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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.A/2005/15.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
CURRENT AND FUTURE STRATEGIC ISSUES	
2005/EB.A/1	1
ANNUAL REPORTS	
2005/EB.A/2	3
POLICY ISSUES	
2005/EB.A/3	4
2005/EB.A/4	5
2005/EB.A/5	5
2005/EB.A/6	6
RESOURCE, FINANCIAL AND BUDGETARY MATTERS	
2005/EB.A/7	7
2005/EB.A/8	7
2005/EB.A/9	7
2005/EB.A/10	8
SOUTHERN AFRICA REGIONAL PORTFOLIO	
2005/EB.A/14	8
WEST AFRICA REGIONAL PORTFOLIO	
2005/EB.A/15	9
2005/EB.A/16	9
MIDDLE EAST, CENTRAL ASIA AND EASTERN EUROPE REGIONAL PORTFOLIO	
2005/EB.A/17	11
2005/EB.A/37	11
EAST AND CENTRAL AFRICA REGIONAL PORTFOLIO	
2005/EB.A/18	12
2005/EB.A/19	12
2005/EB.A/20	12
2005/EB.A/21	12
2005/EB.A/22	12
LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN REGIONAL PORTFOLIO	
2005/EB.A/23	14
2005/EB.A/24	14



ASIA REGIONAL PORTFOLIO

2005/EB.A/25	Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation Approved by the Executive Director (1 July–31 December 2004) — Timor-Leste 10388.0	14
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ADMINISTRATIVE AND MANAGERIAL MATTERS

2005/EB.A/31	Report on Post-Delivery Losses for the Period 1 January–31 December 2004	15
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OTHER BUSINESS

2005/EB.A/38	Report of the Joint Visit of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP to Azerbaijan	16
	United States and United Kingdom Initiative on Africa	16
	Address by His Excellency Olusegun Obasanjo, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria	17



CURRENT AND FUTURE STRATEGIC ISSUES

Current and Future Strategic Issues (2005/EB.A/1)

1. After welcoming Board members and observers to the Annual Session, the Executive Director briefed the Board on a recent humanitarian mission in southern Africa and meetings in Belgium with representatives of the European Union. Southern Africa was facing an extremely severe humanitarian crisis, with the impact of HIV/AIDS compounded by recent droughts, leaving up to 10 million people hungry.
2. The Board was also informed about WFP's participation in reform in the United Nations system. In southern Africa, United Nations regional directors were forming a team to manage local responses to the threats of hunger, poverty and HIV/AIDS. Governments were making progress in distributing anti-retroviral (ARV) drugs; government capacity, good nutrition, food and clean water were important to the effectiveness of these drugs. The Executive Director added that there was currently less food aid available in the world but more hungry people; rising transport and food costs were a major challenge to meeting food needs. WFP needed to do more to include beneficiaries in planning, rotate more staff to the field and improve employment conditions for national staff.
3. Regarding the World Trade Organization (WTO)'s ongoing negotiations on trade and agricultural issues, the Executive Director expressed concern about the potential impact of WTO decisions on the ability of WFP to attract additional resources; but he emphasized that WFP had no interest in a central role in trade debates. The Executive Director also emphasized the importance of addressing the problem of hungry children, particularly in the context of efforts to reach the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). WFP had a role to play in this, but it was a task that required a global effort.
4. Lack of commitments from major donors had resulted in a food shortfall in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). In Darfur, 1.6 million people had been fed in May, but there were substantial resource shortfalls in other parts of Sudan. The situations in Ethiopia and Eritrea were also serious. In Latin America, a regional effort was needed to address child malnutrition. Operations in the areas affected by the December 2004 tsunami were transitioning from relief to recovery and rehabilitation.
5. The Executive Director thanked Board members who had contributed to improving WFP's visibility and noted that the WFP website would soon be available in 11 languages. The Board then viewed three short video presentations on Walk the World, Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools and the Food-Force computer game.
6. Mr Lennart Båge, President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and special guest of the Annual Session, emphasized the complementary mandates of IFAD and WFP. IFAD had concentrated on helping countries to meet the MDGs; a report would be presented to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC) in July 2005. The major challenge lay in Africa: it was crucial for IFAD to cooperate with other United Nations agencies and with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), governments, donors and the private sector. The Gleneagles G-8 summit, due to focus on Africa, needed to meet the huge challenge of African agriculture; investment and spending were far below Asian levels. Food imports had reached record levels and the number of people facing food insecurity had soared; there was a serious lack of investment in infrastructure. In Asia, progress towards achieving the MDGs was on track, and poverty had already fallen sharply, though there were still 400 million poor people. The main obstacles to long-term development were vulnerability and risk, with volatile commodity



prices, financial instability, livestock disease and humanitarian disasters the main threats. The international community needed to strike a balance between tackling immediate needs and securing sustainable livelihoods for local communities. Recently, cooperation between WFP and IFAD had made particular progress with regard to facing the triple threat to security posed in southern Africa by HIV/AIDS, governance issues and food insecurity; there was a need, however, for greater coordination in the future. School feeding had been successful in Africa, but there were many areas where more cooperation could be achieved.

