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Programme
Alimentaire
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World
Food
Programme

Programa
Mundial
de Alimentos

**Executive Board
Second Regular Session**

Rome, 9–12 November 2009



Distribution: GENERAL

WFP/EB.2/2009/15

11 February 2010

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

SUMMARY OF THE WORK OF THE SECOND REGULAR SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD, 2009

In accordance with the methods of work of the Executive Board, the present document reflects the main points of its deliberations to be taken into account by the Secretariat in the implementation of the Board's decisions and recommendations, contained in the document WFP/EB.2/2009/14.

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CURRENT AND FUTURE STRATEGIC ISSUES

Opening Remarks by the Executive Director (2009/EB.2/1)

1. The Executive Director opened the Session by leading a tribute to WFP staff who had lost their lives or been injured in Pakistan, and expressing appreciation for condolences received. WFP was committed to continuing undeterred with its humanitarian work, and the tragedy illustrated the strength and dedication of its staff. The Executive Director noted that WFP's security precautions in Islamabad, such as a carefully selected building, control measures to deter car bombs, reinforcement of walls and blast film on windows, had been effective in reducing the number of casualties. The importance of security awareness, advanced first aid, and driver training were underscored, and were being rolled out.
2. WFP was reforming and retooling to address new opportunities and challenges, the most pressing of which was the 1 billion hungry people in the world and multiple crises triggered by extreme weather, the economic downturn, conflict, and other events. Among the opportunities was the elevation of food security to the top of the global agenda, as seen at the G8 summit in L'Aquila, the African Union and other fora. To maximize this opportunity, the three Rome-based agencies renewed their commitment to combine their respective competencies for a stronger whole to better serve hungry people. At an historic meeting of the three Rome-based agencies on 4 November, a new era of cooperation was launched. This would build on a record of collaboration in over 70 countries, including a Memorandum of Understanding with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) for work in Purchase for Progress (P4P) countries, aimed at promoting long-term food security. Looking ahead, the agencies agreed to move forward on three points: they would hold regular senior-level meetings; issue guidance to country teams with model food security texts for United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) and country-led Poverty Reduction Strategies; and continue to collaborate on joint programmes and continued cost savings through joint procurement and administrative activities.
3. Thanking the donors for their generosity, the Executive Director recognized that 2009 had been a difficult year due to the economic crisis. To maximize the impact of its funding, WFP had enacted a number of measures to improve financial management, transparency, discipline and accountability. She mentioned initiatives already launched, including the introduction of International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS), the unqualified audit opinion given by the External Auditor on the first audited accounts fully compliant with IPSAS, the launch of the WFP Information Network and Global System II (WINGS II) and the establishment of the Strategic Resource Allocation Committee (SRAC).
4. As part of the financial framework review, the Executive Director had called on country offices to apply increased discipline, accountability and transparency in protracted relief and recovery operations (PRROs), tying them directly to the shocks that originated the operation. Funding windows and programme categories were being reviewed, and the Programme Review Committee had been recentralized. A fast-track working group was proposed to work in collaboration with the Board on the differentiation between emergencies, relief, early recovery, recovery and development, and harmonizing these definitions between agencies. Together these would make WFP better, stronger, more efficient and more effective.
5. The Board was unanimous in its condolences for staff who had been killed or injured and in condemnation of the atrocities. Board members urged all governments to prioritize



the safety and security of humanitarian staff and to guarantee safe and unhindered access for United Nations interventions. WFP's plans to further improve field security was widely endorsed.

6. Board members strongly endorsed the Secretariat's collaboration with its Rome-based partners, as well as continued work with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), governments and the private sector. The Board welcomed the new approaches, which would lead to increased efficiency and greater operational impact; several delegations urged WFP to assess and prioritize the options, particularly where there was a risk of duplication of effort. Board members were encouraged by the recent revitalization and initiatives of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS). A motion was made to strengthen the language in the "Directions for Collaboration Among the Rome-Based Agencies" paper to reflect recent work and the reformed CFS.
7. Board members looked forward to results of WFP's review of its financial framework. There was strong support for the review of WFP's programme categories aimed at bringing interventions into alignment with United Nations approaches and national priorities. Some representations stressed the need for more untied multilateral and multi-year funding to enable WFP to take advantage of market opportunities in its procurement processes and to develop long-term solutions to hunger. Enhanced financial management structures would enable WFP to improve its accounting procedures – the introduction of IPSAS and WINGS II were welcomed in this respect – but there was a need to develop measurement systems to record and analyse results. Several Board members applauded WFP's work to address issues of cost-effectiveness and efficiency: the establishment of the SRAC, for example, was welcomed as a positive move in this direction. The Secretariat was urged to complete the financial framework review as soon as possible. The Board accepted the need for the large programme of work proposed in view of persisting high food prices and other issues. Particular mention was made of the challenges in Afghanistan, Gaza, Pakistan and Somalia.
8. In view of the discouraging economic outlook, Board members urged WFP to prioritize its programmes to target the most vulnerable; with reduced trade and remittances from abroad, the problems in many countries were expected to worsen. Several Board members noted the progress made in risk management, particularly in innovations such as weather-related insurance. Board members also supported the development of improved early-warning systems, especially in collaboration with other agencies. Multilateral partnerships were an essential means of addressing humanitarian issues, which could not be tackled by any single organization. Board members noted that local knowledge should be tapped into where possible. Part of WFP's work should be proactive interventions that reduce food insecurity in the long term: several Board members saw the need for WFP to make sustainability a priority. On the other hand, WFP should always maintain its rapid-reaction capabilities for emergencies.
9. Board members particularly commended innovative approaches such as P4P and cash and voucher systems and warmly supported safety net programmes such as school feeding, with a number of members urging expansion of these programmes. But the Secretariat was encouraged to ensure that the root causes of hunger were addressed as the main long-term solution: food access, capacity development, support for small farmers, empowerment of women and increased use of local capacities should be priorities. The need to balance WFP's emergency response work with programmes that addressed recovery and development was stressed by several Board members; there were also calls for WFP to develop its role in the cluster system, particularly with regard to the proposed food-security cluster. The Board recommended that WFP should avoid a "business-as-usual" approach and focus instead on new approaches.



10. In response, the Executive Director agreed that WFP aimed to increase its visibility and to become a centre of action with the Rome-based agencies on food security solutions. Discussions on a food-security cluster were ongoing, along with work on developing common needs assessments. The financial framework and programme category reviews were management priorities: transparency was a major theme in developing systems to ease interactions between WFP and donors.
11. The Executive Director warmly thanked donors that had made multi-year unearmarked funding available, especially in the current situation, which gave WFP the option to procure food under favourable market conditions. The Executive Director concluded by thanking the Board for its continued support in difficult times.

POLICY ISSUES

WFP School Feeding Policy (2009/EB.2/2) (*for consideration*)

12. In presenting the document, the Secretariat emphasized that the proposed policy constituted an investment in the future in terms of well-nourished schoolchildren growing up to be productive adults with food-secure families. The emphasis was on school feeding as a social protection instrument that addressed Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 1, 2 and 3, and on sustainability under government ownership; the policy was in line with WFP's move to food assistance. The Secretariat acknowledged the support of partners, particularly the World Bank, and the value of WFP's 45 years of experience in the field. This showed that school feeding could improve educational outcomes, reduce negative coping mechanisms and promote long-term community development. The document set out five stages of transition to government ownership and a set of quality standards for sustainable school feeding programmes. The Secretariat stated that school feeding could be effective in crisis, post-conflict, recovery and chronic hunger situations: the entry point was food insecurity, but school feeding would be implemented within other kinds of intervention in support of national policies into which it would eventually be integrated.
13. The representative of the World Bank outlined its analytical work on child nutrition as part of its investigation of development needs, which had informed WFP's definition of the new policy. He stressed that school feeding could be introduced rapidly, with effects evident in a short timeframe, but further work was needed on issues such as cost-effectiveness and long-term sustainability.
14. The Board welcomed the document, and expressed approval of aspects such as the clear goals, measurable performance criteria, alignment with national policy, community involvement and government ownership. The focus should be on "how" in developing future school feeding models, which should always include systematic hand-over strategies and be combined with other education and health approaches such as deworming. The need to establish mechanisms for sustainable hand-overs was noted by several members, along with the need for different models of school feeding to suit the various contexts in which WFP operated. Board members pointed out the fundamental need for partnerships and coordination with governments, United Nations agencies and national and local authorities in which organizations maximized their comparative advantages to make school feeding an integral part of poverty reduction and development. Mechanisms for stable multi-year funding would also have to be identified, and more detailed guidelines on implementation should be produced for country and regional staff.



