



Distribution: General

WFP/EB.A/2016/14

Date: 17 November 2016

Original: English

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Summary of the Work of the Annual Session of the Executive Board, 2016

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Special Address by His Holiness Pope Francis

1. Noting that one of his first acts on arrival had been to pray at the memorial wall, His Holiness urged WFP staff to remember those who had given their lives by continuing to build on WFP's achievements and take forward the work for Zero Hunger.
2. Observing that instant access to information was a characteristic of today's world and that it enhanced the effectiveness of humanitarian work, His Holiness cautioned that the resulting "news overload" could nonetheless desensitize people to the existence of poverty and hunger. Human tragedies were becoming ordinary news stories, but the realities of pain and hunger remained.
3. The urgent need was hence to "de-naturalize" poverty and hunger and to see them as the faces of children and families; not to see conflict and suffering as inevitable, but to believe that a free, just and equitable world could be achieved. His Holiness emphasized that compassion lay at the heart of humanitarian action: a renewed commitment to people and their potential must be its driving force. In this, WFP would continue to be an acknowledged leader.
4. Noting the paradox of hungry people in a world of plenty, His Holiness stressed that hunger was largely a result of inequitable distribution of food and over-exploitation of resources. The waste of food in the developed world was not just an economic absurdity, but amounted to theft of food from the poor and malnourished. The need was to eliminate waste and share the world's resources equitably with hungry, displaced and marginalized people.
5. His Holiness stressed that it was imperative to find peaceful ways of resolving issues to prevent the suffering of innocent civilians from being used as a weapon of war, and drew attention to the frequent interruption of food deliveries in war zones – itself a violation of international law. That food deliveries could be blocked by bureaucracy and ideology in a world where weapons were traded largely without impediment was another paradox. His Holiness emphasized the needs to free humanitarian work from bureaucratic and ideological barriers, and to ensure that hungry and oppressed people could be assisted without constraint.
6. His Holiness believed that part of WFP's role was to focus on people, not only issues, in delivering food assistance. Member States were urged to direct their political will to cooperation with WFP to enable it to address food insecurity equitably and respectfully with a view to developing local capabilities, eliminating dependency and preventing waste.
7. His Holiness pledged the support of the Catholic Church, encouraging WFP to believe in its mission, defend the dignity of persons and achieve a world free from hunger. In closing, His Holiness quoted Saint Matthew: "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink...", observing that the future depended on the ability to respond to hunger through imaginative and transformative solutions.
8. His Holiness pronounced his blessings for the forthcoming Board session.

Current and Future Strategic Issues

Opening Remarks by the Executive Director (2016/EB.A/1)

9. Recalling her statement of 2012 – that it is possible to end hunger in our lifetimes – the Executive Director reaffirmed WFP's commitment to becoming fully "fit for purpose" by retuning its ways of working and building on its long experience of innovation, enhancing partnerships and expanding the resource base.
10. The Executive Director reiterated the Pope's call for continuous adaptation, as climate change, conflict, long-term displacement and instability were leading to entrenched poverty.
11. The recent World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) had focused on bridging the humanitarian-development gap and achieving the 2030 Agenda's 17 interconnected Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). WFP had pledged to strengthening the national response capacities of the 20 most risk-prone countries; transferring 25 percent of its resources to national first responders by 2020; increasing cash-based transfers (CBTs); and developing platforms for system-wide management of information on beneficiaries and assistance delivery, to support

government safety net programmes. As part of its work beyond the saving of lives and livelihoods, WFP was collaborating with the Rome-based agencies (RBAs) to help communities transition from subsistence to economic growth. The WHS had also advanced the dialogue on improving humanitarian financing through public and private resources and innovative funding mechanisms. WFP would emphasize the needs of long-term refugees and other vulnerable people at the High-Level Panel on Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants and the HABITAT III conference later in the year.

12. WFP was consulting the Board on four workstreams to support the reorientation of its work: the Strategic Plan (2017–2021), operationalizing WFP’s contributions to national-led emergency and development work; Country Strategic Plans (CSPs), articulating actions for improving food security and nutrition and reducing vulnerability in line with countries’ own priorities; the Financial Framework Review (FFR) – which the Executive Director labelled “the financial framework revolution” – aligning country portfolio budget planning with strategic priorities and objectives; and the Corporate Results Framework (CRF), linking WFP’s activities to results. A new resource mobilization framework would help align contributions to WFP’s diverse activities with donors’ international assistance frameworks. The restructuring would facilitate better partnerships, particularly through building the capacities of local partners.
13. The Executive Director had launched an Inter-Religious Advisory Panel to harness strategic partnerships with faith-based institutions, and WFP continued to encourage private-sector investments, particularly in food and nutrition programmes. A new communications strategy would improve awareness of WFP’s operations and their value among potential donors, including national governments and taxpayers.
14. WFP was leveraging its knowledge and experience to manage and mitigate risks. Based on the African Union-led African Risk Capacity initiative, WFP’s Replica programme could double the insurance cover of vulnerable populations. Micro-insurance through R4 Resilience was assisting El Niño-affected farmers in three African countries, and resources from the Green Climate Fund would enable WFP to increase its support to affected people.
15. WFP was improving its development-oriented programmes through collaboration with other RBAs, the Purchase for Progress (P4P) programme, the Patient Procurement Platform, Purchase from Africans for Africa and school meals programmes. South–South and triangular cooperation were essential in enabling the policy context for success. Following the success of the Centre of Excellence against Hunger in Brazil, a similar Centre of Excellence for Rural Transformation had recently been opened in China.
16. WFP’s Level 3 El Niño response was assisting some of the 60 million affected people in Africa, Asia, the Central American Dry Corridor and Haiti. United Nations access to all besieged areas in the Syrian Arab Republic was necessary to enable WFP to reach some of the 592,000 people who had been isolated since 2012, in addition to the 4.6 million it was already assisting. In other conflict-affected areas, WFP was assisting people in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Iraq, Yemen and the Lake Chad region. It would continue to monitor the situation in South Sudan, where humanitarian needs were growing, despite the peace agreement.
17. Innovation, gender and protection considerations must be incorporated into all WFP programmes. An Innovation Accelerator was gathering, developing and disseminating new tools. The roll-out of the new Gender Equality Accreditation Programme ensured that all programmes were held accountable for gender equality and women’s empowerment. WFP continued to reinforce its policy of zero tolerance of sexual exploitation and abuse.
18. The Executive Director closed by emphasizing that accepting change as its working norm, WFP remained committed to achieving zero hunger, evidence-based decision-making, innovation and strategic partnerships.
19. Mr Christos Stylianides, European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, asserted that WFP was a vital partner for the European Union (EU), with a reputation for responding quickly and being innovative and forward-looking. WFP and the Commission collaborated in difficult conditions and complex political contexts, including on joint assessments

- and assistance to refugees in Lebanon; in Iraq, where WFP led a harmonized approach to cash assistance; and in the coordinated response to Ebola in West Africa.
20. The refugee crisis had global consequences and needed a global response. The EU was providing more than EUR 6 billion to countries affected by the Syrian war, including Lebanon where nearly 30 percent of the population were refugees, but the situation required a political solution.
 21. In Africa, conflicts, terrorism and natural disasters were displacing people. The Commission was working with African countries to develop plans for addressing migration. Large-scale arrivals of refugees and migrants in Europe were testing the region's values, principles and unity; a unified response was needed, and Europe should not return to the politics of fragmentation. The Commission was assisting refugees in Greece and, with WFP, Turkey.
 22. The WHS had emphasized the importance of education in emergencies, involving the private sector in humanitarian aid, making assistance more effective and respecting international humanitarian law. WFP had roles in these areas, including through innovations supported by the EU and other donors. For example, CBTs increased dignity, choice and flexibility for recipients while enhancing efficiency, value for money and effectiveness for donors. The Commission was increasing its support to school feeding, and the Commissioner encouraged donors to do the same.
 23. The Board appreciated the progress in aligning WFP's objectives, planning and indicators to the SDGs, bridging the humanitarian–development divide, and ensuring the incorporation of gender, climate change and protection as cross-cutting issues in all operations. Members looked forward to discussing the documents for operationalizing WFP's contribution to the 2030 Agenda during the session and emphasized the need for WFP to maintain its focus on emergency response while increasing its attention to building the resilience and emergency preparedness of communities, including through nutrition programmes. Collaboration among the RBAs and with other partners was essential.
 24. The Board commended WFP's support to refugees and their host communities, and encouraged WFP to expand the reach of this work to tackle the root causes of migration in poor countries. Welcoming the Level 3 El Niño response, members mentioned a special event on El Niño at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) at the end of June. Members welcomed WFP's increasing use of CBTs and its development of a shared platform for information management, which would be a public good. They emphasized the importance of adhering to humanitarian principles and international law at all times.
 25. With needs likely to increase, the Board called for accelerating work to expand WFP's funding base, and looked forward to hearing the results of feasibility studies on innovative funding mechanisms. With several simultaneous Level 3 emergencies, there was a risk that reduced funding for other operations give rise to “forgotten crises”; WFP should seek to improve the efficiency of its resource use and continue advocating for more unearmarked contributions from donors. Several members announced their countries' increased contributions to WFP programmes.
 26. Thanking the Board for its sustained support, the Executive Director confirmed that WFP was focusing on developing staff capacities; improving joint assessments, including by involving local responders and beneficiaries; and enhancing data collection and management. The more support it had from stakeholders and governments, the better WFP could perform. The Secretariat would draft a policy for people with disabilities if the Board requested it.