7. In response to questions, Mr. Båge confirmed the success of IFAD cooperation with WFP in India; some joint projects had been adapted at the national level. The food for work (FFW) component had been instrumental in increasing rural employment and infrastructure investment. Much of the significant drop in poverty in India could be attributed to the green revolution; a study in 58 countries had revealed a link between increased agricultural productivity and poverty reduction.
8. Mr Kamel Morjane, Assistant High Commissioner for Refugees and special guest of the Annual Session, said that the partnership between WFP and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was fully operational. Cooperation ranged from regular high-level meetings to joint needs assessments and training activities in the field. Pilot evaluations of food distribution had been carried out by UNHCR; the findings would be presented to the Board early in 2006. Despite these efforts, the food situation of refugees and displaced people, especially in West Africa and the Great Lakes region, remained alarming. Donor response had remained low despite warnings. Expressing his thanks to all donors on behalf of UNHCR and WFP, he urged them to contribute to a special effort to avoid a humanitarian disaster. Self-reliance strategies and alternatives to food aid needed to be explored to achieve food security. Some countries were inflexible with regard to making agricultural land available to refugees or allowing them to work; a UNHCR progress report, to which WFP had contributed, would soon be available.
9. In response to questions, Mr Morjane stressed that UNHCR had to encourage donor governments to increase their donations and had to urge host governments to do all they could to protect refugees. UNHCR had seldom had to face situations where governments forced refugees to return to hostile conditions in their places of origin; governments usually complied with international law. But he recognized the enormous economic and social burden on host countries; UNHCR itself faced a considerable financial shortfall every year. Much had been done to integrate UNHCR efforts with local initiatives; farming in situ had frequently been promoted as a solution to refugees' difficulties. With WFP, UNHCR was doing all it could to address the situation of refugees throughout Sudan: UNHCR had been the first international agency to cooperate directly with the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) when helping refugees and displaced people; it also cooperated with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UN/ECA). UNHCR was unable to work directly with or for displaced Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territory or in Jordan, the Syrian Arab Republic or Lebanon, because they were the exclusive remit of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA); however, UNHCR worked successfully in cooperation with its sister agency and assisted Palestinian refugees living outside the Occupied Palestinian Territory.
10. The Board expressed its gratitude for the Executive Director's presentation, particularly regarding the crisis in southern Africa. Board members praised WFP's increased harmonization with United Nations agencies and other partners towards emergency



response and long-term development; such responses must be impact-focused and aligned with countries' poverty-reduction strategies. WFP's pilot efforts to utilize the business process review (BPR) and broaden the donor base had been successful. It was noted that untied, multilateral contributions were the most flexible. Several Board members stressed the importance of addressing the desert locust crisis in the Sahel.

11. The Executive Director thanked the Board for its interventions. He expressed his appreciation to all donors, noting however that untied, multilateral donations had been declining. The Executive Director agreed to provide a management response to the external evaluation of WFP's Enabling Development Policy, to continue prioritizing staff security, national capacity and local procurement, and to remain focused on all needs, including low-profile crises. The Executive Director agreed that a special focus on Africa was important; cooperation was required at all levels to achieve the MDGs. He drew attention again to the situation in Sudan, both in Darfur and in the south. In conclusion, it was stressed that the global response to HIV/AIDS must separate the use of resources to fight AIDS from political issues.

ANNUAL REPORTS

Annual Performance Report for 2004 (2005/EB.A/2)

12. The Secretariat presented the Annual Performance Report (APR) for 2004, setting out its aims and the approach to its preparation. It was stressed that the report was the first to detail outcome-level results for the strategic priorities and achievements for the management priorities.
13. The Board commended WFP and its staff for its excellent performance in 2004 and for the overall improvement in results reporting as reflected in the APR. The quality of the document, its overall usefulness, its examples of good practice and the significant progress in outcome level reporting were all applauded.
14. The Board welcomed the APR, which was widely seen as a comprehensive, informative and analytical document backed by a wealth of statistical data, representing an improvement over the previous year's APR. A number of suggestions and requests were made as to ways in which the report could be improved with a view to producing an even more outcome and results-oriented document for 2005. They mainly concerned the report's content, presentation, degree of analysis and inclusion of supplementary data, and were expressed in the interest of greater clarity and comparability. In view of the large number of requests for the inclusion of more and more data and analysis, it was observed that a balance needed to be struck between producing concise documents, as was also often requested, and including extra information.
15. Other topics raised during the discussion included (i) multilateral and untied donations, (ii) in-kind and cash donations, (iii) donations by recipient countries, (iv) partnerships with other bodies, (v) the differentiation between beneficiaries reached following natural disasters and those reached following disasters caused by human activity, (vi) the attribution of food aid support to poverty reduction or to the solution of humanitarian crises, (vii) comparative levels of donations to WFP, (viii) regional and local procurement, (ix) the long-term effects of food aid, and (x) HIV/AIDS and the chapters on trends and lessons and on the Office of Evaluation (OEDE) Summary of Evaluation Findings and Lessons (Annex III).



16. The Secretariat welcomed the Board members' remarks, agreeing that the report could be further improved. It was suggested that an annual informal consultation of the Board be held to ensure that the Board could add its input to the content and format of the APR at the appropriate time. The comments made would serve to ensure that the APR would meet accountability requirements and be a useful tool for purposes of advocacy, transparency and public awareness. The Secretariat noted that results-based management (RBM) at WFP had the potential to become the model for other United Nations organizations.
17. Explanations were provided with regard to some of the discrepancies or apparent contradictions in the data and tables signalled by the Board. Requests would be met to clarify certain information in terms of clearer differentiation between categories of statistics to avoid ambiguities. Assurances were given as to the representativeness of project samples used and the efforts made to ensure that the data was as accurate, up to date and comprehensive as possible. Attention would continue to be paid to reviews of monitoring methods and standardizing the presentation of study findings.

POLICY ISSUES

Strategic Plan (2006–2009) (2005/EB.A/3)

18. Following wide consultation, the WFP's Strategic Plan (2006–2009) was presented to the Board for approval. In the plan, which was to guide WFP's activities and provide a framework for the Biennial Management Plan, the term "strategic priorities" had been replaced by "strategic objectives" and the term "management priorities" by "management objectives".
19. The Board supported the document and commended the Secretariat for anchoring the plan in terms of achieving the MDGs. It was recognized that the Strategic Plan incorporated the complementary objectives of providing humanitarian assistance and promoting sustainable development. Some Board members suggested that the plan could have addressed more specifically joint programming issues with other United Nations organizations, partnerships with bilateral-aid agencies and capacity-building with national governments.
20. Board members commended the Secretariat on its development of performance indicators and recommended that they be further fine-tuned. A more diversified approach to fundraising, considering that the quality of resources was as important as the quantity, and additional focus on exit strategies were also recommended. In view of resource limitations, some members stressed the importance of prioritizing activities within the broader strategic framework. The Board agreed (i) that the third point in the Draft Decision would be amended to include the word "mothers", (ii) to emphasize importance of partnerships, (iii) to specify the types of partners with which WFP sought to build strong partnerships, and (iv) that the last point in the Draft Decision would be amended to refer to "the Secretariat" rather than WFP.
21. The Executive Director thanked the Board for its comments and recommendations, acknowledging the importance of building partnerships, especially with national governments. In response to the Board's comments, the Secretariat concurred that providing relief to hungry people and encouraging long-term sustainability would be ongoing challenges for WFP. The Secretariat appreciated the Board's willingness to adhere to humanitarian best practices, a necessity previously emphasized by several Board members.



