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TRANSITION FROM RELIEF TO DEVELOPMENT



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NOTE TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

This document is submitted for consideration to the Executive Board.

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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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It has been estimated that 40 percent of countries emerging from conflict relapse into conflict; in Africa, the figure is 60 percent. Aid can play a role in helping countries to make the transition from conflict to peace, but it is essential to have a coherent strategy that unites the actors engaged in the various aspects of the transition process. Existing mechanisms for developing coordinated approaches have met with some success and should be enhanced.

With this in view, the United Nations Development Group and the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs established a joint Working Group on Transition Issues chaired by Ms Carol Bellamy, Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund, to develop measures to enhance the response of the United Nations system in transition contexts. The working group's report identifies areas of consensus and makes recommendations for further action. It was reviewed at a high-level meeting in January 2004 of the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs, the United Nations Development Group and the Executive Committee on Peace and Security, and subsequently submitted to the Secretary-General. WFP has been involved throughout the process and endorses the report's conclusions. An opportunity for the Board to consider the main findings will help to inform WFP's engagement in the follow-up activities, including the planned discussion by the United Nations Economic and Social Council in July 2004.

DRAFT DECISION*

The Board takes note of the Secretariat's communication (WFP/EB.A/2004/5-B) on the final report of the UNDG/ECHA Working Group on Transition Issues and encourages WFP to remain engaged in the process and to keep the Board informed of developments.

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



INTRODUCTION

1. The United Nations Development Group (UNDG) and the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs (ECHA) established a joint Working Group on Transition Issues to respond to two sets of policy directives in (i) the resolution of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) E/2002/32 and (ii) Action Point 14 in the report of the Secretary-General (A/57/387/2002). The first calls on the United Nations system to “address the funding and strategic planning gap between relief and development activities in the context of natural disasters and complex emergencies” and to continue “to strengthen the consolidated appeals process as a coordination and strategic planning tool for the provision of humanitarian assistance and transition from relief to development”. The second calls on UNDG to develop “an implementation plan to strengthen the effectiveness of the organization’s presence in developing countries” and “include[s] such features as ... integrated planning, budgeting and resource mobilization tools for countries emerging from conflict”.
2. The impetus provided by the “Brahimi” process was also relevant to the working group in terms of implementing the recommendations in the “Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations” (A/55/305-S/2000/809), which pertain to transition in the context of United Nations integrated missions. The emergence of hybrid or ad hoc approaches and appeals processes developed by United Nations country teams (UNCTs) in response to transition situations merited further examination, with the aim of seeking methods to promote greater consistency and coherence of approach among United Nations organizations.
3. The group began its work in November 2002 under the leadership of Ms Carol Bellamy, Executive Director of the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF). WFP participated in the working group, seconding a senior staff member to lead the drafting effort and interviewing senior managers of the eight selected case studies. The Executive Director participated in the joint high-level meeting of the Executive Committee on Peace and Security (ECPS), ECHA and UNDG convened on 29 January 2004 to review the report of the working group before its submission to the Secretary-General.
4. The Executive Board has expressed interest in the working group since its inception; the Secretariat has briefed the Board on several occasions to keep it informed of progress. The issue was also discussed at the joint session of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), UNICEF and WFP in June 2003. At the 2004 First Regular Session, the Secretariat gave an informal briefing on transition, after which the Board requested the Secretariat to provide the final report of the working group for consideration at the 2004 Annual Session. This paper summarizes that report and clarifies the next steps. The full report will be discussed by ECOSOC at a special session planned for 12 July 2004. The report is currently only available in English; it will be made available to the Board at the 2004 Annual Session and can be accessed from the UNDG website.

SUMMARY OF TRANSITION REPORT

5. The UNDG/ECHA Working Group on Transition Issues consisted of 22 members, including the member agencies of ECHA and ECPS, the United Nations Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peace Keeping Operations (DPKO) and the Secretariat of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). The World Bank, the International Red



Cross and Red Crescent Movement and several non-governmental organizations (NGOs) provided valuable inputs into the working group's efforts.

6. The objectives of the Working Group were defined as follows:
 - Identify the key concepts and characteristics of transition from conflict to peace and the organizing elements of the United Nations response;
 - Identify the nature of the key "gaps" that exist (financial, conceptual, organizational, policy-related) which affect the United Nations country teams' ability to respond effectively to situations of transition;
 - Identify successes and innovations in the organization of the UNCT response to a transition situation;
 - Identify how existing processes, mechanisms and tools might be strengthened to ensure that the support and guidance provided by headquarters to the UNCTs are integrated and coherent;
 - Propose measures to facilitate timely consultations and agreement by UNDG and ECHA on the guidance headquarters provides to UNCTs at critical junctures in transition processes, and to strengthen the capacity of the UNCTs to respond to the challenges of managing transition;
 - Help clarify the United Nations role relative to other major actors in responding to transition situations.
7. The working group focused on situations of transition from conflict to peace, choosing eight for study to ground its work in field realities: Afghanistan, Angola, the Great Lakes region – Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Tanzania – Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan and Timor Leste. These were chosen to represent different kinds of transition from conflict to peace and different ways in which the United Nations organized its response. The working group formulated an analytical framework to guide the study, drawing on available literature and the results of the case studies, which incorporated extensive interviews and surveys. Briefings were given to the Humanitarian Liaison Group, the G-77, individual donors and the World Bank, and discussions were held at IASC, ECOSOC, ECHA and UNDG.
8. Among the salient points in the report is the consensus reached on the following:
 - A working definition of transition was formulated: "For the UN, transition refers to the period in a crisis when external assistance is most crucial in supporting or underpinning still fragile cease-fires or peace processes by helping to create the conditions for political stability, security, justice and social equity." Thus peace-building is the area where United Nations activities in a transition context intersect.
 - While in the past, transition processes were largely regarded as *sequential* or a *continuum* from relief to development or even from conflict to peace, it is now increasingly recognized that these facets exist simultaneously, at varying levels of intensity, susceptibility to reversals, and opportunity. Planning in transition situations must, therefore, anticipate that things can get worse before they can get better. Such contingencies and their security implications must be planned for, with a view to preventing or mitigating a relapse into conflict, protecting civilians and protecting staff. This requires flexibility in the United Nations operational response and in donor funding decisions.



