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SUMMARY OF THE WORK OF THE THIRD REGULAR SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD, 2003

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 document WFP/EB.3/2003/13.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
CURRENT AND FUTURE STRATEGIC ISSUES	
2003/EB.3/1 Current and Future Strategic Issues	1
POLICY ISSUES	
2003/EB.3/2 Strategic Plan (2004–2007)	2
2003/EB.3/3 Summary Report of the Review of WFP’s Decentralization Initiative	5
2003/EB.3/4 WFP’s Evaluation Policy	6
2003/EB.3/5 Follow-up to ECOSOC/General Assembly Resolutions on Actions to Be Taken by the Executive Boards of the United Nations Funds and Programmes — Issues and Options	8
RESOURCE, FINANCIAL AND BUDGETARY MATTERS	
2003/EB.3/6 WFP Biennial Management Plan (2004–2005)	8
2003/EB.3/7 Report of the External Auditor on the Review of WFP’s Human Resources Strategy	10
2003/EB.3/8 Second Progress Report on the Implementation of Recommendations in the 2000–2001 Audit Report of the External Auditor	10
2003/EB.3/9 Best Practices in Oversight Mechanisms	11
LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN REGIONAL PORTFOLIO	11
EASTERN EUROPE REGIONAL PORTFOLIO	12
MEDITERRANEAN, MIDDLE EAST AND CENTRAL ASIA REGIONAL PORTFOLIO	13
SOUTHERN AFRICA REGIONAL PORTFOLIO	14
SOUTHERN AFRICA REGIONAL PORTFOLIO — EVALUATION REPORTS	15
2003/EB.3/14 Summary Report of the Real-Time Evaluation of WFP’s Response to the Southern Africa Crisis, 2002–2003 (EMOP 10200.0)	15
SOUTHERN AFRICA REGIONAL PORTFOLIO — OPERATIONAL MATTERS	
2003/EB.3/15 Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation for Executive Board Approval — Angola 10054.2	16
2003/EB.3/16 Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation for Executive Board Approval — Zambia 10071.1	16
EAST AND CENTRAL AFRICA REGIONAL PORTFOLIO	17
EAST AND CENTRAL AFRICA REGIONAL PORTFOLIO — OPERATIONAL MATTERS	
2003/EB.3/18 Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation for Executive Board Approval — Democratic Republic of the Congo 10288.0	17
WEST AFRICA REGIONAL PORTFOLIO	18
WEST AFRICA REGIONAL PORTFOLIO — EVALUATION REPORTS	
2003/EB.3/19 Summary Report of the Mid-Term Evaluation Country Programme — Burkina Faso (2000–2004)	19
WEST AFRICA REGIONAL PORTFOLIO — OPERATIONAL MATTERS	
2003/EB.3/21 Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation for Executive Board Approval — West Africa Coastal 10064.2 and Addendum	20
ASIA REGIONAL PORTFOLIO	20



ORGANIZATIONAL AND PROCEDURAL MATTERS

2003/EB.3/26	Provisional Biennial Programme of Work of the Executive Board (2004–2005)	21
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OTHER BUSINESS

2003/EB.3/30	WFP's Involvement in the CAP	22
2003/EB.3/31	Joint Session of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP	23
2003/EB.3/32	An Update on Food Losses in Bangladesh	23
	Briefing on the Follow-up to Governance Issues	24



CURRENT AND FUTURE STRATEGIC ISSUES (2003/EB.3/1)