22. The Executive Director expressed his concern that changes in the international trade regime resulting from the current WTO negotiations on agriculture might inadvertently affect WFP's ability to raise resources. The Secretariat agreed to provide the Board with a paper examining the impact of providing food aid in the developing world.

Information Note on the Progress of Implementation of the WFP Gender Policy (2003–2007) (2005/EB.A/4)

23. The Secretariat presented an Information Note for the Board's consideration regarding progress on implementation of WFP's Gender Policy (2003–2007), following a mid-term review of gender policy implementation. Members of the Board commended WFP's efforts to mainstream gender and its progress in implementing the gender policy in line with its Enhanced Commitments to Women (ECW). More focus was needed, however, on resourcing gender initiatives, integrating gender policy into operations and mainstreaming gender in WFP's response to HIV/AIDS as well as enhancing the collaboration between the gender unit and the HIV/AIDS unit. The need for reliable indicators of progress was also emphasized.
24. The Board praised WFP's focus on distributing food aid directly to women and involving women in FFW and food-for-training (FFT) activities, but suggested that it should address the difficulties beneficiary women faced such as having to carry heavy bags of WFP commodities over long distances. A question was raised as to whether WFP's Information Network and Global System (WINGS) could track and record gender expenses. Members of the Board encouraged the Secretariat to redouble its efforts to meet the target set for the proportion of women in professional categories and senior-level posts.
25. The Secretariat appreciated the Board's recognition of its efforts, and would continue to work to integrate the gender policy in operations; specialist staff capacity was sufficient to achieve this. The Secretariat was examining difficulties caused by large ration bags and would consult with regional directors and beneficiary women regarding an appropriate solution. WFP's commitment to developing indicators and strengthening women's capacity to become influential in local programme-related bodies was reiterated.

Answering the Call to Action: An Update on WFP's Response to HIV/AIDS (2005/EB.A/5)

26. The Secretariat introduced the document, noting that since the last update in 2004 the main focus had been on nutritional support for ARV care and treatment, prevention in school feeding programmes and relief operations, and support for orphans and other vulnerable children (OVC). There was still need for WFP to expand its knowledge base to enable it to target areas where it could achieve the greatest impact through its programmes and to improve its indicators so that accurate assessments of impacts could be made.
27. The Board welcomed the document, and warmly supported the policies and actions it set out, particularly WFP's becoming a co-sponsor of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), its commitment to the "three ones",¹ the focus on children and women, and on prevention. The Board noted that tuberculosis (TB) was often fatal among people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) and that treating TB could enable PLWHA to survive until ARV drugs became available to them; it recognized the need to provide incentives such as food support to encourage people to complete TB treatment and asked

¹ The "Three Ones": i) one agreed HIV/AIDS Action Framework; ii) one National AIDS Coordinating Authority; and iii) one agreed country-level Monitoring and Evaluation System.



the Secretariat to provide information on this area in a future paper. The need for WFP to increase its area of intervention for school feeding and other activities that supported HIV/AIDS programmes was noted. Several members supported WFP in its desire to increase its knowledge base and improve its indicators, and asked what funding sources were available for this. A brief update on the high-level meeting on HIV/AIDS in New York was requested. The Board noted the desirability of the greatest possible coordination among agencies to promote sharing of knowledge and best practices. It also noted that HIV/AIDS was part of a complex set of interacting issues that needed to be addressed holistically; the needs for accurate targeting and for support for national treatment programmes were emphasized by several members.

28. Responding to the Board's comments, the Secretariat emphasized that although rapid progress had been made in several areas, it was not complacent and recognized the need for further efforts. WFP was considering various funding sources for research that would contribute to improving programme quality and impact of nutritional support in both care and treatment for programmes for HIV and TB; WFP was leading some research efforts, but was not doing the research itself, which was left to national and international research institutes. The Secretariat was fully aware of the need for joint approaches and solutions, and emphasized WFP's many effective partnerships in its work on HIV/AIDS issues; the role of women in dealing with HIV/AIDS and the need for long-term follow up to determine outcomes would be further highlighted in future activities.
29. Being a co-sponsor of UNAIDS had the advantages of bringing WFP to the forefront of action against HIV/AIDS and of making other actors aware of the significance of food support for those affected by HIV and those who were HIV positive.
30. The Secretariat emphasized that HIV/AIDS was at the centre of WFP's work. The New York high-level meeting had focused on OVC and school feeding, the effectiveness of which had been noted, and on the need to support families affected by the pandemic. WFP was fully aware of the importance of food support in responding to HIV/AIDS and of working with others on a problem of such global dimensions.

Report on the Management of Evaluation (2005/EB.A/6)

31. In presenting the Report on the Management of Evaluation, the Director of OEDE drew attention to the fact that since the first annual informal consultation on evaluation on 19 May 2005 only minor changes, some of them editorial, had been made to the report. It was impossible to compare WFP's expenditure on evaluation with that of other agencies, and there were no established norms for expenditure on evaluation. On the other hand, a survey by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) offered a useful comparison of professional staff levels, as stated in the report.
32. The Board expressed its appreciation of the report and the principles it set out. The annual informal consultation on evaluation had proved extremely useful and should be repeated. The Steering Group on Governance was praised for its work on the subject. WFP needed to focus more, however, on evaluating the long-term effects of food aid. The work of OEDE was pivotal and major findings of evaluations needed to be reflected in the APR and not in an Annex. Skills and experience of staff in OEDE needed to be strengthened and the level of the Director of OEDE raised. The dissemination of lessons learned needed to be further institutionalized.