15. Some members felt that a roadmap for implementation and mainstreaming was needed as WFP moved into food assistance operations; approaches had to be flexible in order to be effective in different operational circumstances. WFP should work to ensure that national policy for school feeding focused on decentralized social participation and the integration of small farmers to support local food procurement. Board members asked for clearer definition of the criteria for transition to national ownership and for an indication of the ways in which preschool and children under 2 could be targeted. The Board acknowledged the significance of WFP's long experience with school feeding, and applauded the collaboration with the World Bank.
16. Several Board members proposed that an evaluation of the new approaches should be carried out in 2011–2012, and asked that the Board be kept informed of developments. They urged WFP to ensure that its plans were realistic, pointing out that in their view, in some respects the policy document was optimistic rather than objective. Resource allocation on the basis of thorough research and targeting would have to be developed, especially to ensure that the most vulnerable schoolchildren were reached. The Secretariat was urged to consider potential risks and negative experiences in school feeding so that lessons were learned. WFP should give its support for capacity development in support of school feeding for partners and government decision-makers, and integration mechanisms to align school feeding with programmes such as P4P should be put in place. The Board looked forward to receiving further information on implementation of the policy.
17. The Executive Director thanked Board members for their observations. WFP would work with countries that had long experience with school feeding to take advantage of best practices in developing its approaches, for example in targeting preschool children in collaboration with REACH and linking school feeding with other interventions.
18. The Secretariat appreciated the Board's support and its caveats. Implementation guidelines were already being developed, and WFP would look into the mechanisms for integrating school feeding with programmes such as P4P in order to maximize benefits for communities. The fruitful collaboration with the World Bank would continue: research into cost efficiency and cost effectiveness in relation to other safety net approaches; stakeholder workshops were being held to enhance government capacity for coordination of partners' interventions. The World Bank representative supported the Secretariat in emphasizing the need for a practical, research-based and holistic approach with measurable performance and output criteria that would make school feeding a sustainable element of development programmes.

WFP Policy on Capacity Development: An Update on Implementation (2009/EB.2/3) (for consideration)

19. The Secretariat introduced the document, stressing that it was an update on implementation of the existing policy and that it was the outcome of extensive consultations in WFP and with Board delegations. The paper highlighted the key features of the 2004 policy, why it remained relevant, how WFP was taking forward its key principles, and how WFP was taking account of developments since its adoption, most notably the 2008 evaluation, which had prompted the membership to request the document being discussed.
20. Board members welcomed the document but raised questions as to the lack of an action plan and a results framework, and the need to ensure funding for capacity-building work. In particular, WFP had to address the issue of its own capacity to develop the capacities of other actors: it had a certain amount of expertise in programming, but needed to recognize its comparative advantages. The needs to clarify objectives and to work in partnerships to



develop capacity were emphasized, particularly in order to address food insecurity and to find ways to build capacity in crises: the food security cluster would be important in this respect. Several Board members noted that the approach had to be demand-driven, practical and in line with national projects, but warned that the situation on the ground could be complex; hand-over mechanisms had to be carefully considered and outputs had to be related to WFP's mandate. Some members were concerned that not all Board comments were addressed in the paper, particularly with regard to the need to introduce new capacity-development tools in collaboration with United Nations partners. Board members also asked about the Secretariat's intentions with regard to future evaluations of capacity development and reporting.

21. The Secretariat welcomed the Board's comments, noting that capacity development was a cross-cutting issue that was part of most WFP programmes in the form of capacity support. WFP was working with the REACH initiative and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to coordinate capacity development with nutrition interventions. The need for stable funding was acknowledged; the review of the financial framework would contribute to resolving the issue. WFP was prepared to work at the highest level with governments to ensure that capacity development was included among national priorities. The need for joint learning with other agencies was recognized, especially because the Secretariat was aware that national contexts were varied. The Secretariat clarified that a fully developed results framework had indeed been included in the paper, in the section titled "Policy Framework". The Secretariat confirmed that it was working to develop an implementation plan; the Board would be kept informed of progress in that regard.

WFP Gender Policy: Corporate Action Plan (2010–2011) (2009/EB.2/4) *(for information)*

22. Introducing the corporate action plan for the gender policy, the Executive Director confirmed WFP's commitment to embedding a gender perspective throughout its work. Among other things, WFP and partners were seeking to resolve many of the challenges, including security issues, facing women in camps.
23. The Secretariat further explained that the action plan took into account comments received from the Board. Collaboration had been sought from other United Nations agencies and other institutions, including universities and research centres, regarding implementation of the policy and action plan. The plan identified six priority areas: i) strengthening capacity; ii) improving accountability; iii) promoting partnerships; iv) advocacy; v) targeted actions for women and girls; and vi) new programming priorities. It was a living document that would evolve as WFP continued to conduct meetings with partners, consultations and training of staff and partners. The budget for the action plan was US\$7 million, which did not include the country-level mainstreaming activities that were already being carried out.
24. The Board congratulated WFP for the excellent document and for its work on gender, including its recognition of the importance of raising gender awareness among staff and partners. Members emphasized the need to back up activities that empower women with awareness raising, training and other efforts that ensured the sustainability of this empowerment and its extension to other vulnerable groups. It was critical to promote joint efforts by both women and men, and to integrate women in the food-for-work (FFW) programmes. It was suggested that qualitative indicators be included for measuring impact. The Board requested more information on internal WFP policy, including how the Secretariat would attract and retain staff in hardship posts and senior positions, and what the accountability mechanisms would be.



25. In response, the Secretariat recalled that gender issues in WFP's staff recruitment were dealt with in the human resources policy, which sought to achieve gender balance at all levels. WFP would continue to use its gender focal points, but in a new role as gender advocates to avoid the risk of responsibility for gender issues being assigned to an individual rather than being embraced by all staff. A system would be introduced to recognize country offices that demonstrated commitment and innovation in addressing gender issues; a gender innovation fund would be established as an incentive to innovate at the country level. Memoranda of understanding and field-level agreements with partners would include responsibility for implementing the gender policy and action plan. WFP would be supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to track and report on the use of allocations for gender actions. Gender training, including gender audit training, was planned for staff throughout 2010 and 2011.