1. The Executive Director opened his remarks by discussing WFP's new efforts to think strategically in its work, which involved considering the role of food in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). He was optimistic about progress made in Africa, but acknowledged that HIV/AIDS was liable to create as many as 20 million orphans in sub-Saharan Africa by 2010. To meet such a challenge, the Programme needed to be well-managed, prepared, professional, well-trained, accessible and accountable. It also needed to broaden its donor base, strengthen partnerships and increase flexibility.
2. He spoke of the 19 August bombing of the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad, yet another in a series of traumatic events that had placed unprecedented burdens on the Programme; others included emergencies in Kosovo and Timor-Leste, floods in China, drought and war in Afghanistan and the Iraq crisis. He commended WFP's response, in particular its efforts in Iraq, and pointed out that in all these crises the Programme had met a large proportion of the logistics, transport and communications needs of its United Nations and non-governmental organization (NGO) partners. However, such a high level of performance was taking its toll on staff, leading to stress-related illnesses, exhaustion and staff turnover.
3. Despite the precipitous decline in both global food aid and investment in basic agriculture, the Executive Director was encouraged by the response of the Programme's major donors. Also encouraging was the growing commitment to development in Africa as evidenced by the Tokyo International Conference on African Development and the high placement of food security issues on the agenda of the recent G-8 Summit in Evian. He reminded the Board that according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) data, WFP had the best performance in ensuring that the largest percentage of its resources went to least developed countries (LDCs).
4. The Executive Director reported that over 80 percent of WFP's work was in emergencies and protracted relief and recovery operations (PRROs). The Programme would reach an unprecedented 110 million beneficiaries this year, with around 8 million tons valued at more than US\$4 billion. He reviewed the successes and challenges of major WFP operations in Iraq, Liberia, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), the Horn of Africa and southern Africa.
5. With women in Africa representing 80 percent of farmers and 60 percent of people with AIDS, and routinely performing all household duties, the Executive Director promised that the Programme would increasingly focus on reducing the burdens placed on poor women. He reiterated the life-changing ability of school feeding programmes and WFP's commitment to continuing to give children a good start in life with such programmes.
6. In the area of partnerships, the Executive Director described WFP's successful joint efforts with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and the Programme's intentions to strengthen partnerships with the United Nation's Children Fund (UNICEF), the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the World Health Organization (WHO) and other organizations. He reported with pleasure WFP's role as ninth co-sponsor of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). WFP had already responded to the challenges posed by the pandemic by adjusting its work in a number of countries where HIV/AIDS prevalence was highest, including changing the caloric value of its food basket to reflect beneficiary needs.



7. The Executive Director spoke briefly of the Biennial Management Plan and Strategic Plan, both of which would be presented at this session. The Management Plan, which represented the Programme's best thinking, was a new kind of budget, based on needs. He promised that WFP needs assessments would never be deliberately inflated and he reiterated the Programme's commitment to results-based management (RBM), to bringing back training for Country Directors, and to guaranteeing that all sectors of WFP were audited. He described the Strategic Plan as a document that took into account WFP's strengths and comparative advantages but that also acknowledged the Programme's weaknesses.
8. To meet the funding challenges posed by the new budget, WFP planned to engage emerging donors, strengthen private-sector partnerships, and encourage traditional donors to meet the current OECD average of US\$2 per capita. Citing the importance of donations of surplus commodities, the Executive Director assured the Board that such donations would not be used in ways that disrupted local markets. He described WFP's efforts to improve performance through the Business Process Review (BPR). He then updated the Board on the Programme's newly acquired private partnerships, showing three promotional videos — a television commercial, a spot featuring actor Sean Connery, and a corporate video. He closed his remarks by quoting the recently beatified Mother Teresa, pointing out that her work with the hungry poor illustrated the power of the individual to change the world.
9. The Board thanked the Executive Director for his opening remarks. It commended WFP's efforts to reach the private sector, its preventive efforts and its strategic approach to feeding the hungry poor, and expressed general confidence in the Programme's work. It praised WFP's successes in Iraq and condemned the 19 August bombing of the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad. There were general congratulations for Ms Catherine Bertini for having received the World Food Award and appreciation for her donating the award money to the Programme.
10. The Board expressed support for WFP's efforts to direct its work towards the achievement of the MDGs. Many delegations emphasized the comparative advantage of WFP in humanitarian assistance (emergency operations [EMOPs] and PRROs), while others noted the importance of continuing WFP's development work. The value of untied, multilateral contributions to WFP operations was also noted. Several delegations informed the Board of recent developments in their own national humanitarian and development assistance programmes. Some Member States urged WFP to endorse a clear statement of humanitarian principles and to strengthen its engagement with country-level development partnerships, such as Poverty-Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and sector-wide approaches (SWAPs).
11. The Executive Director thanked the Board for its words of praise but reminded members that he was only a small part of a bigger picture involving all WFP staff.