33. Emphasizing the fact that evaluation was constantly evolving and that the document for consideration was only one aspect, the Director of Evaluation assured the Board that their suggestions and comments would be taken fully into account. It was agreed that the annual informal consultation on evaluation should be repeated. OEDE's work plan would be presented together with the budget. The comparative levels of spending on evaluation among agencies would be further investigated but the relatively high level at IFAD was not necessarily a suitable target for WFP.

RESOURCE, FINANCIAL AND BUDGETARY MATTERS

Consolidated Financial Report (2005/EB.A/7)

34. The Secretariat introduced the information document and explained that it included financial information covering (i) the financial report for 2004, (ii) cash and investment management and (iii) a report on the utilization of resources and waivers required under the General Rules.
35. In response to a Board member's question regarding the decline in the proportionate level of in-kind commodities in 2004 as compared with 2002–2003, the Secretariat explained that the high level of cash purchases for Iraq in 2004 had resulted in a lower proportion of in-kind expenditures.
36. The Secretariat also explained the meaning of the word "unrestricted" as including multilateral contributions whose utilization was decided by WFP but that are sometimes spent in the country of the donor because of particular commodity requirements. The Board asked the Secretariat to ensure that in future reports the Board would be provided with statistics showing freely available cash.

Report of the External Auditor on the Upgrade of the WFP Information Network and Global System (2005/EB.A/8)

37. The Director of the Office of the External Auditor presented the report of the External Auditor on the upgrade of WINGS which aimed to inform decisions by management and the Board before WFP proceeded with the next phase of application. To date, WFP management had approached the upgrade in a sound and appropriate way; the report set out the recommendations of the Office of the External Auditor for moving ahead.
38. In response to questions and comments raised by Board members, the External Audit Director commented that the main reason why major systems at international organizations proved more costly and complex than expected was that users tended to customize them rather than adapt their methodologies to existing systems; accordingly, it was preferable for management practices to be adapted to information systems rather than vice versa. Emphasizing the complexity of the subject, the Secretariat acknowledged the importance of implementing the recommendations at the second phase of implementation and the need to focus on user involvement. Gaps such as inadequate staff training would be remedied, and ways of coordinating with other agencies' systems would be investigated.

Follow-Up on the Recommendations of the External Auditor (2005/EB.A/9)

39. Introducing the document, the Secretariat stated that of the 33 recommendations made by the External Auditor, 26 had been implemented and seven were in the process of being implemented; the aim was to complete the process for all the recommendations by the end of 2005.



40. In response to a question, the External Auditor stated that he and his staff would carry out their own follow-up to monitor WFP's action on the audit recommendations, which would be reflected in his report to the 2006 Annual Session of the Board. The External Auditor appreciated the value of being able to work with the new Audit Committee, a forum in which audit issues could be discussed with the Secretariat present.
41. The Executive Director thanked the External Auditor for the helpful and professional way in which WFP's accounts were being examined, and mentioned WFP's aim to make the membership of the Audit Committee, which already had a majority of external experts, 100 percent independent external experts. This would be an unprecedented development in the United Nations system but was in line with best practices in other organizations.

Business Process Review: Progress Report on Implementation (2005/EB.A/10)

42. Introducing the document, the Secretariat drew attention to two changes approved by the Board – the introduction of working-capital financing and pre-filling of pipelines. The number of BPR projects had increased from five projects to nine, with three more envisaged for 2006. The pilot projects had succeeded in feeding considerably more beneficiaries on time than under the previous system and some of the working-capital loans had already been repaid in full. WFP expected BPR implementation to be mainstreamed by the end of 2005.
43. The Board welcomed these bold reforms, noting the demonstrated improvement in WFP's ability to feed beneficiaries on time. The Board noted that donors themselves would need to consider reforming as well in order to maximize the benefits that the facility could achieve; some of the donors were beginning a reform process. The need for clear accountability and coordination with donors was recognized. A question was raised as to whether the new system would be expanded to development programmes. The Board recognized that the process of mainstreaming the new practices across WFP could take time.
44. The Secretariat thanked the Board members for their comments and emphasized the continuing nature of discussions regarding pre-purchasing methods. WFP was working to embed the new business practices into its operations, keeping costs to a minimum and considering the application of these processes to other programme categories as appropriate. WFP respected the regulations governing donor contributions; the Secretariat thanked the donors for their collaboration in finding ways to optimize the utility of contributions.

SOUTHERN AFRICA REGIONAL PORTFOLIO

Development Project Approved by the Executive Director (1 July–31 December 2004) – South Africa 10394.0 (2005/EB.A/14)

45. In making the regional presentation for the Southern Africa Regional Bureau (ODJ), the Regional Director reiterated that the major humanitarian crisis facing southern Africa was largely caused by the triple threat of HIV/AIDS, food insecurity and weakened government capacity. The burden of HIV/AIDS laid particularly heavily on vulnerable groups such as elderly people and orphans. There had nonetheless been a substantial increase in the numbers of people receiving ARV therapy, but adequate nutrition was a vital factor in its effectiveness.



