INFORMATION NOTES

ECHO-COMMISSIONED EVALUATION OF ITS CONTRIBUTION TO WFP PROGRAMMES

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INTRODUCTION

1.   The purpose of this document is to inform the members of the Executive Board of the evaluation commissioned by the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO) of WFP programmes funded by ECHO. The evaluation process was initiated in April 2002, in a letter addressed to WFP by the Director of ECHO, and was concluded on 24 April 2003, with the Deputy Executive Director's visit to Brussels to participate in a meeting of the Humanitarian Aid Committee.

2.   ECHO not only undertakes evaluations of specific projects and programmes but also evaluates its collaboration with specific partners. While in previous years ECHO has commissioned evaluations of its work with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and UNHCR, the decision was taken early in 2002 to initiate an evaluation of WFP programmes funded by ECHO. The evaluation would seek to draw conclusions on how to develop cooperation between the two agencies. The countries selected for the case studies were Afghanistan, Eritrea, Serbia and the United Republic of Tanzania.

3.   According to ECHO rules and procedures, the evaluation was undertaken by independent evaluators from outside the Commission on the basis of a restricted call for tender. Draft terms of reference were shared with WFP on 28 April 2002, and finalized in consultation with the Programme. The then Office of Evaluation and Monitoring (OEDE) was the WFP focal point for this evaluation.

THE PROCESS

4.   The consultants started their work with visits to Brussels and Rome. Missions to the four countries concerned took place in the period August–October 2002. In November 2002 the first debriefing by the evaluation team took place in Brussels; that meeting was attended by programme officers and evaluation staff from both organizations. A subsequent meeting took place in February, and the evaluation reports were finalized that same month. The Director of ECHO and a small delegation subsequently visited WFP in Rome on 28 March in order to discuss the findings of the evaluation, future relations and follow-up.

5.   As is customary with ECHO-commissioned evaluations, the reports were shared, on 20 March, with the Humanitarian Aid Committee, which meets monthly and consists of representatives from member states of the European Union. The Deputy Executive Director of WFP and the Director of ECHO both attended a subsequent meeting on 24 April 2003, where the reports were discussed. This time the meeting was attended also by representatives from future European Union member states.

ISSUES

6.   The main issues treated in the evaluation included WFP's capacities in procuring and transporting large amounts of food, reporting, cost-effectiveness, needs assessment, and the Programme's partnerships with implementing partners. It was concluded that ECHO and WFP were natural partners but that the procedures and regulations of each organization were sometimes incompatible.

CONCLUSION

7. The evaluation process had already led to productive and intensified contact between ECHO and WFP, during which concerns raised by the evaluation were clarified and addressed. On 29 April 2003, the new Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement between the United Nations and the European Commission was signed in New York. That agreement will simplify terms and procedures, thereby facilitating cooperation between ECHO and WFP.

THE REPORT

8. The full synthesis evaluation report and summaries of each of the four country case studies have been made available by ECHO on its website (http://europa.eu.int/comm/echo/evaluation/reports_2002_fr.htm). Copies of the synthesis report are available from the Office of Evaluation upon request.