POLICY ISSUES

Strategic Plan (2004–2007) (2003/EB.3/2)

12. The Board appreciated the extensive consultation process that had led to the formulation of the Strategic Plan and thanked the President and the Secretariat for their support in that process. It welcomed the structure of the Strategic Plan — the inclusion of an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, the statement of a core programme goal to be achieved through five strategic priorities and nine supporting management priorities,



and the development of a strategy for risk management and a strategy for raising the required resources to implement the Plan — within a results-based management framework.

13. The Board recognized that the Strategic Plan was a living document that included reference to work in progress and work to be initiated during the Plan period. On a range of issues, further consultation with the membership would be required and decisions would need to be brought to the Board at an appropriate time.
14. The Board agreed that the Programme should focus its operations on achieving the five strategic priorities of:
 - saving lives in crisis situations;
 - protecting livelihoods in crisis situations and enhancing resilience to shocks;
 - supporting the improved nutrition and health status of children, mothers and other vulnerable people;
 - supporting access to education and reducing gender disparity in access to education and skills training; and
 - helping governments establish and manage national food-assistance programmes.
15. The Board welcomed the alignment of the strategic priorities with the MDGs and noted that these priorities were within WFP's mandate and existing policy framework. Some members emphasized WFP's pre-eminent role in saving lives and protecting livelihoods in crisis situations. Others noted that addressing nutrition concerns and tackling HIV/AIDS would be important for ensuring sustainable reductions in hunger and poverty.
16. The Board welcomed the mainstreaming of WFP's support to building national capacity and looked forward to receiving a paper for Board decision that reviewed experience and further developed policy, approaches and appropriate funding mechanisms for expanding activities in that area.
17. The Board reiterated that WFP's work should fit within national strategies for poverty reduction. In particular, the conclusions of the 2003 Rome meeting on harmonization provided an important framework for collaboration in which WFP and its United Nations partners should be fully engaged. The Board noted that the successful achievement of the strategic priorities would require close collaboration with a range of partners — national governments, other United Nations agencies, NGOs, bilateral agencies and the private sector. Coordination among the three Rome-based agencies had an important part to play in this, as did WFP's partnership with UNAIDS and the United Nations Funds and Programmes (UNFPA) in relation to HIV/AIDS programming.
18. It was proposed that WFP should declare its formal support for the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence. The Executive Director warmly agreed and would undertake to present a paper reflecting those principles to the Board in February 2004. Subject to the Board's concurrence, the principles would be reflected in the revision of the Strategic Plan to be considered in 2005.
19. Within the context of the Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes (CFA) decision to provide at least 90 percent of WFP's development assistance to low-income, food-deficit countries (LIFDCs) and at least 50 percent of its development assistance to LDCs, the Board agreed that a flexible approach that focused resources on those most in need was appropriate. The Board accordingly endorsed the proposal that by 2007 at least 90 percent of WFP's undirected multilateral development resources from traditional donors should go to countries that:



- were least developed or had an equally low income; and
 - faced a problem of widespread chronic malnutrition measured as a rate of under-5 child stunting greater than 25 percent.
20. Some members stated that the adoption of the income criterion would penalize at least 11 LIFDCs. They therefore stressed that the identification of countries in greatest need should be broadened to include LIFDCs with incomes greater than those of the LDCs or with a prevalence of child stunting greater than 25 percent. Some members stated that pockets of hunger also existed in relatively well-off countries, and felt that these should also be eligible for development assistance from WFP.
21. The Board recalled the commitments made at Monterrey for increased and stable resources for development assistance. It was pointed out that undirected multilateral funding was the most efficient means of providing resources to WFP. The Board encouraged WFP to raise money from new sources as well as from traditional donors. Some members had reservations about the proposal that in allocating these funds WFP would consider as one of its priorities the funding of activities affected by the shift in allocation of traditional donor undirected multilateral funds. It was accepted, however, that the choice of funding mode was a matter for the new donors themselves, as it was for traditional donors.
22. It was understood by the Board that directed multilateral resources, including national resources from private sources, would continue to be provided to the countries and activities for which they were intended.
23. The Board noted that no changes were proposed to the principles for allocating emergency funds. The distinction between development and emergency interventions would remain. Emergency interventions would continue to be guided by WFP's emergency response criteria.
24. The Board requested that WFP pursue a flexible approach to the question of country presence, which should be suitably matched to the nature and scale of the programme to be managed, taking account of other approaches being developed elsewhere in the United Nations system. In some situations, a small office headed by an international officer, either in separate WFP premises or working out of the office of another United Nations agency, might be more appropriate than a full country office. In other situations, WFP's presence might consist of an office manned by a national officer working from the premises of another United Nations agency or, for example, a vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM) unit working within a government ministry.
25. The Board encouraged WFP to take the following management steps to buttress the achievement of the strategic priorities:
- strengthening partnerships;
 - human resources management;
 - results-based management and reporting;
 - strengthening WFP's knowledge base;
 - strengthening operational support;
 - the Business Process Review;
 - increased transparency and accountability;
 - communication and advocacy; and



- increased resources for increased needs.
26. Some members emphasized that those management priorities associated with humanitarian operations were particularly important. Their views were further elaborated during the Board's discussion of the Biennial Management Plan. It was stressed that the Board needed to devote more time to humanitarian issues.
 27. The Board warmly endorsed WFP's plans to develop a risk management strategy, and looked forward to being closely involved in that process.
 28. The Board recognized that a pro-active resources strategy that broadened the donor base and engaged the private sector would be essential for achieving the objectives set out in the Strategic Plan. Given that the proposed strategy was a work in progress, the Board looked forward to an informal consultation in early 2004 to discuss, among other issues: the definition of emerging and traditional donors; strategies for strengthening traditional and emerging donor support; mechanisms for encouraging emerging donors through leveraging, particularly twinning arrangements; and the use of cash donations to purchase food. The same consultation would also consider a draft policy paper on WFP's relations with the private sector.
 29. The Board emphasized that private-sector relations must be conducted within the purview of the Board. There needed to be dialogue, consultation and reports back to the Board on initiatives with the private sector. In the same spirit it was important that private-sector partners fully understood the role and responsibilities of the Board.
 30. The Board appreciated the presentation of expected results and indicators in the Plan's Programme Performance Results Matrix. Several members requested clarification on these indicators, particularly their selection and use. The Board also felt that appropriate corporate-level indicators for the management priorities should be identified. The Secretariat responded that, as far as possible, indicators were those selected to monitor progress towards the MDGs. However, some were chosen specifically for their relevance to food aid. These were harmonized through partnerships such as Common Country Assessment (CCA)/United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and the Standardized Monitoring and Assessment for Relief and Transitions (SMART) initiative. Ongoing work in RBM would address issues such as benchmarking and establishing targets, and would include a review of the appropriateness of the selected indicators. In addition, the Annual Performance Report would report on the management priorities at a corporate level.

Summary Report of the Review of WFP's Decentralization Initiative (2003/EB.3/3)

31. The Secretariat introduced the document, which had been produced in response to a Board request, giving a brief overview of the decentralization process. It described the review's organization and highlighted some of its findings.
32. The Board expressed appreciation for the document and its recommendations and for the decentralization process in general. It acknowledged the problems inherent in such a difficult process and noted the good progress WFP had made thus far.
33. The Board posed a number of questions, including: What impact did decentralization have on WFP's beneficiaries? How did WFP measure quality? Did the Programme have plans to re-evaluate functions and competencies at Headquarters and in the country offices and regional bureaux? What effect did decentralization have on programming and on the speed and appropriateness of decision-making? Would smaller country offices be



overstretched with new responsibilities? How did decentralization affect links with governments and beneficiaries? How was cost-efficiency being taken into account?