46. Optimistic harvest predictions for the southern Africa region conveyed to the Board earlier in the year needed to be revised in the light of sustained drought since then. Many more people in the region than originally planned would therefore be relying on food aid and other assistance. Only when assessment studies had been completed would the magnitude of additional needs to be covered by the existing regional protracted relief and recovery operation (PRRO) 10310 become clear; in any case, the resources available for meeting the requirements of PRRO 10310 were insufficient. Already in 2005 far less food had been distributed in the region than planned and it would be extremely difficult to meet life-saving needs in Southern Africa unless many more contributions were received. An urgent appeal was therefore launched for more donations.
47. The situations in Angola and Madagascar were more hopeful. In Angola, cereal production had increased and FFW and food-for-education (FFE) programmes had been successful. A downscaled, more geographically targeted PRRO for the country would be presented to the Board later in the year. More plentiful rice crops and favourable weather conditions in Madagascar had enabled WFP to focus on helping the Government to tackle food issues in the south.
48. A cohesive working relationship among United Nations agencies had been developed in Johannesburg under the leadership of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) regional manager.
49. Members of the Board echoed the concerns expressed about the dramatic situation facing southern Africa, especially the HIV/AIDS pandemic and its consequences. There was no doubt that world attention on the tsunami crisis had diverted resources away from southern Africa, where some government policies, especially in agriculture, were also open to criticism. Appeals for increased donations to address the situation were therefore given full support. Hopes were expressed that the international community would assist the region's governments in finding solutions to their needs and empowering individuals so that exit strategies could be implemented. As a matter of urgency, national authorities needed to be alerted to the gravity of the situation in southern Africa but also informed of the positive consequences of WFP actions, to encourage them to do more to help.
50. In response to a question raised about the levels of WFP distribution costs in the region and the risks they apparently posed, the Secretariat gave an assurance that all had been done to keep those costs down. It was emphasized that distributing food to remote areas was inherently costly.
51. The Board regretted that it had not been possible to fund the project adequately to date, particularly because many elements of it had been recommended by the Board, such as enhanced United Nations system coordination and local food purchases.

WEST AFRICA REGIONAL PORTFOLIO

Draft Country Programme – Burkina Faso 10399.0 (2006–2010) (2005/EB.A/15)

Draft Country Programme – Ghana 10418.0 (2006–2010) (2005/EB.A/16)

52. The Regional Director presented an overview of work in the region and two draft country programmes for consideration: Burkina Faso 10399.0 (2006–2010) and Ghana 10418.0 (2006–2010). He emphasized that every country in West Africa was affected by structural poverty; the region was especially vulnerable to human conflicts and natural



calamities. All WFP projects for the region were insufficiently resourced; an appeal was issued for more contributions.

53. The Board was given information about WFP activities aimed at addressing the conflicts in Togo, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire. Work had started to feed internally displaced people (IDPs), and refugees in countries neighbouring Togo. In Liberia, WFP had played an important role in maintaining peace and stability, with a focus on resettlement of refugees and IDPs. The improved situation in the country had facilitated the task: FFW and school feeding had been highly successful and were expanding. Instability in Côte d'Ivoire, however, had made it harder for WFP to act; it was doing all it could to assist with demobilization and resettlement.
54. The 2004 desert locust infestation in the Sahel, which had had disastrous effects on food security, had to some extent been brought under control thanks to the measures taken and favourable weather conditions. The area affected had diminished; Mali, Niger and Mauritania were the worst affected. Malnutrition in those countries was increasing and more contributions to projects were urgently needed.
55. WFP was feeding 200,000 refugees in Chad. Food deliveries were regular and no severe malnutrition had been reported. FFW and school feeding projects were proving successful, and the Libyan corridor for food delivery was being reinforced. The coming months would be critical, however.
56. The Joint Office Model (JOM), part of the United Nations reform, was being tested in Cape Verde; WFP was participating in the pilot project with UNDP, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).
57. The two draft country programmes had been prepared through consultation with donor representatives and in conformity with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF); to enhance transparency, it involved full NGO participation. Both programmes were geographically targeted and resource oriented. Attention was drawn to the fact that Burkina Faso was a least-developed country ranked among the poorest in the world by UNDP. It was planned that the Government would take over the country programme for Ghana.
58. The Board commended WFP on its efforts to address the situation in West Africa and noted the appeals for more donations. It was pointed out that the desert locust infestation was still causing damage throughout the Sahel; appeals were made for even greater solidarity among the international community.
59. With regard to the draft country programmes, the Board congratulated the Secretariat on producing excellent documents that included independent evaluations of nutritional impacts and proposed exit strategies. Extreme poverty in Burkina Faso and the severe food insecurity facing the whole region were also stressed; appeals were made for donations for both programmes. Requests were made to ensure that the WFP Strategic Plan was fully taken into account when the programmes were finalized. The emphasis on local and regional food purchase was welcomed. The Board also welcomed the exit strategy presented in the Ghana country programme.
60. In general, the Board felt that Annex II of the programme (the matrix of results) was clear and would provide useful information on the achievements of the two country programmes.
61. The Secretariat assured the Board that there would be full cooperation with UNICEF and that the Board members' comments would be reflected in subsequent preparations. The concept of satellite schools was explained. Issues such as consultation with communities,



and women in particular, avoidance of alien foodstuffs, self-reliance, decentralization of capacity-building and education activities, and government ownership, were seen as essential and had already been taken into account. It had been demonstrated that food aid itself favoured gender equality.

MIDDLE EAST, CENTRAL ASIA AND EASTERN EUROPE REGIONAL PORTFOLIO

Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation for Executive Board Approval – Occupied Palestinian Territory 10387.0 (2005/EB.A/17)

Report on the Executive Board Members' Visit to the Occupied Palestinian Territory (2005/EB.A/37)

62. The Secretariat thanked all donors who had assisted WFP's efforts in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and presented PRRO 10387.0 for the Board's approval. This PRRO would be a continuation of the ongoing emergency operation (EMOP); it would enhance the Palestinian people's resistance to shocks and build the capacity of the Palestinian Authority. FFW and FFT activities, and partnerships with other United Nations agencies and NGOs would also be strengthened. The primary beneficiaries would be recipients of aid from the Ministry of Social Affairs and the new poor – those who had lost their livelihoods during the past four years of conflict. WFP would purchase olive oil from local farmers to strengthen the economy.
63. The Ambassador of the United Kingdom reported on a recent Executive Board field mission to the Occupied Palestinian Territory to assess the existing EMOP and examine the pilot working-capital financing initiative. Participants were impressed by WFP's relationship with the Palestinian Authority and its coordination with other United Nations agencies in the region. The team also observed that the working-capital financing initiative had allowed WFP to deliver more food earlier to beneficiaries. In the current political context, however, they believed that livelihoods would continue to be limited and WFP would play a vital role in food security.
64. The Board supported the proposed PRRO and thanked both the country director and the Board members who visited the region. Board members acknowledged that conflict and economic crisis had eroded food security in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and reiterated the need for support to development; WFP was commended for its local purchase of olive oil in the West Bank. The Board also stressed the importance of WFP's coordination with UNRWA, the World Bank, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and others in the region.
65. The Secretariat thanked the Board for its interventions and for its successful field mission, recognizing the benefits of coordination with UNRWA and other partners. In response to a request from the Board, the Secretariat agreed to add the word "current" to the phrase "the humanitarian crisis" in the first sentence of the PRRO document's Executive Summary to reflect that this refers to the Occupied Palestinian Territory during the second *intifada*.
66. The Regional Director advised that the new PRRO for Afghanistan would be presented for consideration at the next Board session. He noted that the country office was developing it in consultation with the Government, donors, United Nations agencies and partners. The new PRRO would be based on the recommendations and lessons learned