Annual Reports

Annual Performance Report for 2015 (2016/EB.A/2) (for approval)

27. The Secretariat drew attention to the significance of the Annual Performance Report (APR) for accountability and learning and its alignment with United Nations reporting requirements. New sections covered trust fund activity, cross-cutting issues and organizational changes; indirect beneficiaries of WFP's work were also accounted for.

28. The Board welcomed the accurate analysis of activities in 2015, and commended WFP for meeting the challenges of the current high levels of emergency commitment – the “new norm”. Board members appreciated the transparency of the APR, its enhanced evidence base and WFP’s alignment with the SDGs and Zero Hunger. The Board welcomed the additional information on trust funds and cross-cutting issues – especially gender and accountability to beneficiaries – and was encouraged by the reported increases in South–South cooperation, implementation of CBTs, and food procurement in developing countries. Some members recommended increased use of CBTs, but cautioned that implementation had to be flexible to address needs in different contexts. There was consensus that in the current funding situation WFP should focus on its comparative advantages and ensure that adequate resources were allocated to the well-being of staff, especially in stressful contexts. The Board commended the resource-based planning approach, which made optimum use of funds and increased WFP’s effectiveness.
29. Some Board members expressed concern that funding appeared to have been disproportionately allocated to Strategic Objective 1, and that experienced staff had been re-deployed from resilience and development projects to emergencies, reducing WFP’s effectiveness in addressing “forgotten emergencies”. The Board emphasized the need for increased multilateral and unearmarked funding to enable WFP to allocate its resources to address actual needs effectively and efficiently. Members requested an additional section in the APR detailing lessons learned in the reporting year and proposals for mainstreaming them.
30. Board members felt that outcome-level reporting could be further improved, but accepted that time would be needed to enhance WFP’s evidence-gathering mechanisms; the “line-of-sight” planning approach was commended. Members also recommended that reporting at the output and outcome levels should be more closely correlated. The Board commended WFP’s top ranking among United Nations agencies with regard to transparency.
31. Thanking the Board for its observations, the Secretariat undertook to provide a section on lessons learned in the next APR. Donors’ earmarking of funds limited WFP’s ability to allocate resources to Strategic Objectives 2, 3 and 4, although funding levels had also been affected by the exchange value of the US dollar. The Secretariat sought to maximize flexible multi-year funding. The Secretariat assured the Board that the new Wellness Division was already having positive effects on all aspects of staff health, and undertook to enhance its reporting mechanisms and procedures as recommended by Board members.

Policy Issues

WFP Strategic Plan (2017–2021) (2016/EB.A/3) (for consideration)

32. The Secretariat introduced the draft WFP Strategic Plan (2017–2021) as a document evolving in consultation with member countries and other United Nations agencies and intended to align WFP’s work with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It identified SDGs 2, on achieving zero hunger, and 17, on partnerships to support implementation, as WFP’s entry points for contributing to the attainment of all 17 SDGs through its strengths in food security and nutrition, emergency response and logistics. By incorporating the SDG 2 and 17 targets as WFP’s strategic results, the plan ensured that WFP’s work would be aligned with and attributable to SDG targets and goals. The plan also provided the broader context for WFP’s country strategic planning approach, FFR and CRF.
33. Commending WFP’s collaborative approach to drafting the plan, and its early submission of the document, the Board endorsed the alignment with SDGs 2 and 17 and underscored the need to incorporate specific SDG indicators for strategic results management; to ensure alignment among goals and cross-cutting outcomes, including those on gender equality, environment and climate; and to reflect the operational implications of the WHS commitments to greater coherence and complementarity. The plan articulated how WFP would strengthen the humanitarian-development nexus; present a strategic vision for working with local responders; and place greater emphasis on enhancing national capacities. Ensuring coherence with national sustainable development strategies would require close cooperation with partners to avoid duplication of efforts and maximize results. The Board supported the move towards defining

country-specific strategic outcomes to facilitate engagement and ensure accountability, noting that the challenge of translating these into global results would require monitoring, baseline data and significant capacity development for staff and partners.

34. Board members sought clarification of references to acute resource pressures, projected needs and funding, and urged WFP to demonstrate that it would continue to prioritize emergency response and seek to expand organizational resources for the Strategic Objectives, to achieve strategic results. Donors should honour their WHS commitments, and several members noted WFP's appeal for less earmarking of funds.
35. The Board looked forward to further consultations on an updated draft, and a finalized plan by November 2016.
36. Welcoming the Board's feedback, the Secretariat reaffirmed its commitment to clarifying links between the Strategic Plan and the CRF, and confirmed that the draft for consideration at the July consultation would reflect the WHS outcomes, drawing clearer links between outcomes and outputs. The Secretariat recalled that there was limited scope to prioritize resources because most contributions were earmarked by country or activity. Engaging in policy dialogue at all levels was essential for WFP to enhance partnerships and assist countries in implementing the 2030 Agenda that they had defined.

Policy on Country Strategic Plans (2016/EB.A/4) (for consideration)

37. The Secretariat reminded the Board that while the Strategic Plan 2017–2021 would provide the global framework for WFP's work, CSPs would operationalize the Strategic Plan at the country level, defining WFP's support to governments' achievement of national goals linked to the global 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. The CSP policy marked a shift from WFP projects to national priorities as the focus of WFP's work in a country, with planning based on the gaps, challenges and priorities identified in nationally led zero hunger strategic reviews.
38. The Board welcomed the latest draft of the policy, noting that it addressed most of the concerns raised at previous consultations. CSPs would strengthen WFP's dialogue with governments while increasing transparency and accountability to affected populations, reducing transaction costs, and improving coordination and the synergy between planning and resourcing. Members emphasized the need for flexibility in matching activities to contexts and welcomed WFP's work to strengthen national capacities, including in assessment through its involvement in national zero hunger strategic reviews. They encouraged WFP to disaggregate results by gender when possible and to continue improving its own monitoring and evaluation (M&E) capacity.
39. Members looked forward to hearing the Secretariat's proposals regarding Board approval of CSPs that were fully funded by their host governments. Some members requested more information on the thresholds for presenting CSP budget revisions for Board approval; underlined the role of the Executive Board in such revisions; on how introduction of CSPs would affect existing WFP commitments within countries; and on how the alignment of CSPs and the new financial framework would affect donor funding mechanisms. Other concerns included how WFP could address regional emergency crises under the new approach, and the feasibility of evaluating every CSP during its five-year cycle.
40. The Secretariat confirmed that countries set their own strategic review processes, with WFP providing support accordingly. WFP saw no inconsistency between the country strategic planning approach and the humanitarian principles, which would continue to be preserved through WFP's focus on emergency response. Clarifications on the issues noted by the Board, including more details on emergency responses and budget revision thresholds, would be presented at an upcoming consultation.

Update on the Financial Framework Review (2016/EB.A/5) (for consideration)

41. The Secretariat noted that the FFR – a major element in WFP's restructuring to align itself with the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs – was a work-in-progress. Among other issues, the implications for governments and donors' system-readiness would have to be addressed before roll-out in 2018. The Secretariat reminded the Board that the advantages of the new financial architecture included its results-oriented approach to linking strategy, resources deployed and results achieved, and its harmonization with United Nations cost categories.

42. The Board expressed approval of the country-led and results-oriented management that would result from the new system, and its alignment with United Nations principles. The Board was aware that a review of governance and oversight procedures was required, and looked forward to the enhanced efficiency, accountability and transparency that would characterize the new financial system.
43. The Board recognized the workload involved in the integrated roadmap, and looked forward to discussing matters such as governance and full cost recovery in the context of WFP's voluntarily funded status. Board members were encouraged by the prospect of enhanced efficiency and operational effectiveness that would result from improved planning, budgeting and operational management at the country level.
44. Questions were raised regarding how the country strategic planning approach and country portfolio budgeting and planning structure could be aligned with regional-level operations and situations such as sudden-onset emergencies, and how budget revisions would be approved in the CSP context. Members also noted the need for detailed accounting of CBT programmes to ensure that food, cash and vouchers were accurately costed and the outcomes assessed. Harmonization of cost categories with other United Nations organizations were underlined by members of the Board.
45. Some Board members cautioned that significant changes would be needed to WFP's risk management approach and training for country office and Headquarters staff teams; adequate resources would have to be made available. Questions were also raised as to the practicability of the FFR timeline in view of the work still outstanding.
46. The Secretariat appreciated the Board's positive observations, noting that the July informal consultation would cover most of the issues raised. Matters such as a new cost structure, the approach to management costs, the ability of the CSPs and the country budgeting structure to accommodate regional and sudden-onset emergency responses were being considered, and the Secretariat was developing financial architecture with the flexibility to accommodate donors' current requirements.