RESOURCE, FINANCIAL AND BUDGETARY MATTERS

WFP Biennial Management Plan (2010–2011) (2009/EB.2/5) (*for approval*)

26. Introducing the document, the Secretariat recalled the timeline of consultations and reiterated that the Management Plan was needs-driven and in line with United Nations rules on harmonization; it also reflected the constantly evolving operational challenges. The Programme Support and Administrative (PSA) budget was based on a realistic funding projection, and the document as a whole gave an overview of WFP financial commitments for the 2010–2011 biennium. In response to comments already received on the format of the document, the Secretariat noted that some elements were mandatory under harmonization requirements and that a more reader-friendly version of the document would be produced in future.
27. The Board expressed its appreciation of the work that had gone into the Management Plan and of the prompt responses the Secretariat had provided to queries from members. Board members suggested improvements for future documents, focusing on clearer measurement criteria, a larger qualitative element and a more reader-friendly format, particularly in view of members' desire for more strategic discussion of the issues covered. There were calls for longer-term cost estimates, and for further consideration of the scope and nature of WFP's country and regional presence. Board members stressed that WFP's country presence should be based on the stated needs of host governments, and that even small country offices with few ongoing operations could offer a more cost-effective response platform than the alternative of setting up contracts with service providers in sudden-onset emergencies. Considerations of economy and efficiency had to be kept in mind, however: country presence did not always have to be synonymous with a WFP country office. The focus on capacity-building and country-led development was appreciated by many Board members as a way to avoid situations of chronic hunger.
28. Some members requested clarifications of the relationship between cost effectiveness and expected income levels, of the structure of the PSA element of the budget and of the relative staff allocations of some WFP departments in relation to the work expected of them. Several Board members stressed the desirability of completing the financial framework review in 2010, but in view of its importance it was agreed that the Secretariat devote the time necessary to ensure that the review served the needs of WFP in full. Some members expressed concern at the near-zero closing balance of the General Fund. The



Secretariat was called upon to enhance the efficiency of WFP financial management wherever possible, and to ensure sufficient resources for oversight.

29. Board members took note of the reference to unforeseen requirements in an annex and of the section on extra-budgetary resources: these were sound business practices and helped make the Management Plan a strategic instrument. Some members suggested, however, that items such as security costs and cluster leadership could be included in the regular budget. Members noted the diversification of activities and new tools, and urged WFP to look at them carefully in order to prioritize them in the light of funding constraints. The need for targeted, timely and efficient operations with clear hand-over criteria and mechanisms was reiterated: these qualities could be enhanced through cooperation with the other Rome-based agencies.
30. There were questions on the role of the Deputy Executive Director for the Office of Hunger Solutions and WFP's role in the CFS. Some members suggested that a review of WFP's business model was due with a view to ensuring that it reflected actual requirements; others questioned how WFP's shift to food assistance was reflected in the budget. The Board was unanimous in requesting the Secretariat to provide more information on all the operational developments, in particular regarding security.
31. In response, the Executive Director thanked the Board for its constructive observations and asked for its views for the future presentation of the Management Plan; the Secretariat would take comments made by the Board, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) and the FAO Finance Committee into account. It was agreed that work was needed to converge with other United Nations agencies in terms of budgeting and reporting. The Secretariat was working to focus programmes on the most urgent and critical needs; the Office of Hunger Solutions was supporting the introduction of new procedures and approaches and would also help to define clear hand-over strategies in longer-term programmes. The need to evaluate WFP's country presence would be addressed with a view to establishing the most efficient and effective mode of operating. Security costs were more efficiently managed outside the PSA budget; the Board would be updated on the security upgrade project. The financial framework review was being conducted through a series of consultations leading toward consensus and had begun by examining programme categories. WFP continued to look for ways to end chronic dependency on assistance and to support countries in establishing sustainable long-term food security; the need for capacity-building in this context was recognized. The Secretariat would review long-term development projects that address chronic food insecurity and would look for sustainable solutions involving food self-sufficiency and hand-over strategies.

Appointment of Members to the Audit Committee (2009/EB.2/6) *(for approval)*

32. In presenting the nomination of a member to the Audit Committee, the Secretariat recalled that new appointments were made on a rolling basis for terms of three years each. Board approval was sought for a replacement for Ms Dianne Spearman, whose term had expired on 8 October 2009. WFP had used an international recruiting agency to find candidates with recent, relevant financial and audit experiences, and who had been independent of both the Secretariat and the Board for at least two years. Equitable geographical representation was also taken into account. From a short list of 16 candidates, Ms Kholeka Mzondeki of South Africa had been selected. Ms Mzondeki's curriculum vitae had been circulated to Board members and her selection had already been supported by the FAO Finance Committee and the ACABQ.



33. The Board approved the appointment, noting that it supported both geographical and gender equity and that Ms Mzondeki had an impressive range of appropriate experience. Members welcomed her and thanked Ms Spearman for her work while on the Audit Committee. It was suggested that in the future Board members be consulted regarding potential candidates.

EVALUATION REPORTS¹

Summary Report of the Strategic Evaluation of WFP Contingency Planning (2002–2008) (2009/EB.2/7) (*for consideration*)

34. The Director of the Office of Evaluation (OE) emphasized that the evaluation had been based on extensive research and field work. While it was an arduous task to clearly establish the impact of contingency planning, the evaluation found that contingency planning had contributed to a corporate culture of preparedness. For enhanced efficiency and effectiveness of corporate preparedness, contingency planning had to be further integrated with other exercises similar in nature – such as business continuity, pandemic planning and enterprise risk management. In addition, it should also steer away from a discrete administrative action resulting in a written plan to become a practical process as part of an integrated set of preparedness measures, which had to be appropriately resourced and coordinated with other humanitarian actors. WFP was recognized as promoter of inter-agency guidance on the subject, but the evaluation emphasized the need to reconceptualize the contingency approach within WFP.
35. The Secretariat welcomed a valuable and timely evaluation and expressed its commitment to addressing the recommendations within 18 months; the cost of implementation was estimated at US\$1 million. The Secretariat agreed with the need to emphasize process over the production of plans and to integrate various tools, and noted that the current WFP funding structure was not optimal for funding preparedness. It also reminded the Board that the WFP emergency preparedness framework dated back to 2000 and that as a result of activities implemented since then, WFP was better prepared today than in the past. Finally the Secretariat noted that in approving the Management Plan (2010–2011), the Executive Board had already supported the renewed commitment to preparedness embedded therein.
36. The Board welcomed the evaluation as a frank analysis and agreed that it also needed to take responsibility for prioritizing some of the preparedness activities. Board members encouraged the Secretariat to find mechanisms for assured funding and recommended that the issue be considered as part of the ongoing financial framework review. The Board stressed the need to focus on process, to integrate tools – which would be a cost-effective approach – and to put in place the organizational support and training to maintain the WFP culture of preparedness. Visible support from senior management would be essential in reconceptualizing contingency planning and sharing expertise with other agencies. Some members pointed to the perceived contradiction between the acknowledged limited impact of contingency planning on preparedness and the recommendation to allocate additional financial and human resources. Board members encouraged the Secretariat to report to the Board on the progress of implementation of the recommendations
37. In response, the Secretariat thanked the Board for its comments, noting in particular that the impacts of contingency planning could not always be clearly defined because its link

¹ Reports on evaluations of operations are included under the relevant regional portfolios.



with overall preparedness was not specific; but its positive contribution to programme outcomes was undeniable, and justified continued commitment and funding. The Secretariat drew attention to the fact that the most successful contingency planning outcomes had occurred in fully funded operations. The Executive Director thanked various donors for their support for contingency planning, noting that additional staff had been allocated to develop the system. The field contingency fund would be used in the short term to support the reconceptualization of contingency planning, and the financial framework review would identify longer-term funding options. The Secretariat undertook to keep the Board up to date with progress.

