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Programme  
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Food  
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Programa  
Mundial  
de Alimentos

**Executive Board  
Second Regular Session**

**Rome, 13 - 14 May 1999**

# REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ON OPERATIONAL MATTERS

## Agenda item 6

### BASIC ACTIVITY WITHIN A COUNTRY PROGRAMME APPROVED BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (1 JULY–31 DECEMBER 1998)— BANGLADESH 2226.07

#### Vulnerable group development

<b>Total number of beneficiaries</b>	<b>1,051,000</b>
Number of beneficiaries supported by WFP	376,000
Duration of project	Two and a half years

#### Cost (United States dollars)

Total cost to WFP	45,161,797
Total food cost to WFP	29,383,508
Total cost to Government	56,972,825
External funding (bilateral)	43,404,500



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**NOTE TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD****This document is submitted for information to 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: Ms J. Cheng-Hopkins tel.: 066513-2209

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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).



1. The Country Programme for Bangladesh was approved by the Executive Board in October 1996, with the vulnerable group development (VGD) as one of the basic activities. The project is a nationwide development operation assisted by various donors; it covers more than 500,000 hard-core poor rural women a year. Women participating in VGD are too poor and distressed to be able to participate in regular mainstream development activities. The main objective of the activity is to improve the socio-economic conditions of these women and enable them to break through the cycle of poverty. The project's strategy is based on the following three components: a) food aid as a platform to participate in development activities; b) capacity-building activities (so-called "development package"); and c) "graduation" of women into regular NGO development programmes after participation in VGD.
2. The current phase of VGD was approved in November 1995 (document CFA 40/SCP 15/6-A/OMA/Add. 1, September 1995). In line with the Country Programme, the activity has been extended for two years with an additional period of six months to synchronize its duration with that of the Country Programme. The period now covers July 1998 to December 2000, and the extension was approved in August 1998.
3. Activities during the extended period include:
  - a) Under the income generation sub-component, women receive 30 kgs of wheat per month over 18 months combined with a development package, delivered by NGOs and consisting of income generating skills training, savings mobilization, provision of credit, functional literacy and numeracy skills training, and group-based awareness raising on social, legal, health and nutrition issues. After termination of the food support, women graduate into NGO mainstream development activities. This sub-component will cover about 900,000 women.
  - b) Under the Women's Training Centre (WTC) sub-component, women receive 30 kgs of wheat per month over 12 months, are trained in income-generation skills, and participate in awareness raising sessions. During the revised period, about 150,000 women will be enrolled in more than 700 government and non-governmental WTCs.
  - c) Under the group leader extension workers (GLEW) sub-component, group leaders extension workers organize women in groups, provide basic training, assist them in income generating activities, and link women with training, credit and other development service providers. Each GLEW receives an honorarium equivalent to 100 kg of wheat per month, half in cash and half in kind. During the revised activity period, 1,000 GLEWs will be working with about 60,000 women.
4. WFP committed 160,500 tons of wheat (\$26,482,500), out of which 159,000 tons will be used for distribution and 1,500 tons for monetization to generate cash wages for GLEW, as well as 3,868 tons of vegetable oil for landside transport, storage and handling (LTSH) (\$2,901,008). In addition, \$150,000 has been allocated for monitoring and evaluation, \$80,000 for training of counterpart staff, \$200,000 for equipment to strengthen the Government's reporting and accounting capacity, and \$60,000 for WFP's membership in the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) Donor Consortium (\$20,000 annual membership fee, starting in 1998. BRAC is the main implementing partner NGO of the VGD activity).
5. More emphasis has been placed on strengthening project design, implementation and improving monitoring. Concerted efforts are being made to elicit greater awareness and contributions from the various stakeholders: the Government, donors, NGOs, WFP and the general public.