34. Ensuring the flow of communication between Headquarters and the field was generally thought to be a key issue. Providing clear normative guidance to the field was considered crucial, and a prerequisite for accountability and oversight.
35. The Board would have liked to see mention of gender in the report. It asked to be updated on specific figures and it requested a comparison of WFP's experience with that of other organizations.
36. In response to queries, the Secretariat ensured the Board that WFP was taking seriously the need to design and implement programmes of high quality and that RBM would enhance this. As far as cost-efficiency was concerned, the Secretariat explained that it was difficult to isolate the costs related to decentralization. However, decentralization had not been cost neutral, but close to *staff* neutral. Regarding the status of WFP's rollout of WFP Information Network and Global System (WINGS), the Secretariat explained that the figures in the report had been updated since the time of writing. By December, 56 offices would be connected, and the Programme expected 100-percent coverage by the year's end. The terms of reference for this review had not requested a comparison of WFP's decentralization experience with that of other organizations, but the Secretariat agreed that this could be valuable.
37. In response to the many comments involving staffing issues, communication, and knowledge-sharing, the Secretariat explained that perceived increases in Headquarters staff were the result of WFP's strengthening previously understaffed management and administrative functions. It stressed that knowledge-sharing was a priority of both the Strategic Plan and the Biennial Management Plan. Senior staff retreats and staff reassignment committees were two fora that fostered such communication. Regarding staff transfers, the Secretariat explained that there were functions that required a staff member for a period longer than the normal staff rotation; when staff were transferred, WFP was committed to ensuring that they moved across regions, thus ensuring knowledge-sharing.
38. The Executive Director thanked the Board for its valuable comments. He reiterated WFP's commitment to decentralization, pointing out that both the Management Plan and the Business Process Review included decentralization elements. He acknowledged the importance of delegating authority to the Country Directors and taking on more national staff. In 2004 there would be a focus on decentralization throughout the organization, especially as regarded the strengthening of financial management at the country and regional levels, and he expected that the Secretariat would be able to produce the next review of the process by mid-2005.

WFP's Evaluation Policy (2003/EB.3/4)

39. The Secretariat reminded the Board that the Office of Evaluation (OEDE) was now responsible for its core business — evaluation — following the creation of the new Results-Based Management Division earlier this year. The aim of the document was to present a policy for evaluation and to clarify the role of an independent evaluation office in a decentralized organization.
40. In approving the document, the Board commended the Secretariat on the progress made so far and raised various issues.
41. The Board recognized evaluation as a process of stocktaking across the whole organization that took into account past and present activities with a view to improving future management, noting that evaluation in WFP was conceived primarily as a



management function and that OEDE documents were management as well as accountability tools. The Board endorsed the allocation of regular programme support and administrative (PSA) budget funds for OEDE's evaluation work.