from the evaluation presented at the last Board session and other reviews; it would build on strengths of the current PRRO, which was being undertaken in a difficult security situation.

67. The Regional Director noted that the Azerbaijan PRRO and those following for Georgia, and Armenia could now be approved under the Executive Director's delegated authority; unless the Board members advised otherwise, these would not be presented to the Board.
68. Regarding the query on the debt-swap in Syria, it was noted that WFP continued to promote the use of the debt-swap mechanism, which had been successful in Egypt. In the case of Syria, WFP had had positive discussions with the Syrian Government and the Russian ambassador following agreement between the two governments on debt balances.

EAST AND CENTRAL AFRICA REGIONAL PORTFOLIO

Summary Report of the Evaluation of WFP's Development and Recovery Portfolio in Uganda (2005/EB.A/18)

Draft Country Programme — Uganda 10426.0 (2005/EB.A/19)

Budget Increases to Development Projects for Executive Board Approval — Tanzania Country Programme 10065.0 (2005/EB.A/20)

Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation for Executive Board Approval — Kenya 10258.1 (2005/EB.A/21)

Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation for Executive Board Approval — Eritrea 10192.1 (2005/EB.A/22)

69. The Secretariat gave an overall picture of the situation in East and Central Africa, noting that insufficient resources had impacted all projects in the region. In the Democratic Republic of Congo instability, violence and the risk of further unrest were significant; a contingency plan had been implemented to protect staff. In Ethiopia, weak resources had delayed the start of the safety-net programme; a joint assessment of beneficiary numbers would commence soon. In Rwanda, rations had been cut and FFW activities suspended because of inadequate resources. Rebels in Uganda had attacked civilians, especially women, and WFP convoys.
70. The Secretariat thanked donors for assistance in Darfur. Concerns remained in Sudan, however, regarding (i) insecurity, which had hindered the movement of food to refugees, (ii) limited transport capacity, which had confined 100,000 mt of food at the port and (iii) operations in Darfur, where malnutrition among refugees was rising because of poor sanitation. Southern Sudan was characterized by limited resources and infrastructure, poor management and an influx of refugees.
71. The Director of Evaluation presented a recent evaluation of the Uganda development and recovery portfolio. The US\$290 million portfolio comprised Country Programme 10019.0, Development Project 10139.0 and the recovery component of PRRO 10121.0. The evaluation commended the WFP country office for quickly changing strategy in response to the humanitarian crisis in northern Uganda. However, the evaluation recommended that capacity-building of partners and small farmers should be stepped up in order to improve the impact and sustainability of the agricultural and marketing and



food-for-assets components. Baseline studies and monitoring should be improved and an exit strategy developed. Various members of the Board commended OEDE for the evaluations and noted that the country office had taken the recommendations into account in the design of the country programme. Some donors wished to know more about the effects of local purchase on market prices, and it was explained that the Strategy, Policy and Programme Support Division was investigating the issue and would present a document to the Board in November 2005.

72. The draft country programme for Uganda, budget increase to the Tanzania country programme and PRROs for Kenya and Eritrea, developed following extensive consultations with governments and implementing partners, aimed to address health and sanitation issues, alleviate food insecurity and strengthen national capacities.
73. The Board welcomed the presentation and documents, praising WFP for its achievements in a region facing a serious humanitarian crisis. Conflict, low food production, high demographic growth and HIV/AIDS were particular causes for concern. It was stressed that some of the countries in the region were among the world's poorest and least developed, and that the refugee situation and other problems were unlikely to improve in the near future. Appeals were made for contributions to the proposed programmes; the Secretariat expressed its gratitude for donations made in the past and pledged for the future.
74. Several members referred to the need for increased cooperation with other organizations and with national authorities: partnerships of all kinds needed to be promoted, especially with UNHCR. Local capacity needed to be boosted with a view to achieving long-term self-reliance. The Board praised the importance attached to capacity-building and the involvement of communities, particularly women, in project design. Concern was expressed, however, that the lack of resources for implementing activities could jeopardize WFP's credibility. It was important to ensure that WFP was results-oriented in all its activities and evaluations.
75. Board members raised questions as to the sources and reliability of some statistics in the documents, and expressed concern that the authorities in some countries were not doing enough, especially in terms of economic and agricultural policy, to alleviate problems: drought and conflict were not the only causes of long-term food insecurity. Food aid should not be distributed at the expense of other activities, such as FFW and school feeding, which could have longer-term benefits without distorting local markets. The Board urged WFP to ensure that aid went to the poorest and most vulnerable people and emphasized that PRROs should be capable of responding to changing situations.
76. The Secretariat appreciated the Board's comments and expressed gratitude for support for WFP operations in the region. Addressing the impacts of HIV/AIDS would be a high priority, focusing on preventing mother-to-child transmission (MCT) and tuberculosis. Capacity-building would also be a major focus of these programmes, in coordination with UNHCR, NGOs and national governments. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) would be strengthened in line with RBM. In response to a Board member's query, the Secretariat noted that cash contributions could be provided in some areas, but cash was not appropriate in areas where no food was available. Regional purchase had been largely unsuccessful, although some commodities had been purchased in South Africa. The Secretariat reaffirmed the need for frequent local reporting from country offices.



LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN REGIONAL PORTFOLIO

Development Project for Executive Board Approval – Latin America and Caribbean Region Capacity-Building Project 10411.0 (2005/EB.A/23)

Development Project for Executive Board Approval – Central America Region Capacity-Building Project 10421.0 (2005/EB.A/24)

77. The Board congratulated the Latin America and Caribbean Regional Bureau (ODPC) on the two regional capacity-building projects, which fell within WFP's mandate and strategy. The implementation approach was endorsed by the Board members who noted that the two projects would strengthen government capacity to enable social programmes in the region to reach the most needy people in the Latin America and Caribbean region.
78. Board members stressed the importance of developing the capacity of local governments by working with local experts and by sharing expertise in the region. The Board stressed the importance of South-South cooperation and sharing lessons learned within the region, with other regions of WFP and with the Board.
79. The Board also emphasized the importance of sustainability and working to develop capacity at all levels. The importance of cooperating with United Nations agencies and bilateral and local actors was highlighted. The Board cautioned that WFP should make use of all existing information and not duplicate ongoing data collection efforts in the region.
80. The Board agreed that these projects should be considered framework projects and that country-specific activities should follow based on national strategies and priorities.
81. A number of delegates mentioned the importance of establishing baselines for the projects, emphasizing lessons learned and the need to develop a plan of work based on national priorities.
82. ODPC was asked to provide the Board with an update on progress during the life of the two projects.

ASIA REGIONAL PORTFOLIO

Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation Approved by the Executive Director (1 July–31 December 2004) – Timor-Leste 10388.0 (2005/EB.A/25)

83. The Regional Director began by observing that the situation in countries affected by the December 2004 tsunami was stabilizing following rapid and efficient emergency interventions, and noting the need for accurate targeting and measurement of programme impacts; a real-time evaluation was ongoing. Operations were fully resourced. The Regional Director stressed the importance and effectiveness of partnerships with governments and other agencies, and noted the need for more emergency officers and training and for WFP to have greater access to aircraft for food deliveries. The risk of further natural disasters in the region was noted; improved emergency preparedness was required. The situation in DPRK was worrying: in response to a growing food crisis the government was mobilizing even urban residents to work in agriculture; food prices were high and rising, and incomes were falling. Rations distributed through the public



distribution system (PDS) had been reduced, and there was a 63 percent shortfall in funding for WFP's activities; assistance was already being cut, and more cuts would be forthcoming. Appreciation was expressed for the government's support, but without random access to beneficiaries it was difficult to establish the facts of the food situation.

84. In Cambodia and Bangladesh, the governments would compensate WFP for food losses; the parties were working together on measures to prevent further losses and improve accountability. A needs assessment had been made in the Philippines following a request from the Government and WFP was considering launching an operation; a decision had been made following an assessment in Papua New Guinea that WFP would not intervene – other actors were better placed to deal with the situation.
85. In welcoming the presentation, the Board praised WFP's work in response to the tsunami; the contributions of the private sector and governments were also acknowledged. Questions were raised regarding the extent of market analysis in the areas affected by the tsunami and whether the cash-distribution programme could be extended. Some members raised questions as to what measures WFP was taking to ensure maximum effectiveness of its programmes and how often and by what criteria WFP decided not to intervene in humanitarian situations. Questions were put regarding whether surplus resources from tsunami operations would be transferred to other operations, whether the situation in Nepal called for changes in operation modalities and whether the Government of DPRK might contribute to WFP operations.
86. In response, the Regional Director offered to answer questions related to the tsunami disaster by e-mail; all Board members would be copied. Work was in progress with governments in the region on improving knowledge about nutrition, which was difficult to measure. Local purchases of food were made whenever possible; the need to eliminate corruption was noted. Surpluses from tsunami operations would be re-programmed, with the agreement of donors. The situation in Nepal was uncertain and constraining operations; donors were thanked for their contributions, especially for the Bhutanese refugees. WFP was seeking greater cooperation from the Government of DPRK; some progress was being made. The Regional Director thanked the Board warmly for its support and appealed for contributions to ensure that all operations were funded.

ADMINISTRATIVE AND MANAGERIAL MATTERS

Report on Post-Delivery Losses for the Period 1 January–31 December 2004 (2005/EB.A/31)

87. In presenting the Report on Post-Delivery Losses (1 January–31 December 2004), the Secretariat emphasized WFP's commitment to accountability and accuracy of reporting. In 2004, the cost, insurance and freight (c.i.f.) value of post-delivery losses had declined by 0.04 percent from the previous year; losses in 2004 were primarily the result of poor handling, quantities short-landed during transport and looting during conflict. Progress had been made in the recovery of losses sustained in Cambodia in 2003 and 2004. A document had been prepared to report on commodity tracking.
88. The Board thanked the Secretariat for its transparency regarding this difficult subject, noting that 65 percent of all post-delivery commodity losses had occurred under WFP's direct management. Board members acknowledged that WFP had restricted losses to a negligible level; some members believed that reported losses were unrealistically low. The Board reiterated WFP's responsibilities of transparent reporting, accountability, compensation and loss prevention; governments would also be responsible for ensuring



that beneficiaries were not deprived of food entitlements. One Board member advised that local procurement could minimize post-delivery losses. The Board requested that the next report include a table examining commodity loss and recovery over past years. Clarification was sought as to the acceptable margin of commodity loss and regarding the possibility of higher reported losses by governments and implementing partners in 2005. It was observed, however, that the amount of commodities recovered by WFP had increased fivefold since 2003.

