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WFP/EB.A/2016/6-C/1

Resource, Financial and Budgetary Matters

For approval

Executive Board documents are available on WFP's Website (<http://executiveboard.wfp.org>).

Use of the Immediate Response Account for Preparedness Activities

Draft decision*

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

Introduction

1. The Immediate Response Account (IRA) was established in 1991 as a flexible, replenishable multilateral funding mechanism to provide WFP with immediate access to resources for rapid responses.
2. Following a review in 2004,¹ the Board increased the annual target level of the IRA from USD 35 million to USD 70 million and decided that it could be used to fund the following preparedness activities up to a limit of USD 2 million per year when there is no alternative and viable funding source:
 - capacity assessments for logistics, telecommunications and procurement;
 - contingency planning and emergency preparedness;
 - needs assessments, vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM), targeting and technical appraisals; and
 - baseline analyses and surveys.

* This is a draft decision. For the final decision adopted by the Board, please refer to the Decisions and Recommendations document issued at the end of the session.

¹ WFP/EB.3/2004/12-A.

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3. This USD 2 million Immediate Response Account for Preparedness (IR-PREP) facility is used to fund exceptional preparedness activities when no alternative is available. This situation might arise if there is no WFP presence in a country, an emergency appears to be imminent or if there is a need for immediate investment in emergency preparedness.

Current Status

4. The IR-PREP facility has been used regularly since 2005 (Table 1).

Year	No. of preparedness allocations approved	Total allocated (USD million)
2005	4	0.48
2006	3	0.61
2007	8	1.17
2008	13	1.68
2009	7	0.93
2010	9	1.39
2011	8	1.51
2012	8	1.22
2013	8	1.37
2014	3	0.45
2015	11	1.73

5. The increase in 2015 of IR-PREP requests at the country-office level included preparedness activities in relation to contentious elections in Burundi and Haiti and investments in countries with no previous WFP presence. The current El Niño phenomenon led to preparedness activities for country offices in Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Colombia, Ecuador, Haiti, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru and Zambia, and a regional operation in southern Africa; these focused on improved early-warning systems, enhanced assessment capabilities and building capacities to respond to emergencies.
6. Because WFP was unable to meet all the requests made in 2015 for IR-PREP funding related to El Niño within the USD 2 million ceiling, allocations to Colombia, Ecuador and Papua New Guinea were postponed to January 2016. Between January and April 2016, WFP approved preparedness activities in Armenia, the Central African Republic and Nigeria, which included: i) missions to develop access strategies and obtain food security data to inform responses; ii) specialist missions to assess modalities such as cash-based transfers in rural areas; iii) joint capacity and needs assessments with other agencies; and iv) expansion of the mobile VAM platform.
7. The increasingly unpredictable and challenging environments in which WFP operates require it to adapt its approach to emergency preparedness. In this context, a pilot study initiated by WFP and the United Nations Children's Fund found that the average financial return on investment for humanitarian preparedness interventions is more than 200 percent – partly because of lower costs and reduced response times – supporting the case for providing early funding for emergency preparedness with a view to ensuring quicker and more efficient responses.
8. Climate change, urbanization, insecurity and the changing political situation affect the planning and implementation of emergency operations: on the basis of current trends the approved ceiling of USD 2 million for preparedness activities is insufficient to address anticipated requirements.

Recommendation

9. WFP's response capacity requires adequate resources to be available at any time to enable rapid and effective response in the event of an emergency.
10. The IRA annual target level is currently USD 200 million but the authority for its use to fund preparedness activities has been unchanged at USD 2 million since 2004, even though WFP faces increasing calls for joint preparedness activities with partners.
11. The Secretariat therefore proposes a revised IR-PREP limit of USD 6 million per annum. This would enable support for:
 - enhancement of WFP's emergency preparedness planning processes;
 - establishment of baselines for responses through capacity assessments, needs assessments, VAM, targeting and technical appraisals;
 - enhancement of WFP's supply-chain, telecommunications and engineering services; and
 - enhancement of partners' capacities for joint responses to emergencies.

Acronyms Used in the Document

IRA	Immediate Response Account
IR-PREP	Immediate Response Account for Preparedness (facility)
VAM	vulnerability analysis and mapping