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REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ON OPERATIONAL MATTERS

Agenda item 10

*For information**



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PROTRACTED RELIEF AND RECOVERY OPERATIONS APPROVED BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (1 JANUARY–30 JUNE 2008) — LESOTHO 10599.0

Social Protection and Food Assistance for Vulnerable Groups

Number of beneficiaries	150,000
Duration of project	32 months (1 May 2008–31 December 2010)
WFP food tonnage	36,047 mt
Cost (United States dollars)	
WFP food cost	18,752,245
Total cost to WFP	31,900,844

* In accordance with the Executive Board's decisions on governance, approved at the Annual and Third Regular Sessions, 2000, items for information should not be discussed unless a Board member specifically requests it, well in advance of the meeting, and the Chair accepts the request on the grounds that it is a proper use of the Board's time.

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NOTE TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

This document is submitted to the Executive Board for information.

The Secretariat invites members of the Board who may have questions of a technical nature with regard to this document to contact the WFP staff focal points indicated below, preferably well in advance of the Board's meeting.

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ABSTRACT

1. Lesotho is a low-income, food-deficit country, importing 50 percent of its staple grain (maize) needs. Poverty, food insecurity and the HIV pandemic are profoundly interrelated in the country: nearly all human development indicators have declined over the past decade due to the destructive synergy of these factors.
2. According to estimates by the Government of Lesotho and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), 254,000 adults and 16,000 children in Lesotho are infected by HIV. The current prevalence rate of 23.2 percent is the third highest in the world, while the prevalence of tuberculosis (TB) is the second highest. The pandemic has resulted in 180,000 orphans in Lesotho, nearly 10 percent of the population.
3. Protracted relief and recovery operation (PRRO) 10599.0 followed the closure of the previous PRRO, which had been launched in 2005 to assist impoverished and food-insecure households adversely affected by drought.
4. This PRRO aims to increase access of vulnerable households to food in areas made food-insecure by natural disasters and high HIV prevalence. The objectives are to:
 - i) improve the ability of food-insecure households to protect their livelihoods and withstand external shocks;
 - ii) safeguard the health, nutrition and well-being of food-insecure HIV and TB patients on anti-retroviral therapy (ART), mother-and-child health and TB treatment programmes;
 - iii) improve the nutrition and education status of orphans and other vulnerable and malnourished children in food-insecure households; and
 - iv) enhance national capacity for the implementation of food-based social safety-net programmes, including vulnerability assessment, monitoring of food security and nutrition surveillance.
5. Associated activities are implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security. Activities are carried out in coordination with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).
6. WFP has signed field-level Memoranda of Understanding with UNICEF and UNFPA whereby those agencies provide technical expertise and non-food support including education in nutrition, HIV prevention and reproductive health, as appropriate, to orphans and other vulnerable and malnourished children, ART patients and WFP beneficiaries. FAO provides technical support for agriculture-based food-for-work activities.
7. Food distributions are carried out by international and local NGOs; food storage and transport in the districts are handled by the governmental Food Management Unit. WFP will implement and monitor the operation through its main office in Maseru and five field offices.