ASIA REGIONAL BUREAU PORTFOLIO

Regional Director's Overview

38. The Regional Director for Asia outlined the situation and WFP's interventions in the region, where staff security and safety was a particular concern. In Pakistan, after the bombing WFP operations had temporarily slowed – but not halted – and WFP was continuing to rely on NGOs to deliver as much of its assistance as possible. Donors were encouraged to make early pledges to avoid pipeline breaks during the harsh winter conditions expected in early 2010. In Afghanistan, international staff had been temporarily relocated but most of WFP's accommodation was already in the top security category. Financial support would be necessary to increase staff security in both Afghanistan and Pakistan; the Deputy Executive Director reminded the Board that its prior approval of security upgrades had made it possible for WFP to continue working in premises with comparatively good security.
39. Following floods in the Philippines, WFP was providing food for 1 million people, and at the request of the Government, WFP had launched special operations to establish and lead the logistics and telecommunications clusters and to provide air services for deliveries in cut-off areas; WFP had revised its emergency operation (EMOP) to extend it to June 2010. Lao People's Democratic Republic and Cambodia were affected on a smaller scale. In Indonesia following the earthquake, WFP had established and led the logistics and emergency telecommunications clusters and distributed locally produced fortified foods to vulnerable groups. WFP had found that its leadership of the logistics and telecommunications clusters was an important factor in all these emergencies. The United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot in Malaysia was expected to open soon as part of emergency preparedness and response initiatives.
40. Although displaced people in Sri Lanka were beginning to return home, those still in camps had no freedom of movement outside the camps. WFP was providing food assistance to returnees as they restored their livelihoods. In Nepal, assistance contributed to stabilization following signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement but there were funding shortages and rations for Bhutanese refugees had been reduced. In the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, operations were only 15 percent funded and reaching only a little over 10 percent of planned beneficiaries. The Government had requested FAO and WFP to cancel their planned crop and food security assessment.



41. The Board commended WFP for its work in Asia and for its collaboration with other agencies. Responding to concerns expressed by some members, the Regional Director reported that WFP and the international humanitarian community were advocating with the Government of Sri Lanka to encourage it to open the camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) and that only life-saving activities would be provided if the camps continued to be closed. International collaboration was essential in tackling many of the challenges facing the region.

Summary Evaluation Report Bangladesh Country Programme 104100 (2007–2010) (2009/EB.2/8) (*for consideration*)

Summary Evaluation Report Lao People's Democratic Republic Country Portfolio (2009/EB.2/9) (*for consideration*)

42. The Director of the Office of Evaluation presented the two summary evaluations. The Lao People's Democratic Republic was the first evaluation of a country portfolio presented to the Board; more such types of evaluation would be made in the future because they made it possible to cover a wider range of issues. It has found that the Lao portfolio was well aligned with government priorities, but that strategic choices about what could be done with the resources available were more of a challenge. WFP's small country office had carried out an impressive array of analytical work, especially a comprehensive food security and vulnerability analysis (CFSVA) that had been very useful to the Government for its planning. Reaching isolated beneficiaries in remote locations was costly and raised questions regarding activities where efficiency was low. The evaluation found a need for more analysis of the challenges facing the country, the use of more participatory approaches, and a monitoring system better linked with decision-making processes.
43. The evaluation of Bangladesh's country programme was one of the last of the evaluations of operations conducted by the Office of Evaluation for the time being. It was a mid-term evaluation; some outcomes were assessed for those activities that had completed a cycle prior to the evaluation, and for which relevant data could be collected. The programme's impacts on social dimensions seemed to be good; those on livelihoods and food security were less sure. The earmarking of funding for the programme had created bottlenecks. Evaluation recommendations for preparation of the Bangladesh country portfolio included setting unifying goals, and focusing on capacity-building and local ownership.
44. The Secretariat presented the specific management responses to the evaluations. More generally, country offices had been asked to engage in a participatory process to prepare country strategies, based on the food security situation. The process would encourage looking at the bigger picture in each country, identifying priorities in line with Government initiatives and ensuring that WFP activities were aligned with the UNDAF.
45. In response to the evaluations, WFP was working with the Lao Government to define an overarching goal for its activities. It was working with the Ministry of Health to find ways of tackling the country's high malnutrition rates, and would collaborate with the Government and other partners to increase participation. A monitoring and evaluation (M&E) expert had been hired to identify improvements in this area. In Bangladesh, WFP was piloting new approaches to livelihoods development, including providing cash grants – rather than microcredit – for purchasing inputs to help bring the poorest women out of poverty. Programme components were being integrated to improve their impacts at the household level, but more resources were needed for this. WFP welcomed the Government's recent decision to launch a school feeding programme, for



which it had asked WFP to provide capacity-building.

46. The Board commended the Office of Evaluation for its insightful reports and management for its responses to the recommendations. The use of national evaluation staff in the Lao People's Democratic Republic deserved mention, as did the presentation of outcome indicators in the Bangladesh evaluation. The need for clearer targeting in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, and for improved outcome reporting were emphasized. Members called for clearer hand-over strategies and capacity-building plans. The Board acknowledged that WFP was providing essential and much-appreciated support and assistance to the governments of both countries as they pursued some ambitious targets.
47. Responding to these and other comments from the Board, the Director clarified that although individual operations would no longer be evaluated by the Office of Evaluation, country offices and regional bureaux would be carrying out self-evaluations and decentralized evaluations of programmes and projects.
48. The Lao People's Democratic Republic country director added that a district-level vulnerability analysis had been completed, which complemented government assessments and would help improve targeting. The country office was working with the Ministry of Health to design a mother-and-child health and nutrition (MCHN) programme, and local purchases had increased from less than 10 percent of total purchases in 2007 to 70 percent in 2008. The Lao People's Democratic Republic was a P4P pilot country.
49. The Bangladesh country director reported that WFP's vision for hand-over in the country had been strengthened by the Government's own vision and its recent request for WFP assistance, especially with the new national school feeding programme. WFP was working with the UNICEF and the Ministry of Health on strengthening community nutrition centres, and with the World Bank on reforming safety nets and improving targeting and design. Regarding Board concerns about the impact of school feeding, the country director cited a 14 percent increase in school attendance and 10 percent decrease in drop-out rates since 2002 in schools with WFP school feeding. WFP needed funding to provide the capacity-building that the Government had requested; attempts were being made to widen the donor base.

PRROs for Executive Board Approval — Myanmar 200032 (2009/EB.2/10) *(for approval)*

50. The Regional Director gave a brief overview of the context for the PRRO. WFP was well-established in Myanmar, and its operational partnerships with national counterparts were essential to this PRRO and to WFP's ability to reach the most vulnerable. Myanmar was food self-sufficient at the macro level, but access problems led to nutritional deficiencies, with 5 million food-insecure people in the country's north and northeast, which was the target area for this PRRO. WFP's increase in beneficiary numbers, from 1.6 to 2.2 million, reflected the wider area and larger population that the Government was allowing access to. The PRRO was necessary because of the lack of development support to the country; the international community was beginning to recognize the need for livelihoods and food security support, but WFP still needed dedicated resources from donors for the PRRO.
51. The Board welcomed the PRRO and approved it, commending in particular its efforts to reach vulnerable people in remote areas and its targeting of vulnerable groups. Responding to specific questions, the Secretariat explained that WFP's capacity-building efforts would be directed to the specific ministries it collaborated with; WFP was examining ways of doing this, by expanding partnerships beyond its current line ministry, the Ministry of Border Areas and National Races, to include the ministries of Agriculture, Commerce and



others. Aid coordination was very challenging in Myanmar, as the Government insisted that each humanitarian agency act with only predefined government ministries. However, the Government seemed to be appreciating the value of coherence and synergies; the prospects for widening WFP's collaboration with more ministries, other agencies and NGOs looked promising. Another challenge was how to support food for education (FFE) in remote areas with few schools; WFP was able to cover only 24 percent of needs in its FFE target areas. Other modalities were being used to bring food to the most vulnerable in these remote areas. Distributions interrupted by conflict in some areas in September were returning to normal.