Update on WFP's Role in Collective Humanitarian Response (2016/EB.A/6) (for consideration)

47. The Secretariat summarized developments since the document was submitted, including the outcome of the WHS and the Grand Bargain, the signing of a commitment to action by the Secretary-General and eight Principals, the World Health Organization's (WHO's) emergency reform, and preparations for Habitat III. To follow through on commitments and capitalize on recent momentum, active engagement was needed in intergovernmental processes, such as the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. Board members were encouraged to advocate for adequate attention in the Habitat III outcome document to food and nutrition security, food systems, including rural-urban linkages, resilience, and social protection systems.
48. The Board commended WFP's engagement in multi-stakeholder initiatives, underscoring its contributions to the 21st Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 21), the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, the WHO reform and the WHS. Several members requested further information on proposals regarding enhanced humanitarian financing.
49. The Board praised WFP's focus on developing innovative responses and disseminating best practices, including its commitment to scaling up the use of cash where appropriate, and welcomed efforts to build capacity of local and national actors. Several Board members stressed the need to put crisis-affected people at the centre of response and to improve partnerships with local actors.
50. The Secretariat confirmed that WFP's WHS and Grand Bargain commitments would be reflected in the draft Strategic Plan, with modalities for follow-up to be determined, but possibly through the annual update on WFP's role in collective humanitarian response. Given the importance of working with first-line responders, WFP was exploring ways to simplify collaboration and adopt common terminology, including working with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to identify opportunities for harmonized reporting formats. These issues would be discussed

further at the annual partnership consultation. The Secretariat informed the Board that a strategy on accountability to affected populations was being developed.

Resource, Financial and Budgetary Matters

Audited Annual Accounts, 2015 (2016/EB.A/7) (for approval)

51. The Secretariat presented the 2015 Audited Annual Accounts, which had been reviewed by the Audit Committee, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the FAO Finance Committee. Revenue and expenses in 2015 had decreased from 2014; the decrease in expenses was due mainly to decreases in the Syrian emergency response. The External Auditor had issued an unqualified audit opinion on the Annual Accounts and included four recommendations in his report.
52. The Board recognized WFP's commitment to maintaining high standards of financial management and reporting and its increasing transparency. With respect to the Statement on Internal Control, members welcomed the improved completion rate of staff performance appraisals. Expressing concern about the negative impact of the high level of emergencies on internal control, they urged the Secretariat to address risks in connection with monitoring. Some Board members pointed to the need for filling vacancies to reduce pressure on staff.
53. Responding to questions, the Secretariat reminded the Board that donor contributions – and therefore income – fluctuated from year to year; estimated contributions for 2016 were increasing. The timing of recognition of contributions was based on International Public Sector Accounting Standards with contributions recorded as income when confirmed in writing. Monitoring was being improved through new monitoring guidelines; development of the COMET country office tool for programme design, implementation and monitoring; training in monitoring and review, particularly for COMET; and the roll-out of decentralized evaluations under the new evaluation policy.

Appointment of Two Executive Board Members to the Selection Panel for the Appointment of Two Members of the Audit Committee (2016/EB.A/8) (for approval)

54. Following a presentation by the Secretariat, the Board approved the appointment of H.E. Mohammed S.L. Sheriff, of Liberia, and Dr Md Mafizur Rahman, of Bangladesh, to serve as representatives of the Executive Board on the panel for the selection of two members of the Audit Committee. The Board was also informed that the selection panel would meet in September 2016 to initiate the selection process.

Use of the Immediate Response Account for Preparedness Activities (2016/EB.A/9) (for approval)

55. The Secretariat introduced its request for the Board's approval to raise the limit on funds available through the Immediate Response Account for Preparedness facility for exceptional preparedness activities, from USD 2 million to USD 6 million. Noting that WFP annual income had doubled, its work increased significantly and its risk profile expanded in the 12 years since the Board set the limit, USD 2 million was no longer sufficient to address anticipated requirements for 2016, having already fallen short of 2015 needs in the context of El Niño preparedness activities. No change was proposed to the conditions for such allocations, only where no alternative and viable funding source was available.
56. The Board supported the increase as necessary for ensuring that WFP was able to invest appropriately based on risk, increasing the speed and utility of financing, and enhancing capacity for early intervention. Some Board members queried whether USD 6 million would be sufficient. The measure should be supplemented by consistent and strategic engagement to build the capacity of local partners, and a focus on preparedness in CSPs. The Board urged WFP to track results to demonstrate the benefits of preparedness.
57. The Secretariat agreed on the need to track investments to demonstrate return. The Executive Director expressed her appreciation of the Board's support for the request, underscoring that WFP often had the information but lacked access to resources to respond to and support countries in mitigating risk.

Annual Report of the Audit Committee (2016/EB.A/10) (for consideration)

58. The chair of the Audit Committee (AC) summarized the topics considered, noting that no concerns had been registered with regard to WFP's internal control or management systems. The AC was impressed by the positive cooperation of WFP management and the high rate of acceptance of audit recommendations.
59. The Board was pleased that the AC had confirmed the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) finding that there were no significant weaknesses in the areas it had covered. The AC's objectivity in considering and advising on matters such as the FFR, the country strategic planning approach, internal controls, WFP's internal justice system and issues of fraud and corruption was particularly appreciated. Board members agreed that the independence of the AC gave managers the opportunity to discuss all matters openly and frankly and hence contributed to WFP's effectiveness and accountability.
60. The AC welcomed direct communication with Board members to clarify issues concerning them, and several members invited the AC to give time to considering the potential risks associated with WFP's organizational restructuring, in particular the need to ensure that partners had the necessary skills for initiatives such as CBTs. Board members suggested that a central system for handling complaints and a database of risk issues be established, noting that undetected risk was itself a risk, and invited the AC to give further attention to staff welfare issues.
61. Overall, the Board felt that the support of the AC was extremely valuable and thanked its members for their commitment.
62. The AC chair thanked the Board for its observations, and agreed to work bilaterally with individual Board members on matters affecting them. The AC appreciated the Board's agreement that it was important for AC members to undertake visits to the field, which enhanced their understanding of the context of WFP's work. Ethics matters and WFP's internal audit system were regularly considered, and the AC would work with management to identify risks connected with WFP's new financial and operational structures, especially the proposed long-term planning approach. The President suggested that additional AC meetings with the Bureau and/or the whole Board membership could be arranged in advance of EB.2/2016 to attain AC reassurance on the processes to be approved.

Annual Report of the Inspector General and Note by the Executive Director (2016/EB.A/11) (for consideration)

63. The Inspector General gave an overview of the report findings and recent developments in his Office, highlighting the recruitment of qualified professional specialists into all oversight-related functions on a non-rotational basis, and outlined key focus areas for work, including information systems and technology processes, common logistic services, operational budget management, CBTs, anti-fraud and anti-corruption, and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA). The overall trajectory with regard to internal control processes was positive: findings on control failures did not reflect a deterioration of the control environment but OIG's increased and improved investigative capacities and proactive anti-fraud stance.
64. The Secretariat recognized OIG's advisory support role and excellent work proactively identifying risks and gaps in monitoring capabilities assisted WFP to improve operations. The Executive Director personally underscored WFP's active commitment to PSEA at all levels.
65. The Board endorsed the report, welcomed its positive findings and commended the added value provided by OIG. Noting WFP's pioneering expansion of CBTs, the Board welcomed the enhanced CBT control environment, including the roll-out of a monitoring toolkit and pilot review of CBTs, and suggested findings be shared to assist humanitarian partners to mitigate risks related to cash-based programming. Several Board members requested further information regarding operational budget management weaknesses relating to unreimbursed Immediate Response Account (IRA) allocations, especially in the context of the FFR. OIG efforts since 2013 to refocus attention on procurement and vendor and third-party fraud would help ensure resources reached beneficiaries. One member suggested that WFP consider the recent Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) recommendation to include a standing item on fraud detection and response on its agenda.

The Board praised management's commitment to implementing recommendations and engaging proactively with OIG.

66. The Inspector General thanked Board members for their positive comments, noting that OIG's enhanced fraud prevention and control work has been enabled by the Board's adoption in May 2015 of the Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy. OIG would continue to enhance the CBT control environment, having already delivered five new tools in 2016, and support the Executive Director's focus on protection.
67. The Secretariat agreed that, although the FFR would have an impact in this regard, further effort was required to improve operational budget management. Situations did arise whereby funds were allocated from the IRA to life-saving operations experiencing contribution shortfalls with the full understanding that they may not be reimbursed: there was a need to distinguish between the IRA and internal project lending in this regard.
68. The President suggested the Bureau consider the JIU recommendations on fraud as a standing agenda item.