42. Several members saw the need to make OEDE an independent office reporting directly to the Executive Director; clear definition of its functions would be essential. Such an arrangement would enhance transparency and accountability and create an environment characterized by positive attitudes towards evaluation. In the new decentralized environment, OEDE would become the repository of experience regarding evaluation and it would communicate lessons learned through a synthesis of findings and lessons, to be presented in an Annual Performance Report.
43. The Board noted the need to develop procedures to make OEDE an effective part of the Programme and asked for clarification of the conclusions in paragraph 39 of the document. It was suggested that, in view of the need for independence, the Director of OEDE should be appointed by the Board.
44. A suggestion was made to form a sub-committee of the Executive Board, which would consider evaluation issues and report to the Board, thereby saving the Board's time. The value of this was recognized, but the President believed that the Board's business was to deal directly with issues placed before it, and wished to avoid moves that might lead to a proliferation of sub-committees, which was discouraged by the regulations that had established the various funds and programmes.
45. The need for specialized and experienced staff was recognized, with questions regarding recruitment, experience, responsibilities, length of tenure and the effects of the normal rotation of staff.
46. The Secretariat responded to questions from the Board, stressing that OEDE would continue to manage thematic and major evaluations, reporting to the Executive Board overall. However, regional bureaux and country offices would carry out evaluations, using monitoring and evaluation (M&E) guidelines already issued by OEDE. These guidelines would need to be updated to include new modules on self-evaluations and real-time evaluations. Staff rotations would be worked out by Human Resources in such a way as to avoid conflicts of interest and to retain evaluation expertise; funds for decentralized evaluations were earmarked in operational direct support cost (DSC) budgets and, as a corporate culture of evaluation developed, there would be no sense of competition for resources. The Secretariat acknowledged the complexity of inter-agency evaluations, but stressed the value of the approach; it would seek more such evaluations in collaboration with partners and stakeholders. There was a need to make OEDE evaluation reports publicly available on the external WFP website.
47. It was agreed that the question of the percentages of operations covered by evaluations would be answered at a later stage. Three matters required further discussion: (i) the independence and organizational positioning of OEDE; (ii) the amount of Board time to be devoted to evaluation, and whether a sub-committee was needed; and (iii) the issue of staff expertise, on which the quality of evaluation would depend. The Board agreed to return to these issues when it received a report at the February 2004 session, after discussions with the governance group.



Follow-up to ECOSOC/General Assembly Resolutions on Actions to Be Taken by the Executive Boards of the United Nations Funds and Programmes — Issues and Options (2003/EB.3/5)

48. Presenting this item, the Secretariat outlined the two options that had been proposed for the method and timing of WFP's reporting on the follow-up actions to General Assembly, Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and FAO Conference and Council resolutions: maintaining the existing two-phase reporting process or adopting a one-phase process.
49. The President reported that the Bureau had supported the second of these options, as in the Draft Decision.

RESOURCE, FINANCIAL AND BUDGETARY MATTERS

WFP Biennial Management Plan (2004–2005) (2003/EB.3/6)

50. The Secretariat introduced the Management Plan as the budget for the first two years of the Strategic Plan 2004–2007, stressing that it was needs-driven, zero-based and focused on beneficiaries, and noting that it reflected the commitments as approved by the Board but did not take unforeseen emergencies into account.
51. The Board welcomed the document and expressed approval of its quality and of the progress towards a results-based budget reflected in it. The Board felt, however, that there was room for improvement, in particular a need to include a result-based matrix associated with management priorities and indicators dealing with HIV/AIDS. The Secretariat emphasized that the document was WFP's first use of a zero-based budgeting approach and that it would take about two budget cycles for the benefits to become fully apparent. The Secretariat undertook to work on the requested results matrix for management priorities and to report to the Board in due course; work with colleagues in other parts of the United Nations on indicators for HIV/AIDS was already in progress.
52. The Secretariat explained that the unprecedented level of operations in 2003 had stretched the resources of the Programme and emphasized the need for additional capacity-building. Several members expressed support for the capacity-building initiatives and mainstreaming of staff posts. Establishment of a fourth ASG post was fully supported.
53. In the discussion of resource availability, it was noted that the new fund-raising and communications department would seek to expand the donor base by working with emerging donors and the private sector. It was agreed that the Board would be consulted regarding engagement with the private sector. With regard to priority setting, some members expressed concern about how priorities would be applied in the event of budget cuts; the Board felt strongly that the Secretariat should consult it about the selection of priorities as part of the process of keeping it in touch with the evolving financial situation and the decisions to be made. It was agreed to record in the summary the priorities instanced in the discussion: emergency needs assessment, VAM, M&E, emergency preparedness, financial management – particularly in the field – the attention and resources devoted to results-based management, and security.
54. In discussion of the use of the PSA equalization account, the Board noted that it was in new territory in managing it and evaluating the choices presented. The Secretariat made a proposal for handling the PSA equalization account in the current circumstances; the Board emphasized that the present decision would not limit its discretion to use resources from the account in different ways in the future.