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN REGIONAL BUREAU PORTFOLIO

Regional Director's Overview

52. Summarizing the situation in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Regional Director drew attention to the 53 million hungry people in the region, who were food-insecure largely because food prices in much of the region remained high. There were 1.5 million more poor people, 1 million jobs had been lost and remittances from abroad – a major element of social security in the region – had decreased by 8 percent. Natural disasters in 2009 were affecting 10 percent of the population in the region, and an El Niño situation was causing droughts resulting in losses of 40 percent or more of bean and maize crops in some areas. Flooding caused by hurricane Ida had destroyed livelihoods, leaving more people in need of immediate food aid. WFP was responding to these needs in partnership with a number of other agencies and NGOs, with much of its effort aimed at reinforcing safety nets and reducing food insecurity and malnutrition. In the longer term, the main needs were to enhance social protection networks and improve nutrition among young children and vulnerable groups such as indigenous peoples. WFP was working with UNDP in seven countries to build capacities in governments and public institutions. In the region as a whole, programmes were being considered with partners to address the nutrition needs of young people and schoolchildren and to provide technical support for government programmes.

Draft Country Programme – Guatemala 200031 (2010–2014) (2009/EB.2/11) (for consideration)

PRROs for Executive Board Approval – Haiti 108440 (2009/EB.2/12) (for approval)

53. Guatemala country programme (CP) 200031 was designed to address chronic undernutrition among children under 3 and support agricultural recovery among farmers affected by disaster. It also aimed to increase government capacity to reduce food insecurity and included elements addressing HIV and AIDS and disaster response. The CP was fully aligned with WFP's Strategic Objectives and with government policies.

54. Haiti PRRO 108440 was designed to address a situation in which high food prices and natural disasters had destroyed livelihoods and led to civil unrest. Unemployment, food insecurity and vulnerability rates were still very high, which was preventing recovery. The basic need was to re-develop Haiti's agricultural potential, particularly by increasing the amount of food produced by small farmers and by developing food processing and other agriculture-related programmes; there was also a need for health, education and nutrition interventions to support stabilization and recovery.

55. Board members welcomed the Regional Director's remarks. With regard to Haiti, Board



members applauded the efforts to overcome aid dependence and support recovery, and drew attention to underlying causes of the situation such as the breakdown of the rural economy, environmental degradation and inequalities in external trade. It was essential to enable the Government to invest in agricultural and market development, infrastructures and livestock farming: WFP was urged to maximize local food procurement policy to support this aim. There was an urgent need for sustained funding to support safety-net and food-security programmes. Board members approved of the support for small farmers, and of the disaster risk reduction elements of the PRRO, including pre-positioning of food. The Board encouraged WFP to continue its partnerships with FAO, UNDP and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in support of capacity development. Some Board members recommended that the Secretariat give more attention to targeting, measurement of outputs and hand-over mechanisms, and asked whether cash and voucher programmes had been considered.

56. With regard to the Guatemala CP, Board members suggested that programmes such as seed diversification be introduced to guard against crop failure and that WFP study the potential benefits of cash-based interventions. Some members asked about the targeting approaches used in the CP. Board members particularly approved the capacity-building elements of the CP and its alignment with government priorities, but recommended more attention to gender and to developing common indicators to measure impact. Coordination with other actors at all levels was essential in a situation requiring a combination of disaster response, recovery and development approaches.
57. The Board recognized that there were resource constraints in the Guatemala CP and the Haiti PRRO and urged WFP to prioritize its interventions to make best use of the resources available and to consolidate its capacities with the other United Nations agencies.
58. The Regional Director thanked the Board for its observations and support. The country director for Haiti noted that work was under way to improve the measurement of impact and nutrition outcomes and that capacity-building in ministries was moving forward with a view to making disaster response a locally owned process. Local procurement was a priority; cash-based projects were being considered, and decisions on how and where to apply them were imminent. Coordination with the Government, United Nations agencies and NGOs was at the core of WFP's work in Haiti.
59. The Guatemala country director noted that the Government had taken over the school feeding programme and was working on community centres and IDP resettlement. Agricultural interventions were aimed at structural development based on small farmers. The Government was working with various agencies to reduce food insecurity, particularly among children, and in programmes addressing gender equality and health. Cash and voucher programmes had been considered in designing the CP, but uncertainty of funding made it unlikely that such programmes would be implemented.

WEST AFRICA REGIONAL BUREAU PORTFOLIO

Regional Director's Overview

60. The Regional Director outlined the situation in West Africa, which was threatened by two new crises: increased food insecurity, owing to poor harvests in the Sahel where malnutrition rates were already above emergency levels; and the security situation in Guinea, which also threatened security in the neighbouring countries of Sierra Leone and Liberia. Floods had left 600,000 people without assets and infrastructure. Delayed rains and the resulting reduced production in the eastern Sahel made it likely that EMOPs would



be required in several countries; WFP and partners were carrying out a crop assessment and finding shortfalls in some crops. Erratic rainfalls were also affecting pastoralists; in Chad, 30 percent of cattle was lost, resulting in reduced incomes and protein availability – especially less milk for children. Changes in pastoralists' transhumance patterns were putting the environment under stress and increasing the risk of conflict. Security issues in Guinea could lead to internal and cross-border population movements, that might result in rice price rises and market disruption requiring responses. Partnerships were essential for dealing with these issues and designing response options. Country offices were collaborating with ministries of agriculture and FAO on the REACH initiative, and WFP was also involved in building a nutrition alliance and chairing a nutrition and food security working group. Throughout the region, WFP and its partners were working to build community resilience to natural disasters, through small-scale irrigation systems, green belts and other interventions.

Summary Evaluation Report Côte d'Ivoire PRRO 106720 (2009/EB.2/13) *(for consideration)*

61. The Director of the Office of Evaluation then presented the summary evaluation report of the Côte d'Ivoire PRRO, which was found to be relevant and aligned with national priorities and plans; the school feeding and HIV/AIDS components were particularly well-matched with national strategies. Education and nutrition outcomes were good. WFP now needed to reposition its activities and adjust its programme as the situation in Côte d'Ivoire changed from one of relief to recovery and development. The evaluation found that 81 percent of beneficiaries had been reached, but high food prices meant that only 50 percent of the planned quantities were distributed. WFP should now focus on fewer and more clearly defined activities.
62. The Board appreciated WFP's activities in West Africa and concurred with the PRRO evaluation findings and recommendations, particularly those regarding a tighter focus for activities and sharper targeting. Members recognized that more funds would be required to put the recommendations into operation.

SOUTHERN, EASTERN AND CENTRAL AFRICA REGIONAL PORTFOLIO

Regional Director's Overview

63. The Director for the Southern, Eastern and Central Africa region began his overview by drawing the Board's attention to the increasing scale of food and nutrition insecurity in the region. In the Horn of Africa, drought and livestock diseases combined with the effects of global recession had led to a 14 percent increase in malnourished and vulnerable populations: 20 million people were in need of assistance. WFP was working to leverage various forms of assistance to address immediate needs and improve safety nets. El Niño was currently causing floods in parts of eastern Africa and drought in southern Africa, and food was only one of many urgent needs.
64. A good harvest in Zimbabwe had increased the availability of food, but there was still a cereal deficit in rural areas; WFP had been obliged by resource shortfalls to reduce its ration sizes. WFP was working with FAO to develop smallholder food production and respond to the cholera outbreak. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, political instability and conflict had displaced 2 million people and left another 1.5 million vulnerable to food insecurity: WFP and its partner agencies were addressing these problems as best they could. In Ethiopia, in response to earlier requests from the Board, an



improved system of reporting at the district level had been introduced jointly with the Government. A new food security network and a capacity-building action plan were being developed, with a new monitoring system to be functioning by early 2010.