Report of the External Auditor on the School Feeding Programme and WFP Management Response (2016/EB.A/12) (for consideration)

69. The External Auditor summarized the 15 audit recommendations, noting that the cooperation of WFP staff had been much appreciated; all the recommendations had been accepted.
70. The Board commended the audit, and agreed that improved data collection and a wider range of performance and outcome indicators were needed to optimize reporting, and that the fall in funding levels should be addressed in consultation with donors. The recommendations for more detailed budgeting were noted, with some members suggesting that a longer-term planning approach would maximize economy and sustainability. The South-South cooperation fostered by the Centre of Excellence was commended, but should be audited to assess achievements and gaps. Board members noted that the audit recommended closer tracking of enrolment and gender-related trends, and more accurate linkages of activities and outcomes.
71. It was suggested that the audit would have benefited from engagement with beneficiaries, greater attention to nutrition outcomes, and wider geographical coverage. The Board was pleased that WFP had accepted all the recommendations, but there was concern that the proposed implementation timescale was unrealistic. Some members felt that the M&E of school feeding programmes should be enhanced in alignment with the CRF, and that advocacy should be increased with a view to obtaining more long-term funding.
72. The External Auditor appreciated the Board's comments, and while concurring that a larger scope of audit could have been beneficial, observed that the range of programmes audited, the geographical coverage and the engagement with beneficiaries had been limited by practical considerations.
73. The Secretariat noted that monitoring indicators should be defined in the context of WFP's overall activities, and accepted the caution that establishing too many indicators could create problems. The promotion of national schemes was the priority, but WFP was aware that hands-on support was often needed.

Report of the External Auditor on WFP Aviation and WFP Management Response (2016/EB.A/13) (for consideration)

74. The External Auditor presented the main findings of the performance audit of WFP's Aviation Service, covering the period January 2013 to June 2015. Management welcomed the six recommendations, which it would implement by the end of 2016. The United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) filled a gap by reaching remote, isolated and insecure locations, delivering resources and transporting humanitarian personnel in environments where commercial air services were not viable.
75. The Board welcomed the evaluation and its focus on safety and efficiency. It encouraged the Secretariat to implement the recommendations as quickly as possible, noting that the humanitarian community depended on UNHAS as a service of last resort, so costs and risks were likely to be higher than for commercial services.

76. Responding to the Board's concerns, management explained that customer satisfaction surveys were carried out twice a year to allow time to implement suggestions between surveys. The staff training issue noted in the report arose from an administrative oversight rather than a technical lapse; WFP worked with local civil aviation authorities to facilitate capacity strengthening based on international best practices. UNHAS planes were commercial passenger aircraft adapted to humanitarian needs. UNHAS services were discontinued when commercial airlines were able to maintain scheduled services on desired routes. WFP was updating the Air Transport Manual to incorporate the audit's recommendations and other changes. There were clear eligibility criteria for the use of UNHAS, and systems to prevent fraud and misuse. While ensuring continuous response to needs, WFP was establishing ways of demonstrating value for money through the introduction of an aviation performance management tool for measuring the efficiency and effectiveness of its air operations.

Report on the Implementation of the External Auditor Recommendations (2016/EB.A/14)

(for consideration)

77. Introducing the report, the Secretariat noted that, at 46 percent, the rate of implementation was 10 percent higher than in the previous year, and expressed its appreciation of the External Auditor's critical feedback, which enabled WFP to improve its performance continuously.
78. The Board welcomed the report as a useful oversight tool and commended the Secretariat for its commitment to transparency and accountability, as demonstrated by the thorough document. The high rate of implementation reflected WFP's efficiency and the Board looked forward to timely implementation of the outstanding recommendations, encouraging the Secretariat to redouble its efforts to implement those from 2014 on food procurement. One member requested clarification of the scope of a pending recommendation on the development of comprehensive guidance on P4P.
79. The Secretariat provided a general update on progress on food procurement recommendations and undertook to clarify the question about the scope of P4P guidance bilaterally.
80. The President and the Executive Director thanked the outgoing External Auditor for his valuable collaboration with WFP during his tenure.

Report on the Utilization of WFP's Advance Financing Mechanisms

(1 January–31 December 2015) (2016/EB.A/15) *(for consideration)*

81. The Secretariat reminded the Board that WFP's financing mechanisms included the IRA, the Global Commodity Management Facility, Internal Project Lending and advances for corporate services.
82. The Board noted the usefulness of the mechanisms in enabling WFP to respond rapidly and effectively to sudden crises in spite of its 100 percent voluntarily funded status, observing that the long-term planning approach could reduce the need for internal loans. Board members urged WFP to continue to develop internal systems that maximized the availability of immediate funding independent of donors' contributions.
83. A Board member expressed concern that although the advance financing mechanisms were very useful in emergencies affecting poor countries, middle-income countries derived little benefit from them. The Board was reminded of the policy of according financial priority to situations in which lives were directly threatened, and the expectation of working with governments to allocate national resources to responses in middle- and upper-income countries.
84. Board members took note of the Secretariat's observations that the mechanisms under consideration were ways of providing immediate emergency assistance, that IRA allocations – available to all countries irrespective of income level – were authorized to address life-threatening situations and in the absence of forecast contributions, and that in cases where no contribution materialized the allocations were converted into grants.

Evaluation Reports

Annual Evaluation Report, 2015 and Management Response (2016/EB.A/16) *(for consideration)*

85. The Director of Evaluation presented the report, explaining that part I synthesized findings of 2015 evaluations, while part II reported on performance against plans and developments in WFP's evaluation function. Seven overarching recommendations based on recurring recommendations from 2015 evaluations were directed to high-level management and relevant to WFP's priority focus areas for the year.
86. The Secretariat added that the Executive Director was tracking progress on these recommendations and had appointed an Evaluation Function Steering Group (EFSG) to champion evaluation throughout WFP, ensuring application of provisions to safeguard the impartiality of decentralized evaluations and that all new WFP programmes incorporated evaluation lessons and included plans and resources for evaluation.
87. The Board welcomed the progress in embedding evaluation in all WFP activities, including through the Evaluation Policy and Charter. Members emphasized the need for additional evaluation staff and resources, especially for supporting decentralized evaluations. They applauded the Office of Evaluation's (OEV's) attainment of the United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment target for gender in evaluation.
88. Evaluation findings confirmed WFP's strengths in emergency response and its commitment to partnerships, although there was room for improved inter-agency collaboration and clearer analysis of complementarities and value-added in selecting partners. The Board encouraged the Secretariat to continue building the evidence base for monitoring and evaluation, particularly in nutrition; strengthening partnerships; using evaluation findings to inform the design of programmes and policies, including inputs from beneficiaries; and clarifying roles in humanitarian clusters, especially in pursuit of WHS commitments.
89. As funding gaps – resulting from the demands of Level 3 responses, the type and timing of contributions and other factors – often restrained the implementation of WFP programmes, the Board called for increased flexible and sustainable funding.
90. In response to questions, the Director of Evaluation outlined planned RBA collaboration on evaluation, including follow-up to the RBA seminar on preparing for evaluating progress towards SDG 2, a joint country portfolio evaluation and joint syntheses of evaluations on gender, resilience and other topics; OEV and the External Auditor coordinated their work plans. Having designed the normative framework for its support to decentralized evaluations, OEV was developing guidance on evaluation quality control for regional bureaux.
91. Six regional evaluation officers were being appointed. Mechanisms for resourcing country-level evaluations from project funds were included in the FFR and supplemented by a new Contingency Evaluation Fund, overseen by the EFSG.

West Africa Portfolio

92. The Regional Director spoke of the major challenges and advances in the regional bureau over the past years, especially its provision of guidance, support and oversight during corporate decentralization; emergency frontline support and national staff capacity development; and corporate reviews of Central African Republic operations and the Ebola response.
93. As an example of building evidence-based responses, she cited collaboration in Nigeria using multi-faceted data collection tools to reach even inaccessible areas through mobile vulnerability analysis and mapping (mVAM), informant networks and mobile hotlines. Anthropological studies under the Regional Gender Markets Project were gathering qualitative information about opportunity costs and benefits not usually captured in traditional monitoring; one example was a caregiver programme in Mali. Research on new programme models was looking into expanding WFP's work beyond direct delivery to connecting local demand and supply and enabling smallholder value chains, such as with the yoghurt project in Burkina Faso.