55. Discussion of the effect of foreign exchange variances on staff costs focused on whether the split assessment methodology used by FAO would be of help to WFP. The Secretariat explained that the current cost variances related to PSA staff, mainly Rome-based personnel, who are budgeted at a standard cost but paid in Euros; actual costs could be less than the budgeted amount, depending on exchange movements. The nature of WFP as a voluntarily funded organization meant that the mechanism to be proposed for adoption by FAO at its November conference did not apply in the current circumstances.
56. The Secretariat stated that its approach to government counterpart cash contributions (GCCCs) aimed to give credit to countries as donors to WFP and to allow the use of such contributions in the country in question. This approach would, however, have to take into consideration standing agreements at the national level.
57. The allocation of US\$20 million to upgrade security was strongly supported; details would be announced in the near future.
58. Some elements of the budget proposal before the Board would need to be adjusted in the light of decisions to be made regarding the Business Process Review; the Secretariat would be making a formal proposal regarding the Business Process Review at the Board's First Regular session in February 2004.
59. The Board appreciated the importance of discussing the Evaluation Workplan. A greater focus on relief operations and less on country programmes was recommended by some members; having more country portfolio evaluations was useful, but the effectiveness of relief operations in a portfolio should be diluted; the two planned real-time evaluations were welcomed. Given the technical nature of current evaluations, the question was raised as to whether WFP had sufficient in-house evaluation expertise: the proposed 64 field-based evaluations (including 18 field-based evaluations to be managed by OEDE) seemed a large number for the biennium; regional offices would need assistance to carry them out, and planning and timing evaluations could pose problems. In view of these issues, one delegation felt that the workplan should possibly be less ambitious.
60. It was proposed that the Board should consider setting a percentage target for operational coverage by OEDE in a fixed timeframe. Information was requested on current coverage of evaluations and the size of the Office of Evaluation compared with those of other organizations.
61. The Board commended the flexibility of the workplan, but regarded the number of relief evaluations as low; more thematic evaluations were recommended. Clarification was sought regarding the criteria for selecting countries and operations to be evaluated.
62. The Secretariat stated that regional evaluation plans had been drawn up in consultation with the regional bureaux. OEDE estimated the net cost of decentralized evaluations, including self-evaluations, at about US\$1 million for the biennium. OEDE would have covered 30 of an estimated 40 first-generation country programmes by the end of the next biennium; there were no plans for routine evaluations of second-generation country programmes. It was estimated that up to 75 percent of relief operations would be evaluated in the four-year period 2002–2005.
63. The OEDE complement of one Director and six officers was similar to that of other United Nations agencies in Rome; OEDE would be strengthened in 2004 when the vacant P-5 post was filled. The office was committed to attending to the suggestions made, including the proposal that it make more room for EMOPs.
64. The Eritrea and Rwanda evaluations would be largely of relief portfolios. The call for new thematic evaluations was noted. The German-led multi-donor evaluation of Food Aid and Development (FAAD) could cover some of the proposed country programmes and



would look at country contexts, including links to PRSPs. The creation of more space in the workplan brought about by the FAAD evaluation country case studies would be examined.

65. The Secretariat pointed out that some Board members were perhaps being inconsistent in urging WFP to become more involved in the simplification and harmonization process (including UNDAF evaluations) and yet criticizing OEDE for continuing with country programme evaluations.
66. In closing, the President felt that the Evaluation Workplan would benefit from further discussion; should they so wish, delegates should approach the Director of Evaluation before the Board discussed its own programme of work, at which time the present document could be revisited.

