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الأغذية  
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Programme  
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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



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## PROTRACTED RELIEF AND RECOVERY OPERATION APPROVED BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (1 JULY–31 DECEMBER 1998)— ALGERIA 4155.08

### Assistance to Sahraoui refugees in Algeria

<b>Number of beneficiaries</b>	<b>80,000</b>
Duration of project	Six months (1 October 1998– 31 March 1999)

<b>Cost (United States dollars)</b>	
Total cost to WFP	2,357,721
Total food cost	4,435,632

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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:

Senior Liaison Officer:            P. Bourgeois                            tel.: 066513-2725

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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 conflict regarding the question of Western Sahara has been going on for more than two decades. Attempts to resolve it have not succeeded to date. Pursuant to the direct talks held under the auspices of the Personal Envoy of the United Nations Secretary-General in 1997, a settlement plan was accepted and agreements for its implementation were reached between the parties, the Government of Morocco and *Polisario*. It was initially determined that a referendum would be held on 7 December 1998. Owing to delays in the process of identifying eligible voters, the date of the referendum has been postponed.
2. In view of the uncertainties facing the implementation of both the United Nations settlement plan and the repatriation plan, a six-month expansion of the PRO Algeria 4155.07 was necessary. This was in order to ensure continuity of adequate food supplies to the refugees while they were still in the refugee camps in the Tindouf area of Algeria, and until such time as a repatriation programme could be implemented.
3. WFP assistance has been provided to Sahraoui refugees in Algeria since 1986, at a total cost to WFP of 47 million dollars. Upon review of the response by other agencies to the basic food needs of the Sahraoui refugee population in 1997/98, it was found that in-country stocks were frequently very low as a result of delays in food shipments, which caused the distribution of food rations to be irregular and incomplete. In order to limit hardships caused by such delays, WFP finds it necessary to reassume responsibility for covering the basic food needs of the full number of vulnerable refugees, estimated to be 80,000. As and when the repatriation takes place, it is envisaged that WFP food assistance will be provided to all eligible voters in the referendum and their immediate dependants who will be repatriated from the Tindouf refugee camps under the auspices of UNHCR.
4. Women's committees distribute food (on a volunteer basis, as for all related humanitarian tasks) to heads of households residing in the four camps. Limited productive activities (livestock raising, agriculture, handicrafts) continue to be undertaken with the assistance of the Algerian authorities, within the constraints of the local climatic, environmental and economic conditions. Training and education programmes continue to be conducted with the support of UNHCR. The WFP Country Director in Algeria ensures the coordination of food aid shipments with the major donors and UNHCR through regular structured meetings involving all actors. WFP staff travel regularly to the Tindouf area for programme coordination and monitoring of distributions, and to assist with logistical and storage management matters.