94. The Regional Director drew attention to the alarming hunger situation in areas of the Sahel, in particular Chad, to the importance of maintaining response capacity in the Central African Republic, and to WFP's approach in Nigeria as one model of engagement that required reflection on how to measure impact. She referred to WFP's work to enable national government capacities. Through the regional "look behind the fence" campaign, WFP was stimulating conversation around gender in the workplace.
95. The Board reiterated the extreme vulnerability of the Sahel to continued environmental and security shocks and appealed for increased resources to pre-empt further large-scale crises. Members welcomed the regional bureau's focus on resilience and emergency, regional initiatives on building evidence-based innovative programme models and WFP's focus on addressing structural issues. The Board urged continued and greater coordination with partner agencies to enhance WFP outcomes.

Summary Evaluation Report—Mauritania Country Portfolio (2011–2015) and Management Response (2016/EB.A/17) (for consideration)

96. The Director of Evaluation noted that the country strategy in Mauritania was relevant and well aligned with the operations of the Government and other partners and with WFP's priorities. Support for national safety nets and coordination of logistics had been successful, but there was need to focus more on capacity development for national institutions. The evaluation noted that funding inconsistencies and shortfalls, rapid staff turnover, variable government support, competition for resources and uneasy relations with other United Nations agencies had resulted in uneven implementation, reducing the effectiveness of several programmes. These issues were being addressed.
97. The Regional Director concurred with the evaluation findings, pointing out that partnerships were already being established to broaden the focus of collaboration with the Government and others on promoting resilience and development. She re-emphasized the need for adequate resources, particularly in the form of multi-year unearmarked funding.
98. The Board was pleased by the generally positive evaluation findings, particularly those regarding the drought response and assistance for Malian refugees and the alignment of the portfolio with government policies and programmes, but was concerned that issues such as inadequate M&E, soured relations with United Nations partners, staff turnover and funding shortfalls had constrained outputs and outcomes. Recognizing the challenges of operations in such vast and ecologically fragile geographical areas, the Board recommended that monitoring and reporting be enhanced, and that more attention be given to identifying needs and developing operational synergies.
99. The need for more funding was fully endorsed. The Board was encouraged by WFP's acceptance of the recommendations, which reflected detailed consideration of the challenges identified and the options for addressing them.
100. The Director of Evaluation thanked the Board for its incisive observations, noting that implementation of some recommendations was already in progress.

Asia and the Pacific Portfolio

101. The Regional Director outlined WFP's activities in the shock-prone region, where inequitable growth often saw infrastructure investments prioritized over social spending, ultimately impacting the food and nutrition security of vulnerable groups. WFP's regional presence accounted for 15 percent of WFP's global throughput and would carry forward its 2015 focus on nutrition and building capacity and resilience at community and national levels. Challenges included funding constraints, operational cutbacks, changing political situations and climate volatility, sometimes leading WFP to prioritize depth of intervention over coverage.
102. Having successfully enhanced the response to shocks in the Philippines through CBTs, WFP was assessing the most cash-responsive national safety nets for scale-up. While cross-cutting progress was made in implementing the gender policy and aligning VAM work with national actors, further efforts were needed in M&E, knowledge management, urban programming and protection. The protracted relief and recovery operations (PRROs) in Afghanistan,

Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), Pakistan, the Philippines, Nepal and Myanmar faced substantial resourcing challenges, demonstrating the need to further engage host governments in donor and advocacy capacities, while maintaining traditional donor ties.

103. Close collaboration with host governments and enhanced partnerships, including local civil society and private-sector actors, international finance institutions and inter-agency partnerships, were priorities for future work. WFP's approach would evolve in the context of the post-2015 global agenda, pending direction from the Board: the 2030 Agenda, COP 21, Sendai III and WHS frameworks broadly linked risk mitigation and preparedness, focusing on nationally led responses, to be complemented and supported by WFP.
104. Responding to Board queries, the Regional Director conveyed early lessons learned from the country strategic review process, underscoring that WFP's role was not prescriptive but to sponsor and assist the broad range of national stakeholders involved in identifying gaps and defining longer-term solutions for attaining SDG 2. Regarding WFP's presence in the Pacific, WFP was helping to strengthen the clusters and was taking a more strategic approach to pre-positioning food. Member State advocacy support would be required regarding inter-island shipping issues.

Protracted relief and recovery operations—Democratic People's Republic of Korea 200907 (2016/EB.A/18) (for approval)

105. The Country Director introduced the PRRO, which carried forward WFP's objectives of preventing undernutrition and reducing micronutrient deficiencies among young children and pregnant and lactating women, and helping communities mitigate the effects of recurrent natural disasters. Operations would be reduced from 87 to 60 counties, reflecting a decline in predicted resources, rather than in need. While the Government strove to achieve food self-sufficiency, chronic malnutrition had been compounded by serious drought in 2015, exacerbating the food gap and lack of diet diversity, with 80 percent of households estimated to have inadequate food. The PRRO gave greater emphasis to food-for-assets activities to minimize the impact of natural disasters on communities and inject more diverse foods into the diet. Despite the lack of gender data, women and children would be the main beneficiaries; food-for-disaster-risk-reduction activities would encourage women's community leadership. Together with UNICEF, WFP advocated with the Government for a national nutrition survey to gather up-to-date information.
106. The Board welcomed the PRRO and commended its alignment with SDG 2 and WFP Strategic Objective 2. Noting that malnutrition and stunting rates remained alarmingly high, members endorsed WFP's focus on chronic acute malnutrition targeting women and children, and building of community capacities to respond to natural disasters. Engaging the Government could strengthen its capacity to formulate and implement policies and programmes for addressing the PRRO objectives, and facilitate access to data essential for establishing monitoring and reporting baselines. Recalling the importance of non-discrimination and impartiality in multilateral assistance, and the 2030 Agenda commitment to leaving no one behind, the Board commended WFP's attention to maintaining an enabling environment with the Government. Some Board members stressed the importance of ensuring strict monitoring during implementation of this PRRO. The Secretariat confirmed that monitoring was a significant part of the country office work plan and would continue to be carried out to the same standards as in other countries, to ensure that food assistance reached the people who needed it.
107. The representative of the DPRK expressed his appreciation to WFP, thanked the Executive Board for approving the PRRO, highlighted the food security and nutrition components of his country's ongoing five-year strategy for economic development, and stressed that discussions of humanitarian assistance should never be politicized.

East and Central Africa Portfolio

108. The Regional Director noted that 20 million people in the region faced crisis levels of food insecurity as a result of drought caused by El Niño, displacement, insecurity and, in some cases, political and economic challenges. Governments were supporting WFP and its partners in

food and nutrition programmes, but major additional funding was needed to enable them to continue.

109. Humanitarian operations in South Sudan included rapid response teams and airdrops to reach remote communities; road transport remained essential to support the pre-positioning of food for the coming lean season, including the delivery of food through Eritrea's port for the first time in ten years. In Ethiopia, the logistics cluster was scaling up vital support for large-scale food and nutrition assistance operations, which had strained local systems. Following the decision by the Government of Kenya to close Dadaab refugee camp, WFP and its partners, led by UNHCR, were exploring ways to expedite voluntary returns of refugees while expanding programmes to promote refugee self-reliance, including CBTs and market support.
110. The regional bureau was maximizing efficiencies by promoting development of the market and retail sectors, rolling out biometric food-collection systems and expanding use of the SCOPE system.
111. The Board expressed its approval of WFP's work in East and Central Africa, and urged WFP to work with partners to ensure that the movement of refugees from Dadaab camp to new settlement areas inside Somalia was implemented safely and with respect for people's dignity.

Budget increases to protracted relief and recovery operations—Ethiopia 200712 (2016/EB.A/19)
(for approval)

112. The Country Director introduced the budget revision, which would enable WFP to scale up its support for the national emergency response, in view of increasing relief requirements and rising malnutrition.
113. The Board supported the budget increase, noting that the positive leadership of the Government and its allocation of major funding would help to maximize the effectiveness and sustainability of WFP's operations. Board members recommended that WFP assist the Government in addressing the structural causes of food insecurity through disaster preparedness and prevention of malnutrition. They recommended additional work with the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) and others on enhancing food security and market analysis, cautioning in particular about the use of cash in areas where there were food shortages. In view of the scale and urgency of needs, the Board urged donors to make timely contributions for work in Ethiopia.
114. The Country Director was grateful for the Board's support, noting that disaster risk management and social protection systems were already in place, but needed to be further strengthened. The need for expanding long-term resilience approaches was recognized, but the immediate need to contain rising acute malnutrition and household food insecurity was paramount. Assessments were underway; market analyses in particular would be strengthened, including through the addition of a markets expert. Nutrition monitoring and surveillance would also be improved.
115. The representative of the Government of Ethiopia expressed his country's appreciation of the support received.