65. In the region as a whole, very high rates of HIV and AIDS continued to exacerbate other difficulties. WFP was preparing to introduce new and innovative tools such as cash and voucher programmes and P4P interventions to increase local procurement in support of small farmers with FAO and IFAD, and was working on forward purchasing and pre-positioning to reduce delivery lead times, food processing projects, food exchanges and food warehousing options for small farmers, and enhancing school feeding and other safety-net approaches. The successes of the Managing Environmental Resources to Enable Transitions to More Sustainable Livelihoods (MERET) programme in Ethiopia were highlighted as a model that could be scaled up and replicated elsewhere. Throughout the region, WFP was strengthening its contacts with the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and others. A regional nutrition group had been formed to develop new approaches. The Regional Director expressed gratitude for the generosity of donors; the region still needed more assured funding to be able to continue its work at the current level.
66. The Ethiopia delegation gave a brief account of the Government's work to address hunger issues, noting that Ethiopia had met and even exceeded the targets set in the Maputo Declaration. Under MERET, large areas of land had been rehabilitated and reforested, and water and soil management programmes were proving to be effective.
67. Board members expressed appreciation for the Regional Director's presentation, and asked how new programme approaches were assessed in terms of suitability and cost-efficiency. The Board commended the regional bureau on its partnerships with other United Nations agencies, NGOs and CAADP, and encouraged it to maintain and enhance them. The improvement in reporting from Ethiopia had enabled donors to increase their contributions to humanitarian work in the region.
68. The Regional Director thanked the Board on behalf of the country offices for their support. Work to improve M&E and to enhance resilience to weather shocks was ongoing and would be reported to the Board regularly. WFP's partnerships were fundamental to its operations in the region and would certainly be continued and extended. In response to a Board member's question, the Secretariat noted that new tools and nutrition products were being introduced to support the objectives of different projects; research into optimum nutrition options was ongoing.



Summary Evaluation Report Democratic Republic of the Congo PRRO 106080 (2009/EB.2/14) (for consideration)

69. The Director of OE noted that the PRRO was fully aligned with the priorities of the Government and partners: 90 percent of the activities had been allocated to emergency relief, with attention given to recovery and development where appropriate. The PRRO included a diverse range of effective activities and had achieved good outreach to the populations in need; it had responded well to increased needs related, for example, to larger numbers of IDPs. WFP had exercised sound judgement in selecting its logistics arrangements and in working with a small number of efficient partners. Challenges to the success of the PRRO included resource shortfalls and resulting pipeline breaks, with pervasive insecurity an added problem. Work was needed to address weaknesses in the M&E system and to decentralize authority to the eastern provinces so that decision-making in such a vast country was not impeded.
70. The Board welcomed the evaluation document and the management response, applauding the increased focus on emergencies, the impact of the operation on nutrition and the fact that local purchase had increased. Members recommended that action plans for future continuation of the operations be developed as soon as possible. Questions were raised as to how ration changes and targeting had been handled as the situation moved from emergency to recovery. Some Board members asked about the sustainability of the school feeding element of the PRRO. Board members approved the use of a varied set of tools to address different needs, and recognized the difficulties of operations in very remote areas. The importance of continuing to work with partners was emphasized, particularly in the complex situations of emergency and recovery. Board members urged WFP to ensure that local organizations were involved in all activities with a view to increasing capacities and local ownership and hence improve cooperation and sustainability. The need to protect the interests of women and children was stressed by several members. Board members were pleased that the management response addressed all the recommendations of the evaluation, and recommended increased focus on M&E and on local purchases to support small farmers. The Board asked to be kept informed of developments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) programme.
71. In response, the DRC country director thanked the Government of Belgium for its support to P4P in the DRC. P4P staff were in place and activities were getting started; an agreement had been signed with FAO, and the first purchase was to be effected soon. Local purchasing was being extended, and P4P would increase its effectiveness. The situation with regard to general food distribution was complex: it would be used as appropriate for returnee areas. School feeding would be reviewed in planning activities for the coming years with a view to ensuring that it would be sustainable and could be handed over. Capacity development for partners and local organizations was a priority, and work to improve M&E was already underway. The prevailing security situation in many parts of the country posed serious challenges to introducing cash programmes; nonetheless, the country office was reviewing with partners their relevance for certain groups such as returning refugees.

Summary Evaluation Report Malawi Country Portfolio (2009/EB.2/15) (for consideration)

72. The Director of OE noted that the country portfolio in Malawi was well aligned with the priorities of the Government and partners. WFP had emerged as a leader in responding to the drought emergency and had contributed policy advice and advocacy. The main challenge was that the situation was changing from emergency to recovery, and WFP



would need to ensure that it repositioned itself for a new role. Reductions in funding as the emergency gave way to recovery led to a reduction of staff and skills that would have been needed to decide on how to reposition the programme. Emergency responses had been effective, the food pipeline had been operative, and nutrition and school feeding interventions had achieved good results. The effectiveness of FFW and food-for-assessments (FFA) interventions should be reviewed, however.

73. Board members welcomed the evaluation and the management response, and asked whether early-warning systems were in place and if so, what their impact had been. The question of maintaining an adequate level of resources after an emergency was raised, and Board members noted that donors' perceptions of a situation and needs were a central issue: effective communications had to be developed accordingly. Board members recommended that WFP and its partners keep in mind the ultimate aim of operations in Malawi: sustainable recovery and development that could be handed over eventually. Board members also recommended that attention be given to enhancing M&E and improving oversight of data collection activities. They also indicated their support in looking for sustainable funding mechanisms.
74. Thanking the Board for its observations, the Regional Director noted that WFP was consulting its partners on aligning programmes with the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, UNDAF and One UN objectives in social protection; this was especially true for school feeding, which would be combined with other educational assistance. UNICEF and WFP were working together to address acute malnutrition among children and to support anti-retroviral treatment patients. Work was ongoing with FAO, IFAD and other partners to develop P4P and related activities. WFP was helping enhance the disaster management capacity of the Government. WFP's repositioning would be carried out in the context of alignment with government policies and WFP was working closely with the governments in the CAADP process.

Summary Evaluation Report Republic of the Congo PRRO 103121 (2009/EB.2/16) (for consideration)

75. The Director of the Office of Evaluation presented the summary evaluation, which had found that very low proportions of target beneficiaries had been reached by FFW and school feeding interventions. Activities for people living with HIV and AIDS had been more successful. The causes of these problems had been pipeline breaks, transport problems and weak monitoring. The evaluation team had had no access to information on results and outcomes, but these were likely to have been weak given the poor performance of the PRRO.
76. The Board remarked on the value of evaluations in identifying weaknesses and ways of correcting them. Members appreciated the management response to the evaluation recommendations, and urged the Secretariat to implement its plans. They recognized the PRRO's flexible approach to targeting and acknowledged that solutions to the repeated pipeline breaks would be difficult to achieve in the medium term. The Board commended the evaluation team for a good job done in difficult conditions, and was particularly concerned about the apparent lack of government interest in the PRRO activities, lack of coordination with relevant government ministries and lack of functioning monitoring and evaluation systems.
77. The Regional Director confirmed that the recommendations would be implemented as a matter of urgency. The evaluation findings had already been brought to the Government's attention, and the Government had responded by making the first of what would become annual financial contributions to the PRRO. Functioning coordination mechanisms were



being established with ministries, and WFP's Regional Bureau and Headquarters were providing the country office with technical assistance to improve its monitoring and reporting capacity. The Government's contributions to the PRRO were likely to improve the wider donor response to this programme, which should reduce pipeline breaks in the future. To fill the gaps in information availability, the evaluation team had met people in the field, including beneficiaries, and its findings were based on what it had learned from these meetings.

