

First Regular Session of the Executive Board, 2013

Intervention by OMP RD, Gemmo Lodesani

In my presentation I will discuss two main topics that are top priorities for us at the moment: 1) resilience building in Central and South America, and 2) the situation in Haiti.

Central America

The Central American Dry Corridor is an area of chronic drought and high levels of food insecurity. Last June, WFP, the Central American Integration Bank and the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation, hosted a regional meeting in Antigua, Guatemala, to discuss scale-up of resilience efforts in the region.

The meeting resulted in a mobilization of partners to form a Resilience Alliance with key Central American organizations, WFP and FAO; developing a Plan of Action with four components: 1) Restoring ecosystems through a water-shed based approach; 2) Institutional strengthening and development of local capacities; 3) Systems of production, sustainable livelihoods and commercialization; and 4) Knowledge Sharing.

WFP's programmatic role under this Plan will be to scale-up ongoing CP activities in our COs, such as sustainable asset-building activities for reforestation, soil and water conservation in Honduras, Nicaragua and Guatemala. In El Salvador, we are encouraging South-South cooperation, through the exchange of best practices from Guatemala on resilience building. And through P4P, we are also promoting best practices and environmentally friendly agricultural techniques to avoid soil erosion and improve grain storage.

To enhance emergency preparedness WFP is also working closely with the Central American Regional Emergency Body (CEPRENAC) and IFRC on strengthening government capacities, early warning systems and advocating for priority status to speed up the movement of humanitarian goods and staff in Central America.

Andean region

In the Andean region, WFP is working on climate change adaptation and resilience building. Alarming warming trends are causing the melting of snow mass in a number of the Andean glaciers; this glacial retreat is contributing to weather extremes and high food insecurity.

WFP has already developed an Atlas of Food Security and Climate Change for the Andean Region. The tool will be very useful to support government efforts to prioritize and target climate change adaptation activities.

In partnership with UN Women, we are now developing a regional project with the **Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru and Colombia** COs to increase resilience through climate change adaptation activities focused on strengthening food security, with an emphasis on the empowerment of women.

During implementation of this project, which is planned from 2013 to 2018, the strategy will be to focus on aligning activities with government priorities, adopting a decentralized approach focused on communities and ecosystems, and encouraging broad participation while incorporating traditional knowledge.

Within this strategy, three components will be developed: 1) Capacity Building, 2) Knowledge Generation and Sharing, and 3) Resilience Building.

The project proposal is based on commitments made by the Governments of Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru in prioritizing climate change adaptation measures within the context of food security, with an emphasis on gender issues. The commitment to and ownership of the project has been confirmed during a highly participatory consultation process with government representatives.

Haiti

Finally, I would like to discuss progress in Haiti.

Haiti is at a critical stage in its evolution towards a functional state and towards sustainable development. The recovery from the earthquake has made important advancement. On the development as well as on the recovery front, national and local authorities now have to demonstrate engagement and concrete steps ahead, by reinforcing capacity and focus on a set of very simple and basic priorities, building on progress made so far. Lack of timely results on this front will offset even the most loyal donors, development and humanitarian partners.

As the country is facing a severe food security crisis that will last until the June harvest, there is need for national and local authorities to take leadership for the formulation of clear plans and to collaborate with the international community for their implementation. Timely results on this front would be a positive indication of commitment for donors as well as for humanitarian and development partners.

WFP stands ready to support authorities to properly target the needs of the vulnerable. We are currently contributing to building local capacity through the food security and the logistics groups under the transitional agenda. We have started to implement cash for work activities and take home rations, and now need tangible demonstration by the

government of its engagement in gradually taking over the school meals and local procurement program.

The signature in December 2012 by the Prime Minister of an agreement with WFP for the development of a sustainable school meals program marks a landmark success for the GOH and WFP as well as for the donors who have committed and supported us in this endeavor. We would like now to work closely with the government and donors for the timely implementation of this agreement -under the leadership of the National School Meals Program of the Ministry of Education- and around two key priorities:

1. the establishment of a legal framework and,
2. the development of a joint fund raising strategy that includes the mobilization, as established in the MOU, of US\$ 10 million from the national budget for the School Meal Program for the current school year.

The challenge for 2013 is to work with the government within the new aid coordination framework (CAED), to ensure a sustainable focus on key priorities outlined in the food security framework developed in 2012. These include school feeding, local procurement, watershed management and emergency preparedness and response. It is key to obtain results in these areas and avoid dispersing scarce resources and capacity in too broad a spectrum of initiatives.

Thank you.