Southern Africa Portfolio

116. The Regional Director highlighted the alarming deterioration in food security over the last few months. Following two to three consecutive years of poor and erratic rains linked to El Niño, the region faced its worst drought in 35 years, with the Southern African Development Community (SADC) estimating that up to 40 million people would be food-insecure – 30 percent more than the already high number in the 2015/16 lean season; 21 million were reported to require immediate assistance. Four countries had declared national disasters and SADC was expected to declare a regional disaster in the coming days. High poverty, income inequality, HIV prevalence and levels of stunting exacerbated the situation.
117. WFP's recent declaration of a Level 3 corporate emergency for El Niño-affected countries signalled the urgency of the challenge ahead. WFP was working with SADC to raise awareness and support its regional response capacities; launching and scaling-up direct responses; and working with partners and governments to cover gaps and ensure coordination.

WFP's programmes in priority affected countries aimed to assist 11.5 million people by early 2017 through immediate relief and more medium- to long-term recovery, resilience and development activities. Breaking the cycle of food insecurity was a humanitarian imperative in Southern Africa. Funding shortfalls for these programmes totalled USD 610 million, of which USD 202 million was needed by the end of June.

118. The situation was particularly serious in DRC, where armed conflict compromised food security and put operations at severe risk. Funding shortfalls limited WFP's ability to deliver assistance as planned and were expected to grow.
119. Recalling that 40 years had passed since the Soweto uprising galvanized worldwide efforts to end apartheid, the Regional Director called on donors, partners and governments to support short-, medium- and long-term strategies to end the scourge of drought in southern Africa.

Protracted relief and recovery operations—Zimbabwe 200944 (2016/EB.A/20) (for approval)

120. The Country Director presented the PRRO for Zimbabwe, where climate change and El Niño were exacerbating existing vulnerability, increasing food insecurity and child malnutrition. The Government was committed to achieving zero hunger, and a national zero hunger strategic review had informed the design of WFP's CSP; the PRRO was aligned with this plan.
121. The Board welcomed the PRRO, which incorporated recommendations from the latest country portfolio evaluation, efforts to reduce costs, and consideration of gender issues in all activities and partnerships. Commending WFP's monitoring capacity and relationships with other stakeholders in the country, members supported the PRRO's prioritization of emergency relief while focusing on resilience-building through the creation of sustainable assets, and the shift from food transfers to CBTs according to food availability and the findings of regular market analyses.
122. The Board encouraged the country office to continue enhancing the PRRO's links to national social safety net systems; collaborating with the RBAs and other partners; and increasing attention to smallholder farmers.
123. Thanking the Board for its support and advice, the Country Director confirmed that the PRRO focused on the areas in greatest need and the activities in which WFP could obtain the most impact, moving as many beneficiaries as possible into resilience-building activities. The PRRO addressed three of the five strategic outcomes in the CSP.

Budget increases to protracted relief and recovery operations—Malawi 200692 (2016/EB.A/21) (for approval)

124. The Country Director explained that the budget increase was needed to tackle the deteriorating food and nutrition security situation and continue the strategic shift from relief to recovery and resilience-building.
125. The Board supported the revision, noting that it was an appropriate response to the effects of El Niño, covering both relief and recovery/resilience activities. Members liked the shift to conditional activities and encouraged the country office to link the PRRO's recovery components to those of other organizations and to purchase from local farmers when possible. While urging donors to provide timely contributions for the PRRO, the Board encouraged the country office to enhance coordination with government ministries, including through joint assessments and programme proposals.
126. The Country Director confirmed the commitment to working in partnership, especially with the Government and bilateral organizations. Through the P4P, WFP procured food from a network of 61,000 smallholder farmers in Malawi, switching to regional purchases when local production was insufficient.

Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Overview

127. The Regional Director reported that the 2015/2016 El Niño event was waning, but its effects still threatened food security in the Central American Dry Corridor and Haiti, where WFP activities faced funding gaps. The RBAs were holding a high-level meeting on the Dry Corridor at FAO Headquarters at the end of June.

128. WFP's support to the emergency preparedness and response capacities of governments in South America had facilitated a swift response to the earthquake in Ecuador. For the first time in the region, WFP responded to this Level 2 emergency through an existing government safety net programme, with food and cash assistance supporting host and displaced families to help local communities rebuild their livelihoods.
129. Country offices were designing action plans for implementing the new regional gender strategy, working with beneficiary communities and governments to increase awareness of gender issues.
130. WFP protection activities were designed to support victims of gender violence, reduce the risk of tension in host communities, and work with vulnerable young people to reduce enrolment into gangs and militia.
131. In this region of predominantly middle-income countries, WFP worked mainly with central government counterparts and local community organizations to promote programme sustainability and national ownership. RBA collaboration was based on complementarity and avoiding duplications in areas such as home-grown school feeding, evaluation, information-sharing and communication. Contributions from regional governments were increasing, including through South–South cooperation.
132. The Board thanked WFP for its work in the region, noting that the earthquake response in Ecuador provided a model for other emergency responses.
133. Responding to questions, the Regional Director reported that WFP held local seminars on the use of CBTs in emergency response. The new financial framework and CRF would ensure funding and appropriate indicators for M&E in the region.

Middle East, North Africa, Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Overview

134. The Regional Director underscored the need for sustainable resilience and development efforts in parallel with ongoing emergency responses, especially where lack of education, and food insecurity were root causes of terrorism. Displacement resulting from conflict should be addressed through long-term schemes promoting education, livelihood opportunities and social cohesion. Governments were providing effective support, and WFP was developing modalities for involving partners from planning to implementation and monitoring, with a view to sharing risks and exploiting comparative advantages. New delivery modalities included CBTs and voucher cards accepted by all agencies. The main challenges were insecurity and political uncertainty, which constrained access and delayed deliveries of assistance.
135. The Board commended WFP's work in difficult circumstances, and praised the dedication and professionalism of all staff. The fragility of the context in which WFP had to operate was recognized, particularly the absence of stable government in some countries; Board members emphasized that a collective approach was the only viable way forward. The Board stressed the importance of providing hope for people exhausted by war, emphasizing that confidence in the humanitarian system had to be restored and maintained through resilience programmes for refugees and internally displaced persons, and support for livelihoods and education.
136. The Board noted the negative effects of funding shortfalls, which led to absenteeism from schools, and migration, which was often a dangerous option. Board members recommended that climate-change issues and economic challenges be addressed as part of the inter-agency approach.
137. The Regional Director thanked the Board for its support and donors for the contributions received. Governments were already requesting the United Nations to implement unified responses, and WFP was developing partnerships with United Nations and private-sector agencies to address problems collectively and efficiently. The Regional Director closed by drawing attention to the funding shortfall of USD 1.2 billion, and appealed for generous donor contributions.

Other Business

Oral Report on the Joint Field Visit of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, UN-Women and WFP

138. Members of the group gave an overview of lessons learned, thanking the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic for its hospitality, the United Nations Development Programme for coordinating the mission, and the WFP Secretariat and country office for their assistance. The group had observed WFP technical assistance to government and other partners implementing school feeding programmes, which it identified as the most effective platform for collaboration, not only in building food security but also in raising school attendance rates, strengthening community resilience, livelihoods and capacities, and promoting women's economic empowerment. WFP and UNICEF could collaborate further to improve water and hygiene in schools. The group commended efforts to target the most vulnerable unemployed rural women, who were core agents of the economic, environmental and social change needed to achieve the SDGs. Operations in the Kyrgyz Republic demonstrated the added value of United Nations inter-agency coordination and collaboration, and how such integrated efforts were essential for delivering zero hunger and ensuring that no one was left behind. The group stressed the need for results-oriented collaboration among the RBAs.
139. The representative of the Kyrgyz Republic thanked the Board members for their visit, underscored the real impact of WFP's work, in coordination with the other RBAs, in reducing poverty, building food security and resilience, and empowering women in his country, and appealed for such efforts to continue.
140. The Secretariat recalled that the oral report for information would be supplemented by a document presented to the Board in November, also for information.

Update on Cost Excellence

141. The Executive Director reminded the Board that the Cost Excellence Initiative launched in July 2014 had two main components: i) identifying measures to reduce non-payroll costs across WFP; and ii) exploring the potential for establishing a service centre outside Rome for selected Headquarters operations. Findings of cost, benefit and risk assessments related to the service centre, and an update on the location options would be presented to the Board at consultations in July and September, with a view to seeking support for a plan at the Board's Second Regular Session in November.
142. While welcoming efforts to increase efficiency and effectiveness in WFP, the Board raised concerns about the risks of offshoring – loss of jobs and corporate culture, political and security issues, and effects on WFP's reputation. Referring to a 2009 note on offshoring by the JIU, Board members requested more information on the social and financial costs of the proposal and the longer-term potential savings, taking into account issues such as inflation and exchange rate fluctuations in the selected country, and urged the Secretariat to explore other avenues for making savings.
143. The Executive Director and Secretariat took note of these comments, which would be addressed and discussed at the next consultation.