Country Programmes – Uganda 108070 (2009–2014) (2009/EB.2/17) *(for approval)*

78. In presenting the document, the Secretariat assured the Board that it incorporated responses to Board comments made at an informal consultation in July 2009.
79. The Board welcomed the new document and recognized that it addressed queries that members had raised at previous discussions. It emphasized the need for WFP to review its position and comparative advantages in Uganda, as the country's economy grew and expanded; the CP should fit within Government-led processes and focus on providing technical assistance. Some members expressed concern about the lack of support for school feeding activities, especially at the local government level. The Board commended the excellent in-country process that had gone into designing and revising this programme and the country office's strong partnerships with the Government and its ministries.
80. The Executive Director also thanked the country director for his efforts in strengthening the United Nations country team, respecting Government wishes and seeking inputs from a broader range of stakeholders.
81. Responding to points raised by the Board, the country director reported that the network of WFP sub-offices throughout Uganda was a useful resource for both WFP and United Nations partners working at the community level. The Government fully supported the CP, and joint action agreements were being set up with counterpart ministries outlining roles and responsibilities for reaching its objectives. Concerning school feeding, the Government regarded it as the responsibility of parents and communities, and had requested WFP to provide them with expertise and advice on how to fulfill this important responsibility.
82. The Board asked for a progress report on the CP to be presented at its Second Regular Session in 2011.

MIDDLE EAST, CENTRAL ASIA AND EASTERN EUROPE REGIONAL PORTFOLIO

Regional Director's Overview

83. The Regional Director outlined some of WFP's activities in this very diverse region, which included middle-income countries suffering the effects of the global economic crisis, as well as very sensitive and conflict-prone countries with high numbers of displaced people, where high food prices, compound disasters and the global crisis had weakened government capacities and had a significant impact on food security situations. This diversity was a challenge but also provided opportunities to try out new approaches. WFP's wide range of collaboration in the region included a new initiative to support capacity development of junior professionals through year-long internships, giving them the experience to guide national food security and development strategies in the future. All



WFP activities in the region involved collaboration with other United Nations agencies, government and other national stakeholders, and NGOs.

84. Yemen was facing a particularly complex situation, with high malnutrition and food insecurity rates, refugees from Somalia and floods; most of the population could not cover basic monthly expenditures. Gender disparity was also a serious issue. Dramatic funding problems were leaving many beneficiaries without support. WFP and the humanitarian community sought a ceasefire to allow access to civilians affected by conflict in Sa'ada. WFP's activities included a pilot safety-net programme for vulnerable people, and a long-term school feeding programme.
85. In Gaza, WFP was expanding its urban voucher programme, which was the first of its kind in the Middle East. Food assistance programmes had mitigated the nutrition crisis, but 60 percent of the population was food-insecure owing to poverty and low purchasing power. An expanded school feeding programme in the West Bank was based entirely on local products, with fortified foods produced by local people and using local expertise.
86. Central Asia was very badly affected by the global crisis. Cash and vouchers were becoming increasingly important in the region, including the innovative use of mobile phone-based vouchers for Iraqi refugees in the Syrian Arab Republic. These vouchers gave beneficiaries greater choice in the products they received, and provided valuable support to host neighbourhoods, where support networks were often stretched by the presence of displaced people. Cash and vouchers were also being used in Armenia and Georgia, and were planned for Iraq. Fortification of bread and oil was being carried out in Egypt, and expansion of such interventions to Yemen and other countries was planned. WFP's participation in the Climate Change, Food Security and Water-Scarcity Task Force was important in a region where climate change and water deficit were major concerns.

Oral Report on Board President's Visit to Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan (2009/EB.2/23)

87. The President then reported on his visit to Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. He found a good balance between national and international staff at WFP country offices, and relatively good security conditions facilitated effective work. Tajikistan was the poorest country in the region, and its dependence on remittances from migrant workers meant it was badly hit by the global economic crisis; 50 percent of the population lived below the poverty line, and one-seventh of the population was food-insecure. Food security was a top priority for the Government; WFP was supported by the Government at the highest levels, including through Ministry of Education support to school feeding. The current PRRO for Tajikistan had been extended until June 2010. The Government of Kyrgyzstan saw WFP's support to the country – which started in 2009 after a hard winter and two years of drought and locust infestations – as a way of helping it return to its usual self-sufficiency and was working with WFP to help strengthen food security monitoring.
88. The Executive Director confirmed that such Board member trips played an important role in helping understand the role of WFP. She also emphasized the many benefits of the mobile phone-based voucher system being piloted in the Syrian Arab Republic, adding that these included cost savings for WFP and, for beneficiaries, time and effort savings.
89. The Board commended WFP's activities in this region. The Secretariat expressed its gratitude for donor support and its hope that an increasing number of countries in the region would contribute.



90. At the President's initiative, the Board approved a draft decision noting that further projects for Tajikistan would be submitted for the Board's approval at its Annual Session in 2010.

THE SUDAN PORTFOLIO

Regional Director's Overview

91. The Sudan Regional Director began his account of the situation in the Sudan by noting that elections and a referendum on the status of Southern Sudan were imminent, and that WFP operations in the region might be affected by the outcomes. Southern Sudan was the least developed area in the world: conflict and unrest had resulted in a "lost generation" in terms of education and development. There were 1.5 million food-insecure people, and levels of maternal mortality were extremely high; there were also large displaced populations requiring assistance. Failed harvests, conflict and high food prices were making more people vulnerable to food insecurity.
92. The situation in Darfur was relatively stable in that there had been fewer armed clashes during 2009, but no peace accord had been signed. WFP's operations were continuing in spite of the expulsion of NGOs earlier in the year. In the south, emergency operations already accounted for 60 percent of WFP interventions, but with the deteriorating food security situation, the figure could increase to 80 percent next year. Returnees were being assisted where possible; new targeting strategies, food security monitoring and safety-net programmes were being introduced with a view to promoting early recovery and self-sufficiency for 4 million people. WFP was developing new partnerships with local organizations, and was continuing its work in collaboration with government and United Nations agencies.
93. Access continued to be extremely difficult and air drops had become necessary again. The United Nations Humanitarian Air Service had been used by 300 agencies, transporting 75,000 humanitarian workers and carrying out over 400 security evacuations. Cases of kidnapping involving humanitarian workers were making an already dangerous operating environment even more hazardous; United Nations agencies were having to consider withdrawal from the region. The Sudan EMOP involving food pre-positioning was already in need of a budget increase.
94. The Board was unanimous in its admiration for the dedication, skill and courage of WFP staff in the Sudan, and commended the way in which WFP had responded to the expulsion of NGOs by filling gaps in assessments, targeting and monitoring of operations. Board members supported the focus on emergency programmes, and asked what use had been made of United Nations common funds to support operations.
95. The Regional Director thanked the Board for its support. Given the huge scale of needs in the region, work was starting on mobilizing assistance from inside the Sudan as well as from outside sources. Funding from Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and other common funds had contributed covering 2.2 percent of 2009 operational needs, but currency variations had reduced the actual benefits. The limited all-weather roads in Southern Sudan, largely built with support from WFP, were being maintained but not extended. Overall, the situation for vulnerable populations across the Sudan was precarious: any support for the region would be deeply appreciated.



REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ON OPERATIONAL MATTERS

Budget Increases to Development Activities and PRROs Approved by the Executive Director (1 January–30 June 2009) (2009/EB.2/18) (for information)

96. These two reports provided additional analysis of the Executive Director's delegated authority, as requested by the membership. In the first six months of 2009, budget revisions had been fewer in number and lower in value for both development projects and PRROs compared with the same period in 2008. The Executive Board had approved at least 75 percent of new PRROs in value terms since the last revision of delegated authority in 2004.
97. The Board welcomed the reports but asked for clarification of some of the reasons for increases and for a better sense of the trends and total picture.
98. The Secretariat reminded the Board that EMOPs were approved by the Executive Director, together with the Director-General of FAO for higher-value operations. For development activities, the budget increases were incurred to absorb donations to projects, reflecting WFP's cautious initial budgeting of certain projects where funding was uncertain. Increases in PRRO budgets were the result of a variety of factors, including introducing cash transfers when they could meet needs more effectively than food transfers, changes in items for the food basket, changes in local operating costs, increased needs, and time extensions to align projects with the activities of partners.