- Promoting national ownership of transition processes at central and community levels, including through capacity-building, is fundamental to a successful transition. The pace of government leadership of transition processes, however, might at times be affected by its capacities or willingness to adhere to humanitarian principles and human rights law. In such cases, the United Nations must uphold its moral authority and maintain leadership of the humanitarian response.
- A single coherent strategy for all United Nations system actors is imperative in transition contexts and should undergird political and operational *synergies*, though the strategy need not necessarily imply the operational *integration* of United Nations system actors. Leadership for development of this strategy must be field-driven from conception to implementation.
- Such a strategy should be based on a shared contextual analysis, a system-wide assessment of need, and a clear identification of the potential role for the United Nations.
- To facilitate such strategies, there is a need for practical and systematically-applied guidance. Such guidance would help to ensure that the right questions are asked and answered at the right time, so that the uniqueness of each transition situation is understood and the appropriate response formulated.
- A headquarters mechanism, comprising the secretariats of UNDG, ECHA and ECPS, should be established to ensure that headquarters support to United Nations country teams remains coherent and timely.
- Adequate and timely funding of the United Nations response in transition situations, including through the regular budget, may, under certain circumstances, require a common, dedicated and multi-year funding facility.
- The dialogue with Member States on transition issues and policies should continue, with a view to attaining a common understanding and approach. Fora for such dialogue with donors and with the G-77 will be required in 2004.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

9. The working group drew on these recommendations and areas of consensus in preparing an implementation plan that included the main elements of a common analysis of transition, dissemination of the report to stimulate debate and establishment of senior working teams to (i) develop and facilitate systematic application of practical guidance for post-conflict transition, (ii) review potential or ongoing transition situations to identify UNCT support requirements and issues requiring attention by the executive committees, and (iii) design and propose to ECHA, ECPS and UNDG a multi-year resource mobilization mechanism for use in certain transitions. The Development Group Office (DGO) and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) were tasked with taking steps to enhance in-country coordination mechanisms in transition situations.
10. The Deputy Secretary-General endorsed the report in January 2004, stressing that (i) the implementation plan should prioritize development of a common planning framework, (ii) capacities to support resident coordinators should be strengthened and (iii) a multi-year resource mobilization instrument should be created to secure the funding required in transition contexts. She also emphasized the need to identify areas for greater harmonization among United Nations agencies of administrative and financial procedures relevant to the handover of responsibilities in transition situations.



11. Throughout the working group process WFP stressed the importance of coordinating transition situations at the country-level and focusing Headquarters efforts on providing the support required. In view of this and taking into account strengths and capacities, WFP's involvement in follow-up processes has focused on development of practical guidance and tools to assist UNCTs in seven areas: (i) guidance on agreed working definitions in transition, (ii) guidance on triggers and benchmarks for determining whether conflicts offer opportunities to consolidate peace, (iii) a method for enabling shared contextual analysis, (iv) a common methodology for assessment of needs in transition, (v) guidance on the comparative advantage of the United Nations system in transition and on determining the optimal United Nations role in a particular transition, (vi) guidance on the main elements of coherent strategy and the relation of such a strategy to the Common Humanitarian Action Plan (CHAP), the Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP), the Common Country Assessment (CCA), the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and (vii) a framework for monitoring implementation of coherent strategies and evaluating their impact.
12. Development of the guidance and tools has been proceeding simultaneously in all seven areas; it is not clear, however, whether all products can be completed by June 2004. WFP will use the resulting guidance and tools to revise its programme guidance and will adjust its assessment methodologies in transition contexts as appropriate.
13. Through its New York office, WFP also plans to participate as a core member of the senior-level working group to be established to monitor potential and ongoing transition situations.
14. ECOSOC will hold a special session in July 2004 to discuss transition issues, combining its segments on humanitarian and operational activities. The session will be informed by the working group's report. The structure of the session is still under discussion, but it is likely to focus on the United Nations response to transition, challenges in planning and managing transition at the field-level and resource mobilization. The Secretariat will follow the process with its partner agencies, taking into consideration the Board's discussion of this paper.



ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

CAP	Consolidated Appeal Process
CCA	Common Country Assessment
CHAP	Common Humanitarian Action Plan
DGO	Development Group Office
DPKO	Department of Peace Keeping Operations
ECHA	Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
ECPS	Executive Committee on Peace and Security
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
NGO	non-governmental organization
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
UNCT	United Nations country team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