Address by Staff Representative Bodies to the Board

144. Noting that consultation and communications with management were good, representatives of the Professional Staff Association (PSA) and the Union of General Service Staff (UGSS) noted the current concerns of their memberships.
145. The PSA raised the issue of changes in United Nations administrative regulations that meant that the families of staff serving in hardship duty stations would have to return to their home countries, some of which were war-torn, without guarantees of their safety. Board members were requested to assist these families with visas for residence in their countries. The risk was that there could be fewer qualified staff willing to be deployed to hardship locations. It also expressed concern that pension payments from the United Nations Joint Staff Pension fund for recent retirees were delayed by many months, urging Member States to ask questions of the Pension Fund and

United Nations management; and that the offshoring initiative could have negative ramifications and impact on efficiencies in service provision.

146. The UGSS called on WFP management to introduce the new United Nations mandatory retirement age of 65 years by 2018. It also expressed concern about the proposed cost-efficiency measures, particularly the service centre, which could have repercussions on administrative processes, staff turnover and WFP's capacity to respond to emergencies. These and other costs of changes had to be considered in all decision-making. With a freeze on recruiting General Service staff, many positions were covered by staff on temporary contracts, causing insecurity and disruption.
147. The Executive Director added that WFP was exploring ways of softening the impact of the changed conditions for staff in hardship postings. The United Nations Secretary-General had requested the necessary improvements in pension disbursements.

ANNEX I**Decisions and Recommendations****Adoption of the Agenda**

The Board adopted the Agenda.

13 June 2016

Appointment of the Rapporteur

In accordance with Rule XII of its Rules of Procedure, the Board appointed H.E. Inge Nordang (Norway, List D) Rapporteur of the Annual Session of 2016.

13 June 2016

The decisions and recommendations in the current report will be implemented by the Secretariat in the light of the Board's deliberations, from which the main comments will be reflected in the summary of the work of the session.

Current and Future Strategic Issues

2016/EB.A/1

Opening Remarks by the Executive Director

The Board took note of the presentation by the Executive Director. The main points of the presentation and the Board's comments would be contained in the summary of the work of the session.

13 June 2016

Annual Reports

2016/EB.A/2

Annual Performance Report for 2015

The Board approved the Annual Performance Report for 2015 (WFP/EB.A/2016/4*), noting that it provided a comprehensive record of WFP performance for the year. In accordance with General Regulation VI.3, and pursuant to its decisions 2000/EB.A/2 and 2004/EB.A/11 and to ECOSOC's resolution E/2013/L.17 and the FAO Council's decision at its 148th Session in 2013, the Board requested that the Annual Performance Report for 2015 be forwarded to ECOSOC and the FAO Council, along with the present decision and the Board's decisions and recommendations for 2015.

14 June 2016

Policy Issues

2016/EB.A/3

WFP Strategic Plan (2017–2021)

The Board took note of "WFP Strategic Plan (2017–2021)" (WFP/EB.A/2016/5-A) and reaffirmed its support to WFP's commitment to aligning its operations with the 2030 Agenda. The Board looked forward to the final draft of "WFP Strategic Plan (2017–2021)", which would be submitted for its approval during EB.2/2016, taking into account the issues raised by the Board during its discussion.

14 June 2016

2016/EB.A/4 **Policy on Country Strategic Plans**
 The Board took note of “Policy on Country Strategic Plans” (WFP/EB.A/2016/5-B*). The Board looked forward to the final draft of “Policy on Country Strategic Plans”, which would be submitted for its approval during EB.2/2016, taking into account the issues raised by the Board during its discussion.

14 June 2016

2016/EB.A/5 **Update on the Financial Framework Review**
 Having considered “Update on the Financial Framework Review” (WFP/EB.A/2016/5-C/1*) the Board:

- i) took note of the ongoing work on the Financial Framework Review; and
- ii) looked forward to the conclusions of the Financial Framework Review, including a country portfolio budgeting and planning structure, to be presented for approval at the 2016 Second Regular Session.

The Board also took note of the comments of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) (WFP/EB.A/2016/6(A,B,C,D,E,F,G,H,I,J)/2, WFP/EB.A/2016/5-C/2), and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Finance Committee (WFP/EB.A/2016/6(A,B,C,D,E,F,G,H,I,J)/3, WFP/EB.A/2016/6-C/3).

14 June 2016

2016/EB.A/6 **Update on WFP’s Role in Collective Humanitarian Response**
 The Board took note of “Update on WFP’s Role in Collective Humanitarian Response” (WFP/EB.A/2016/5-E).

14 June 2016

Resource, Financial and Budgetary Matters

2016/EB.A/7 **Audited Annual Accounts, 2015**
 The Board:

- i) approved the 2015 Annual Financial Statements of WFP, together with the Report of the External Auditor, pursuant to General Regulation XIV.6 (b);
- ii) noted the funding from the General Fund of USD 3,914,774.27 during 2015 for the write-off of receivables; and
- iii) noted post-delivery losses of commodities during 2015 forming part of the operating expenses for the same period.

The Board also took note of the comments of the ACABQ (WFP/EB.A/2016/6(A,B,C,D,E,F,G,H,I,J)/2, WFP/EB.A/2016/5-C/2), and the FAO Finance Committee (WFP/EB.A/2016/6(A,B,C,D,E,F,G,H,I,J)/3, WFP/EB.A/2016/6-C/3).

15 June 2016

2016/EB.A/8

Appointment of Two Executive Board Members to the Selection Panel for the Appointment of Two Members of the Audit Committee

The Board approved the following appointments to the selection panel of Audit Committee members in relation to the selection of two Audit Committee members:

- H.E. Mohammed S.L. Sheriff, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Liberia, as representative of the Executive Board
- Dr Md Mafizur Rahman, Economic Counsellor, Alternate Permanent Representative of Bangladesh, as representative of the Executive Board

and requested the selection panel to report its recommendations to the Executive Director and the President of the Board.

The Board also took note of the comments of the ACABQ (WFP/EB.A/2016/6(A,B,C,D,E,F,G,H,I,J)/2, WFP/EB.A/2016/5-C/2), and the FAO Finance Committee (WFP/EB.A/2016/6(A,B,C,D,E,F,G,H,I,J)/3, WFP/EB.A/2016/6-C/3).

15 June 2016

2016/EB.A/9

Use of the Immediate Response Account for Preparedness Activities

Having considered the recommendations of the Secretariat in document WFP/EB.A/2016/6-C/1, the Board approved use of the Immediate Response Account for preparedness activities up to a limit of USD 6 million per annum.

The Board also took note of the comments of the ACABQ (WFP/EB.A/2016/6(A,B,C,D,E,F,G,H,I,J)/2, WFP/EB.A/2016/5-C/2), and the FAO Finance Committee (WFP/EB.A/2016/6(A,B,C,D,E,F,G,H,I,J)/3, WFP/EB.A/2016/6-C/3).

15 June 2016

2016/EB.A/10

Annual Report of the Audit Committee

The Board took note of “Annual Report of the Audit Committee” (WFP/EB.A/2016/6-D/1/Rev.2).

The Board also took note of the comments of the ACABQ (WFP/EB.A/2016/6(A,B,C,D,E,F,G,H,I,J)/2, WFP/EB.A/2016/5-C/2), and the FAO Finance Committee (WFP/EB.A/2016/6(A,B,C,D,E,F,G,H,I,J)/3, WFP/EB.A/2016/6-C/3).

15 June 2016

- 2016/EB.A/11 **Annual Report of the Inspector General and Note by the Executive Director**
- The Board took note of “Annual Report of the Inspector General” (WFP/EB.A/2016/6-E/1) and noted that the oversight work performed and reported did not disclose any significant weaknesses in the internal control, governance or risk management processes in place across WFP that would have a pervasive effect on the achievement of WFP’s objectives.
- The Board encouraged management to take advantage of the opportunities for improvement highlighted in the report.
- The Board also took note of the comments of the ACABQ (WFP/EB.A/2016/6(A,B,C,D,E,F,G,H,I,J)/2, WFP/EB.A/2016/5-C/2), and the FAO Finance Committee (WFP/EB.A/2016/6(A,B,C,D,E,F,G,H,I,J)/3, WFP/EB.A/2016/6-C/3).
- 15 June 2016*
- 2016/EB.A/12 **Report of the External Auditor on the School Feeding Programme and WFP Management Response**
- The Board took note of “Report of the External Auditor on the School Feeding Programme” (WFP/EB.A/2016/6-F/1) and the WFP management response in WFP/EB.A/2016/6-F/1/Add.1, and encouraged further action on the recommendations, taking into account considerations raised by the Board during its discussion.
- The Board also took note of the comments of the ACABQ (WFP/EB.A/2016/6(A,B,C,D,E,F,G,H,I,J)/2, WFP/EB.A/2016/5-C/2), and the FAO Finance Committee (WFP/EB.A/2016/6(A,B,C,D,E,F,G,H,I,J)/3, WFP/EB.A/2016/6-C/3).
- 15 June 2016*
- 2016/EB.A/13 **Report of the External Auditor on WFP Aviation and WFP Management Response**
- The Board took note of “Report of the External Auditor on WFP Aviation” (WFP/EB.A/2016/6-G/1) and the WFP management response in WFP/EB.A/2016/6-G/1/Add.1, and encouraged further action on the recommendations, taking into account considerations raised by the Board during its discussion.
- The Board also took note of the comments of the ACABQ (WFP/EB.A/2016/6(A,B,C,D,E,F,G,H,I,J)/2, WFP/EB.A/2016/5-C/2), and the FAO Finance Committee (WFP/EB.A/2016/6(A,B,C,D,E,F,G,H,I,J)/3, WFP/EB.A/2016/6-C/3).
- 15 June 2016*
- 2016/EB.A/14 **Report on the Implementation of the External Auditor Recommendations**
- The Board took note of “Report on the Implementation of the External Auditor Recommendations” (WFP/EB.A/2016/6-H/1).
- The Board also took note of the comments of the ACABQ (WFP/EB.A/2016/6(A,B,C,D,E,F,G,H,I,J)/2, WFP/EB.A/2016/5-C/2), and the FAO Finance Committee (WFP/EB.A/2016/6(A,B,C,D,E,F,G,H,I,J)/3, WFP/EB.A/2016/6-C/3).
- 15 June 2016*