ORGANIZATIONAL AND PROCEDURAL MATTERS

Biennial Programme of Work of the Executive Board (2010–2011) (2009/EB.2/19) (for approval)

99. The Secretariat introduced the Biennial Programme of Work of the Executive Board (2010–2011) to which changes could be introduced once they had been discussed by the Bureau and the Secretariat. The Board had requested a more strategic and systematic scheduling of items for the Programme of Work; discussions were underway in the Bureau which would have an impact on this document in the future.
100. The Board welcomed the overview and made suggestions for the future; these included having a discussion to clarify the policy cycle and document classification. Members asked that an information document be submitted to the Board concerning a nutrition improvement strategy, that more thematic evaluations be conducted, and that the issue of Delivering as One be included in the upcoming document on WFP's role in the humanitarian assistance system. It was also suggested that the Board have access to the country strategies that WFP was introducing, as this would help Board members situate operations, programmes and projects within their national contexts.

Directions for Collaboration among the Rome-Based Agencies (2009/EB.2/20) (for consideration)

101. The Secretariat introduced the document, which was jointly produced by FAO, IFAD and WFP and was being discussed in a climate of renewed collaboration among the Rome-based agencies. Of particular importance was the historic meeting held among the three agencies on 4 November 2009 during which they discussed the way forward to strengthen their collaboration; a joint letter was to be issued to communicate the outcomes



of this meeting to their country teams. The 11 areas that had become a regular feature of administrative collaboration included procurement, finance, information technology, human resources, travel, conference services, protocol, privileges and immunities, climate neutrality, library services and security in Rome. Future plans were to promote a more systematic approach to collaboration, strengthen collaboration in the area of early warning and identify joint pilot programmes.

102. FAO's Assistant Director-General for United Nations Coordination and Millennium Development Goals Follow-Up outlined the rationale for collaboration among the three agencies, including their similar mandates, their proximity in Rome, and the need to avoid duplication and overlaps. Priorities for the near future were to contribute to the Comprehensive Framework for Action under the helm of the High-Level Task Force on Food Security and Nutrition; climate change and agriculture; ensuring linkages with national development plans and food security programmes; enhancing the food-security cluster; transition and hand-over activities; advocacy; and efforts to reach in particular MDG 1 and its hunger target by 2015.
103. The Secretary of IFAD updated the Board on administrative collaboration between the agencies, for which a committee had been established to discuss ways of strengthening this. Joint procurement of goods and services had resulted in cost savings and leverage advantages. The use of a common procurement unit for the three agencies was to be piloted for a year starting in January 2010.
104. WFP's Executive Director added that strengthening collaboration also included more regular contacts among the heads of the three agencies, conducting joint field visits and representing each other at high-level conferences.
105. The Board commended these developments, which they saw as promising. Members expressed their appreciation for efforts already being undertaken by WFP, but had high expectations for collaboration among the agencies and asked to be kept up to date on further developments throughout the year. The directions presented in the document were practical and achievable, especially in emphasizing that although collaboration was desirable when appropriate, it should not be an end in itself. Some members mentioned the risk of important activities being dropped in the name of efficiency; collaboration should be country-driven, and based on the specific needs of the case and on the comparative advantages of each of the three agencies.
106. Members mentioned the need to ensure that savings in administrative costs were passed on to developing countries, and emphasized that collaboration must go beyond the administrative level, to include joint programming, country plans and activities. The three agencies could also extend their joint activities to include governments, non-state actors at the national level, other United Nations agencies and other stakeholders. Collaboration was already an essential part of P4P and cash and voucher activities; it had enormous potential in local purchases, safety nets, humanitarian assistance, the transition from relief to development, agricultural training and school feeding.
107. The Board expressed its strong support for the revitalization of the CFS and its potential for strengthening global governance on food security and nutrition, and for strengthening Rome-based collaboration through the new joint Secretariat. It was agreed to amend the draft decision to include reference to the reformed CFS and encourage the active participation of WFP and IFAD, in line with the spirit of enhanced collaboration among the Rome-based agencies.
108. The Secretariat undertook to brief the Board over the following year about aspects of the collaboration. Action plans were being prepared, outlining each agency's role and responsibilities and providing timelines for implementation and indicators for measuring



outputs. These would include details on agencies' respective roles in climate change activities, as requested by several Board members.

Extension of the WFP Strategic Plan: Amendment to General Rule VI.1 (2009/EB.2/21) (for approval)

109. In order to implement the provisions of General Assembly resolution 63/232, the Board adopted, with no discussion, the amendment to WFP's General Rule VI.1.

OTHER BUSINESS

Address by Ms Helen Clark, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme

110. The Executive Director introduced Ms Helen Clark, who as Administrator of UNDP was the third highest ranking member of the United Nations. She expressed her condolences to the Administrator for the recent loss of two UNDP staff members killed in Afghanistan. UNDP was WFP's fourth largest United Nations partner; the two agencies worked together in 43 countries on a range of issues and were now looking for further opportunities for collaboration.
111. Ms Clark opened her remarks by expressing her condolences for the WFP staff members killed in Pakistan. WFP was an important partner for UNDP and the whole United Nations humanitarian system; it was important for UNDP and WFP to maintain as wide a global presence as possible, to facilitate any necessary scale-up of operations in response to unforeseen emergencies. The negative effects of global economic recession on progress towards achievement of the MDGs were a major concern, with the number of hungry people worldwide increasing. Agriculture development was essential, along with ensuring that food security pledges materialized. Ms Clark encouraged working together to strengthen capacities and institutions to address the causes of food insecurity.
112. There was already considerable joint programming among United Nations agencies in many countries and it was important that coordination be increased as well as the avoidance of duplication. Developing countries were increasingly looking to United Nations country teams for strategic advice and capacity development. WFP and UNDP could further collaborate in laying the foundations for early recovery from crises, on advising governments on social protection options and helping more small farmers become involved in WFP's P4P initiative. The intentions of United Nations agencies to work together had to be translated into practical actions on the ground to accelerate progress on the MDGs. She encouraged support for Resident Coordinators, who underwent a rigorous selection process and had complex roles.
113. The Board thanked Ms Clark for her visit and agreed that the United Nations system as a whole was to respond in new ways to transforming economies and societies. Supporting government initiatives through strategic and policy advice might require smaller but more highly skilled staff. Security issues were a growing concern for the humanitarian community, particularly for UNDP and WFP; it was suggested that countries be encouraged to include protection of humanitarian workers in their national legislation.



114. The Executive Director thanked Ms Clark and announced that a memorial service for United Nations staff who had lost their lives was to be held the following week at WFP Headquarters. She reiterated the importance of supporting Resident Coordinators who were to represent the whole United Nations, and called on countries to exercise leadership in ensuring that humanitarian workers were protected.

Revised Fee for the External Auditor for the Biennium 2008–2009

115. The decision regarding fees for the External Auditor (WFP/EB.2/2009/13) was postponed to the First Regular Session in 2010.



ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

ACABQ	Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CFS	Committee on World Food Security
CFSVA	comprehensive food security and vulnerability analysis
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CP	country programme
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
EMOP	emergency operation
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FFA	food for assets
FFE	food for education
FFW	food for work
IDP	internally displaced person
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IPSAS	International Public Sector Accounting Standards
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MCHN	mother-and-child health and nutrition
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MERET	Managing Environmental Resources to Enable Transitions to More Sustainable Livelihoods
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	non-governmental organization
OE	WFP's Office of Evaluation
P4P	Purchase for Progress
PRRO	protracted relief and recovery operation
PSA	Programme Support and Administrative
SRAC	Strategic Resource Allocation Committee
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WINGS II	WFP Information Network and Global System II