89. The Secretariat was grateful for the Board's interventions; the losses that had occurred under WFP's direct management had been concentrated in large-scale EMOPs where commodities remained under WFP's responsibility for long periods. Data regarding losses occurring under WFP's management was also likely to be more reliable than for other losses; recommendations from the internal audit on improving reporting accuracy were much appreciated. Losses by governments and implementing partners were not expected to increase in 2005 but better information could result in higher reported losses. Improved packaging would be examined as an additional way to prevent losses. Tolerance of loss, especially pre-delivery losses, depended on the type of commodity and means of transport utilized.
90. In considering the report, the Board recommended that the Draft Decision be amended to highlight WFP's responsibility to reduce losses that occurred under its direct management.

OTHER BUSINESS

Report of the Joint Visit of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP to Azerbaijan (2005/EB.A/38)

91. A video was presented detailing a joint mission of executive board members from four United Nations organizations, including WFP, to Azerbaijan. This mission allowed Board members to experience conditions in the country at first hand and allowed the Board to draw conclusions regarding strengths and weaknesses of the work of the United Nations in the country. The participants described the difficulties faced in Azerbaijan and outlined the resources and opportunities that were present, emphasizing that the Government was committed to child protection, education and health. WFP's focus on targeting women and IDPs was also noted. FFE was seen as a valuable means of empowering children to contribute to their families' income.
92. The United Nations country team was commended for its excellent work and collaboration with the Government, NGOs and the international community. The Secretariat was urged to increase its attention to the working conditions of WFP field staff, which were inadequate and not conducive to knowledge-sharing.

United States and United Kingdom Initiative on Africa

93. The United States delegation announced for the Board's information that following a meeting between President Bush and Prime Minister Blair the United States would allocate US\$674 million to provide food, water and healthcare in a bid to avert famine in the Horn of Africa, where 14 million people faced starvation conditions. This sum was in addition to the US\$1.4 billion already donated by the United States for assistance in Africa. In working to create a long-term break in the cycle of famine, the United States and United Kingdom would work particularly with NEPAD and WFP, focusing on debt relief and aid volumes.



94. The Executive Director expressed WFP's gratitude for this notable support, which he characterized as an ambitious response to a huge problem.

Address by His Excellency Olusegun Obasanjo, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

95. The Board and the Secretariat welcomed President Obasanjo, who had demonstrated his personal commitment to feeding children and developing agriculture in Africa. President Obasanjo expressed his gratitude for this opportunity to share knowledge and experiences with WFP, and noted that food insecurity was a daunting challenge facing Africa, but a solid foundation had been laid for collaboration between the Government of Nigeria and WFP.
96. President Obasanjo was pleased that Nigeria was producing enough food to meet its needs and that WFP was purchasing 10,000 mt of sorghum from the Nigerian Strategic Grain Reserve Department. He recognized that these first purchases had not been without some difficulties and assured the Board that they would be removed as the private sector became more involved in future purchases. He believed that providing food aid from within the region would benefit regional trade and help to ensure peace and stability, which are necessary for sustainable development. WFP had also commenced technical assistance to Nigeria's emergency management agency; a national home grown school feeding programme was being prepared. Collaboration with the FAO-supported national special programme for food security could be anticipated.
97. The agricultural sector was a major focus of Nigeria's social reform agenda; improvements in the past four years included self-sufficiency in the production of staple foods. The agricultural sector was growing at 7 percent per annum; Nigeria's food-security strategy was being shared with other African states. To achieve universal primary education and the MDGs, WFP was asked to assist the Government in developing the home-grown school feeding programme, an initiative by NEPAD to increase school attendance and raise nutritional standards. President Obasanjo would be participating in WFP's Walk the World initiative and was asked to be WFP's ambassador in advocating to end child hunger.
98. President Obasanjo thanked WFP for helping to fight hunger in Africa, and directed donors' attention to Africa's food-security crisis. It was hoped that a WFP office would be established in Nigeria and that WFP would intensify its work with NEPAD.
99. The Board congratulated the President of Nigeria on his address, which confirmed his personal commitment to the eradication of hunger in Africa. The President had rightly stressed the fact that food security contributed to peace. The Executive Director also thanked him for his willingness to act as WFP's ambassador to fight hunger around the world and to set up a WFP office in his country. The President was asked how NEPAD could cooperate better with United Nations agencies, especially WFP. The Board drew attention to the encouraging recent focus on Africa among the developed countries. Assurance was given of continued international solidarity with Africa; the role of advanced developing countries within the African Union, such as Nigeria with its impressive agricultural growth rates, would be vital. As Head of the African Union, President Obasanjo carried the burden of ensuring that Africa had a prominent role to play in a globalized world. The African Union's strong institutional capacity was welcomed and it was asked how it intended to cooperate with other regional organizations.



100. President Obasanjo said that NEPAD initiatives for cooperation with the United Nations and bilateral cooperation needed to be more proactive and prevention-oriented. He asserted that Africa's absorptive capacity in such areas as health, transportation and food production was considerable, and he particularly wanted to reverse the brain drain that had been caused by economic problems; capacity-retention was as important as capacity-building. He praised the record of certain countries with regard to solidarity with Africa, especially in the field of education. School feeding was an important element in improving food security. He suggested that cassava, a major agricultural product in Nigeria, could help to alleviate food shortages throughout the continent. He agreed that the African Union's institutional strength had enabled it to address conflicts more successfully than the Organization of African Unity. The African Union intended to cooperate in many areas with all regional organizations as part of a reciprocal learning process.



ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

APR	Annual Performance Report
ARV	anti-retroviral
BPR	business process review
c.i.f.	cost, insurance and freight
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council of the United Nations
ECW	Enhanced Commitments to Women
EMOP	emergency operation
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FFE	food for education
FFT	food for training
FFW	food for work
IDP	internally displaced person
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
JOM	Joint Office Model
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MCT	mother-to-child transmission
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	non-governmental organization
ODJ	Southern Africa Regional Bureau
ODPC	Latin America and Caribbean Regional Bureau
OEDE	Office of Evaluation
OVC	orphans and other vulnerable children
PDS	public distribution system
PLWHA	people living with HIV/AIDS
PRRO	protracted relief and recovery operation
RBM	results-based management
TB	tuberculosis
UN/ECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
WINGS	WFP's Programme Information Network and Global System
WTO	World Trade Organization

