to vulnerable groups will by definition focus exclusively on women and children. The future Country Programme will similarly encourage the participation of women in new local decision-making structures through functional literacy and training programmes to better enable them to take part in decisions affecting the community.

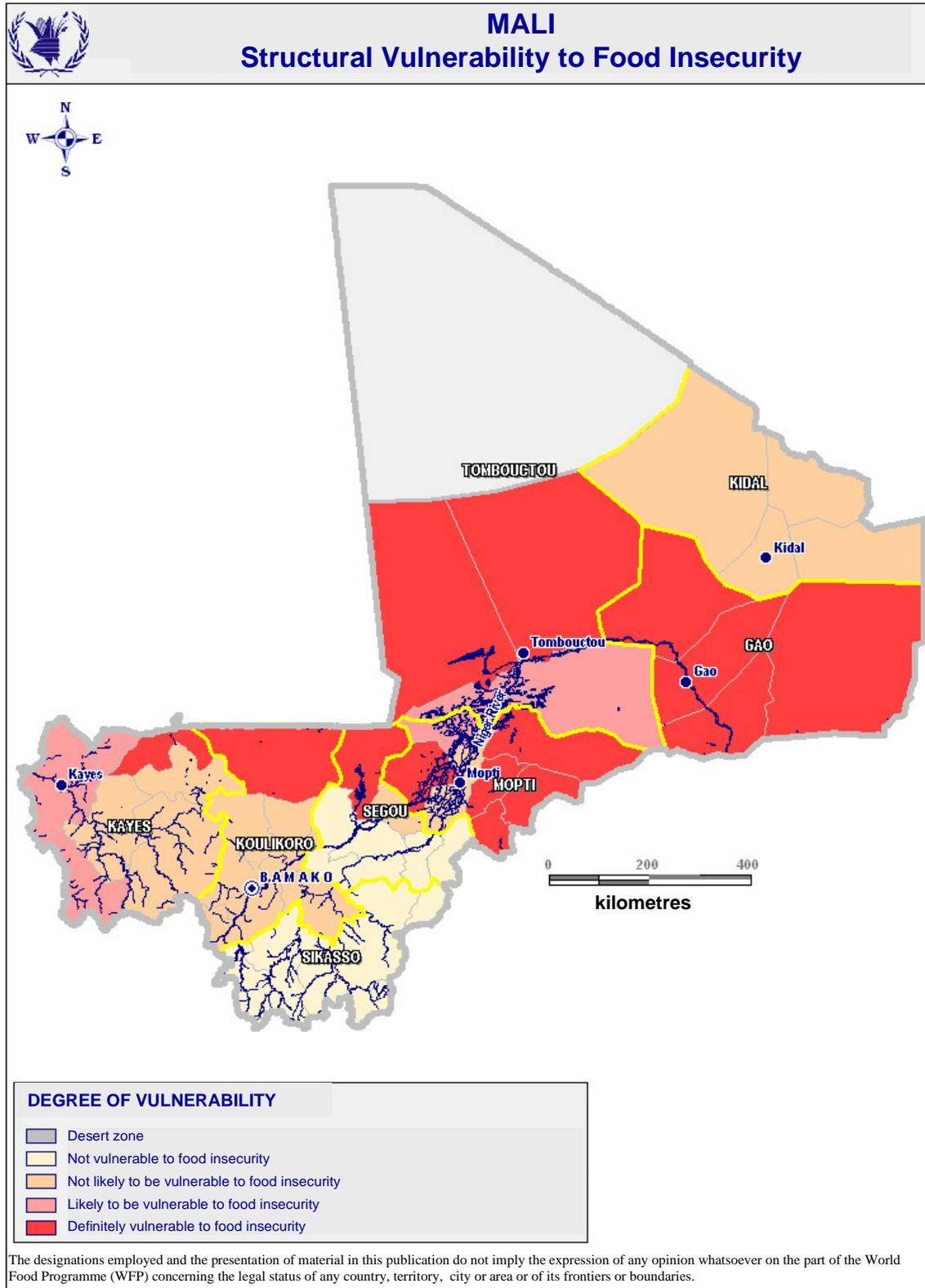
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## KEY ISSUES AND RISKS

58. This strategy in favour of community development is fully in line with the policy of the Government of Mali, which is at present transferring increasing responsibility on to new regional and community institutions. The latter must play a major role in planning and monitoring food aid-supported activities, while also ensuring the necessary technical and financial back-up. However, the resources and technical skills currently available at the local institution level are extremely limited. The success of this approach will depend to a large extent on the political commitment and resources that the Malian Government allocates to carrying out decentralization. The financial and technical support of donors and United Nations bodies will also be needed.
59. Should the contributions of non-food resources from potential partners not be forthcoming, there is a danger that the Country Programme activities would not only suffer delays in execution, but would also—and with more serious consequences—fail to fulfil their development objectives.
60. A major crisis situation such as a large-scale drought (an ever-present danger in the Sahelian sub-region) or conditions of insecurity in the north of the country could compromise implementation of the envisaged development activities.



# ANNEX



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## ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

CSO	Country Strategy Outline
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FFT	Food for training
FFW	Food for work
GDP	Gross domestic product
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
LDC	Least developed country
LIFDC	Low-income, food-deficit country
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PRMC	Cereal Market Restructuring Programme
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VAM	Vulnerability analysis and mapping