2016/EB.A/15 **Report on the Utilization of WFP’s Advance Financing Mechanisms (1 January–31 December 2015)**

The Board took note of “Report on the Utilization of WFP’s Advance Financing Mechanisms (1 January–31 December 2015)” (WFP/EB.A/2016/6-I/1*).

The Board also took note of the comments of the ACABQ (WFP/EB.A/2016/6(A,B,C,D,E,F,G,H,I,J)/2, WFP/EB.A/2016/5-C/2), and the FAO Finance Committee (WFP/EB.A/2016/6(A,B,C,D,E,F,G,H,I,J)/3, WFP/EB.A/2016/6-C/3).

15 June 2016

Evaluation Reports

2016/EB.A/16 **Annual Evaluation Report, 2015**

The Board took note of “Annual Evaluation Report, 2015” (WFP/EB.A/2016/7-A*) and the management response in WFP/EB.A/2016/7-A/Add.1, and encouraged further action on the recommendations, taking into account considerations raised by the Board during its discussion.

16 June 2016

West Africa Portfolio

2016/EB.A/17 **Summary Evaluation Report — Mauritania Country Portfolio (2011–2015) and Management Response**

The Board took note of “Summary Evaluation Report – Mauritania Country Portfolio (2011–2015)” (WFP/EB.A/2016/7-B/Rev.1 and the management response in WFP/EB.A/2016/7-B/Add.1, and encouraged further action on the recommendations, taking into account considerations raised by the Board during its discussion.

16 June 2016

Asia and the Pacific Portfolio

2016/EB.A/18 **Protracted relief and recovery operations — Democratic People’s Republic of Korea 200907**

The Board approved the proposed protracted relief and recovery operation Democratic People’s Republic of Korea 200907 “Nutrition Support for Children and Women and Strengthening Community Capacity to Reduce Disaster Risks” (WFP/EB.A/2016/8-A/1/Rev.1).

16 June 2016

East and Central Africa Portfolio**2016/EB.A/19 Budget increases to protracted relief and recovery operations — Ethiopia 200712**

The Board approved the proposed budget increase of USD 186 million for Ethiopia protracted relief and recovery operation 200712 – Responding to Humanitarian Crises and Transitioning Food-Insecure Groups to More Resilient Strategies (WFP/EB.A/2016/8-B/1*).

16 June 2016

Southern Africa Portfolio**2016/EB.A/20 Protracted relief and recovery operations — Zimbabwe 200944**

The Board approved the proposed protracted relief and recovery operation Zimbabwe 200944 “Building Resilience for Zero Hunger” (WFP/EB.A/2016/8-A/2).

16 June 2016

2016/EB.A/21 Budget increases to protracted relief and recovery operations — Malawi 200692

The Board approved the proposed budget increase of USD 257 million for Malawi protracted relief and recovery operation 200692 – Responding to Humanitarian Needs and Strengthening Resilience, with a nine-month extension from 1 April 2017 to 31 December 2017 (WFP/EB.A/2016/8-B/2).

16 June 2016

Summary of the Work of the Executive Board**2016/EB.A/22 Summary of the Work of the First Regular Session of the Executive Board**

The Board approved the document “Draft Summary of the Work of the First Regular Session of the Executive Board, 2016”, the final version of which would be embodied in the document WFP/EB.1/2016/14.

17 June 2016

ANNEX II**Provisional Agenda**

1. ***Adoption of the Agenda (for approval)***
2. ***Appointment of the Rapporteur***
Special Address by His Holiness Pope Francis
3. ***Opening Remarks by the Executive Director***
4. ***Annual Reports***
 - ***Annual Performance Report for 2015 (for approval)***
5. ***Policy Issues***
 - a) ***WFP Strategic Plan (2017–2021) (for consideration)***
 - b) ***Policy on Country Strategic Plans (for consideration)***
 - c) ***Update on the Financial Framework Review (for consideration)***
 - d) ***Update on the Integrated Road Map for the Strategic Plan (2017–2021), the Corporate Results Framework, the Policy on Country Strategic Plans and the Financial Framework Review (for information)***
 - e) ***Update on WFP's Role in Collective Humanitarian Response (for consideration)***
 - f) ***Update on the Gender Policy (for information)***
 - g) ***Update on WFP's Response to HIV and AIDS (for information)***
6. ***Resource, Financial and Budgetary Matters***
 - a) ***Audited Annual Accounts, 2015 (for approval)***
 - b) ***Appointment of Two Executive Board Members to the Selection Panel for the Appointment of Two Members of the Audit Committee (for approval)***
 - c) ***Use of the Immediate Response Account for Preparedness Activities (for approval)***
 - d) ***Annual Report of the Audit Committee (for consideration)***
 - e) ***Annual Report of the Inspector General (for consideration) and Note by the Executive Director (for consideration)***
 - f) ***Report of the External Auditor on the School Feeding Programme (for consideration) and WFP Management Response (for consideration)***
 - g) ***Report of the External Auditor on WFP Aviation (for consideration) and WFP Management Response (for consideration)***
 - h) ***Report on the Implementation of the External Auditor Recommendations (for consideration)***
 - i) ***Report on the Utilization of WFP's Advance Financing Mechanisms (1 January–31 December 2015) (for consideration)***
 - j) ***Report of the Executive Director on the Utilization of Contributions and Waivers of Costs (General Rules XII.4 and XIII.4 (h)) (for information)***
7. ***Evaluation Reports***
 - a) ***Annual Evaluation Report, 2015 and Management Response (for consideration)***
 - b) ***Summary Evaluation Report – Mauritania Country Portfolio and Management Response (for consideration)***
 - c) ***Implementation Status of Evaluation Recommendations (for information)***

Operational Matters

8. ***Projects for Executive Board Approval (for approval)***
 - a) Protracted relief and recovery operations
 - Democratic People's Republic of Korea 200907
 - Zimbabwe 200944
 - b) Budget increases to protracted relief and recovery operations
 - Ethiopia 200712
 - Malawi 200692
9. ***Organizational and Procedural Matters***
 - Biennial Programme of Work of the Executive Board (2016–2017) *(for information)*
10. ***Administrative and Managerial Matters***
 - a) Address by Staff Representative Bodies to the Board
 - b) Report on Post-Delivery Losses for the Period 1 January–31 December 2015 *(for information)*
 - c) Update on Food Procurement *(for information)*
 - d) Statistical Report on International Professional Staff and Higher Categories *(for information)*
 - e) Security Report *(for information)*
11. ***Summary of the Work of the First Regular Session of the Executive Board, 2016 (for approval)***
12. ***Other Business***
 - a) Oral Report on the Joint Field Visit of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, UN-Women and WFP *(for information)*
 - b) Update on Cost Excellence *(for information)*
13. ***Verification of Adopted Decisions and Recommendations***

Acronyms Used in the Document

AC	Audit Committee
APR	Annual Performance Report
CBT	cash-based transfer
COP 21	21st Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
CRF	Corporate Results Framework
CSP	Country Strategic Plan
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
EFSG	Evaluation Function Steering Group
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FFR	Financial Framework Review
IRA	Immediate Response Account
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
mVAM	mobile vulnerability and mapping
OEV	Office of Evaluation
OIG	Office of the Inspector General
P4P	Purchase for Progress
PRRO	protracted relief and recovery operation
PSA	Professional Staff Association
PSEA	protection from sexual exploitation and abuse
RBA	Rome-based agency
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UGSS	Union of General Service Staff
UNHAS	United Nations Humanitarian Air Service
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WHO	World Health Organization
WHS	World Humanitarian Summit