

برنامج  
الأغذية  
العالمي



Programme  
Alimentaire  
Mondial

World  
Food  
Programme

Programa  
Mundial  
de Alimentos

**Executive Board  
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## ADVOCACY

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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 point for this document is:

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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 World Food Programme has embarked upon a pro-active advocacy campaign. This is not a vanity issue. It is motivated by purely practical reasons. In an era of declining aid budgets, it has become even more imperative to demonstrate to the public in donor countries and their governments that WFP is an essential tool for fighting hunger and for carrying out foreign policy objectives in the humanitarian sphere.
2. In fact, governments have frequently encouraged WFP to raise public awareness of its efforts - efforts which no matter how effective and life-saving - were often overlooked.
3. WFP advocates on behalf of the hungry poor. It also advocates on behalf of itself as an efficient tool through which donor countries can deliver food aid to the hungry.
4. Through advocacy, WFP strives to enhance its effectiveness. It can do this by promptly alerting donors and their public to impending or developing disasters as well as humanitarian needs. WFP can also enhance its effectiveness by establishing itself as a moral authority which encourages others to listen and respond rapidly to crises. In addition, through active information campaigns, WFP is better able to inform donor publics of the generosity of their respective governments. Vigorous advocacy can help demonstrate that governments are swift in responding to crises. This is especially important in an era when the CNN effect can dramatically inflame public opinion.
5. WFP advocacy can assist governments by creating public support for involvement in humanitarian crises. This is particularly the case for politically sensitive issues where governments may want to pursue humanitarian interests but may be reluctant or unable to publicly advocate on behalf of such an issue. WFP can do this for them. Prompt alerts on the effects of El Niño in Kenya/Somalia helped focus international action to assist the tens of thousands of flood victims.
6. Similarly, WFP has vigorously advocated on behalf of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.
7. Through public statements outlining the severity of this crisis, and equally important, through the use of video and photographic images, WFP helped to demonstrate the severity of the crisis. These visual data helped convince public opinion that action was needed. They also helped to open the door to generous contributions that have so far averted a major humanitarian catastrophe.
8. WFP's advocacy strategy is manifold, involving an array of communications media. However, there are two key underlying components. One is the use of all news media outlets, radio, television, newspapers, wire services, and the Internet. The other is a focused public awareness campaign.
9. Using the former, which is essentially free of cost, WFP is inserted into the mainstream clatter of daily communications. The aim is to have WFP appear pro-active in all the major crises and to have the Programme's name and activities frequently mentioned. One limitation of this approach is that WFP will never completely control the message.
10. This is where the public awareness campaign comes in. Through a series of advertisements it is possible to start shaping an image of the organization in order to generate knowledge and support. Recently, WFP commissioned Young and



Rubicam, the advertising agency, to create a series of pro-bono advertisements. The aim is to establish a brand name, and stress that as a United Nations organization, WFP is effective in helping the hungry. Copies of these ads, which have the theme FAST FOOD, have been distributed in at least two donor countries - Spain and United Kingdom - and 11 other countries will soon follow. So far, publications such as the Economist, the Financial Times, the Wall Street Journal Europe, Business Week, El Mundo, Epoca, and Selecciones Readers Digest have carried the ad, in all cases free of cost. The Financial Times and the Economist liked it enough to run it twice. WFP is optimistic that the ads, which have been translated into nine languages, will be carried by a good number of additional publications.

11. At the same time, WFP is launching a series of television advertisements. Again, these are to be carried free of charge on major broadcast networks. Incidentally, initial word has just been received that CNN has agreed to carry these ads on a worldwide basis.
12. It is hoped that this campaign will also help to enhance private-sector fund-raising efforts. But above all, it is hoped that WFP will be established in the minds of the general public and of decision-makers as an effective instrument available to the international community. It is an instrument that reflects the humanitarian concerns and generosity of donor nations. If WFP's advocacy campaign is successful, WFP can also be a source of pride to citizens eager to eliminate the scourge of hunger.

