

EXECUTIVE BOARD – OMC RD STATEMENT
FEBRUARY 2013

INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW OF CHANGES IN WFP OMC REGION

- Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

- The MENA region continues to suffer from the effects of the **global economic slowdown through food and fuel price volatility, reductions in trade, revenue, reduced foreign investment and tourism**. This has further resulted into increased **unemployment** and **higher food insecurity**. Most countries in the region are categorized as Middle income countries, this needs further consideration.

- The **increased displacement and movement** across the region is placing additional pressure on local economies; triggering inflation and draining governments' expenditures on social safety nets and subsidies.

- **Malnutrition rates** are on the rise and many suffer from micronutrient deficiencies. In addition, the **annual losses in grains** are estimated at more than 60 percent of production across the whole Near East region.

- In **Central Asia**, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are also facing serious food security challenges mostly driven by increase in food prices and poor harvests. In addition, small scale but widespread natural disasters present an extra risk threatening the livelihoods of many in this region.

ODC PORTFOLIO

- **The OMC portfolio includes 23 active operations in 15 countries. The planned support for 13.5 million beneficiaries is valued at US\$1.5 billion. As of this month, Sudan CO is now part of the regional portfolio; the Sudan CO will be providing support to 3.6 million beneficiaries.**

- On the other hand, WFP has closed the office in **Libya** by the end of 2012 in line with our exit strategy and marking the gradual increase in the level of social assistance provided by the Government. WFP will however continue to have oversight responsibility and upon the request of the government of Libya, we will also continue to provide technical support to the government to enhance their safety net programmes.

REGIONAL STRATEGY IN 2013

- **OMC regional strategy for 2013 will continue to focus on scaling up of humanitarian response while supporting stabilization & recovery efforts and building the resilience of the vulnerable communities.**
- Strategic focus is placed on: i) Strengthening **emergency disaster/preparedness and response**; ii) Developing and implementing clear early **recovery/ resilience strategy** where possible; iii) Enhancing **national food security through enhancing Food Subsidy and Safety Nets Systems** and iv) **Contributing to improving regional nutrition and addressing 'hidden hunger'**.

OMC ACTIVITIES IN 2013

I) EMERGENCY RESPONSE;

- Almost three quarters of OMC beneficiaries are supported through EMOP operations.
- In 2013, WFP's emergency operation in **Yemen** is targeting nearly **five million** people and focuses on three main areas: food assistance under the **emergency safety net activity to 3.5 million** food insecure and vulnerable people and **cash transfers for another 400,000**; **food assistance to 500,000 IDPs**, war affected populations and returnees; and **nutrition support for 400,000 children under five** and almost **160,000 pregnant women and nursing mothers**. WFP Yemen will also continue to implement and expand other existing operations in 2013, including **support to school girls** and their families as well as **refugees**.
- Total cost of all Yemen operations in 2013 is more than US\$ 250 million. Funding is a major constraint, with only 24 percent of total operations funded at the beginning of February [The overall shortfall for the EMOP is US\$ 176 million, with an urgent requirement US\$ 79 million through June]. Faced with the funding and food shortages, WFP in February reduced rations by half for 60 percent of the 490,000 beneficiaries under programmes to assist IDP's, war-affected populations and returnees. The reductions, hopefully temporary, will enable WFP to continue distributions to April.
- In **Sudan**, in 2013, WFP will assist the populations affected by conflict in **South Kordofan** through General Food Distribution and Targeted Supplementary

Feeding Programmes as well as through community based Food for Assets and emergency school feeding programmes, provided there is stability and sustainable access. In order to build resilience, almost 40 percent of those assisted in Darfur are enrolled in 2013 in recovery programmes which lay the ground for WFP's exit strategy in Darfur.

II) DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING CLEAR EARLY RECOVERY/ RESILIENCE STRATEGY BUILDING RESILIENCE

- Another example for resilience in the region is WFP's overall approach in **Palestine** with focus on developing strong partnerships that promote Relief, Resilience and Preparedness (RRP).

III) ENHANCING NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY THROUGH ENHANCING FOOD SUBSIDY PROGRAMMES, SAFETY NETS SYSTEMS AND FOOD MONITORING SYSTEMS

- **In addition to supporting governments through the provision of capacity development activities; WFP is providing direct support to safety net programmes:**
- In **Jordan**, responding to the Government's request WFP is planning to expand since 2013 its country operations in Jordan through supporting social safety nets system and providing more substantial assistance to food insecure and vulnerable Jordanians.
- WFP plans to **expand its school feeding programmes** in **Armenia, Tajikistan, Iraq** and other countries while building the capacity of the Governments to ensure future suitability of the programme.
- Two **new School feeding programmes** in **Jordan** and **Kyrgyzstan** will be launched in 2013. For the first time, OMC is also introducing **two capacity development activities** in **Morocco** and **Tunisia** with the objective of enhancing national capacity in running the national school feeding programmes.
- WFP is also expanding the implementation of **cash and voucher (C&V) activities in the region**. C&V activities are now implemented in 7 operations with a total value of US\$ 236.2 million (excluding Sudan). In addition to voucher programmes implemented in **Egypt, Iraq, Palestine, Yemen, Lebanon,**

Jordan, Turkey and Darfur, Tajikistan launched its first ever cash transfer project benefiting 7000 people.

PARTNERSHIPS

- We coordinate closely with the UN, Rome-based agencies, intergovernmental organizations such as League of Arab States and Organization of Islamic Conference, International and national NGOs and others. In addition, over the last quarter, OMC held three regional meetings with key partners and donors to enhance communication at the regional level.

CONCLUSION

- Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,
- Thank you for all your support.