Report of the External Auditor on the Review of WFP's Human Resources Strategy (2003/EB.3/7)

67. The External Auditor introduced the item by explaining that the report was the first to be issued in advance of the biennium's end, a procedure that was part of the delivery designed to make the biennial audit available in smaller pieces.
68. He gave a brief overview of progress on the wider financial audit. The present report, which was in accordance with the programme of work provided to the Board in February 2003, showed that WFP had developed a comprehensive and professionally conceived strategy and was making good progress in implementing it.
69. The Secretariat was pleased with the Auditor's report and looked forward to following up on the recommendations therein and to the review of progress.
70. The Board welcomed the valuable report, citing its early presentation as a good model for other organizations, and looked forward to seeing the Secretariat incorporate the recommendations. It appreciated the recommendation that WFP consider using more innovative approaches, including partnering, outsourcing and purchaser-provided arrangements. The Board was generally eager to see how WFP would respond in a flexible, cost-effective manner to the challenges posed.
71. In response to questions, the Secretariat reported that WFP had begun a review of locally recruited staff and would formulate a policy within six months. Regarding the outsourcing of staff, it explained that the Programme already practised a kind of outsourcing through its use of standby partners, and that it would examine purchaser-provided arrangements.
72. The Executive Director elaborated on this point, explaining that the Programme had been focusing on strengthening its core business so it could be flexible and support staff in decentralized structures worldwide. WFP considered the issue of equity and fairness in the treatment of staff to be of crucial importance and would examine this issue in future.

Second Progress Report on the Implementation of Recommendations in the 2000–2001 Audit Report of the External Auditor (2003/EB.3/8)

73. The Secretariat stated that the External Auditor had made 36 recommendations in its report, two thirds of which had been carried out; the rest were in progress. Workload and system implementation schedules had led to some being deferred to the first quarter of 2004.
74. The President drew attention to the usefulness of the Auditor's approach, applied in other Rome agencies, in which the recommendations were prioritized with deadlines for action.



75. There were no observations from the Board. The good work of the Secretariat was recognized. The Board took note of the document.

Best Practices in Oversight Mechanisms (2003/EB.3/9)

76. The Secretariat introduced the paper “Best Practices in Oversight Mechanisms” and highlighted that recent studies and publications, and legislation in some countries, confirmed that the four themes presented in the paper were indeed the principal areas of attention in the private and public sectors.
77. The External Auditor noted that this was a useful paper and a good platform for corporate governance issues. It emphasized three areas: First, regarding ownership of good corporate governance, risk management was actually considered to be an issue of good management. Risk management should encompass all of the risks an organization faced, not only the financial risks, and the responsibility for this process should rest with management. Second, regarding accountability, it was important to ensure that risks were being addressed or that controls worked. This might be accomplished through an annual statement by the management on controls, including reporting on risk management, and by the fact that such statement would be scrutinized by the External Auditor. Third, ensuring that management was doing a good job in identifying and addressing risks and controls was achieved through the work both of the Board and of the Internal and External Auditors. Audit committees could also assist in this challenge, and could themselves challenge the work of the Internal Auditor to ensure that this was conducted up to standard. In the private sector, audit committees comprised independent members; in the public sector they consisted of a combination of internal members and external members selected from industry.
78. The President highlighted the comments made by the Finance Committee, notably that risk management was included in the Strategic Plan and that the Board should be closely involved in that subject.
79. The Executive Director indicated that WFP would take steps to make an annual statement to the Board on the adequacy of the checks and balances in place. The decentralized activities of WFP required such a statement, and the Board was clearly entitled to it. The Executive Director felt there was a strong need to discuss the creation of an external audit committee, given the distinct nature of such a committee.
80. Board members encouraged WFP to assume leadership in corporate governance by adopting best practices. They welcomed the Executive Director’s intent regarding a statement of internal control and an external audit committee. With regard to the latter, they felt that the next best option to having an external audit committee would be to include independent external members on the internal audit committee. Members further emphasized the importance of risk management, and the need for the involvement of all of management to ensure its successful implementation. One member emphasized the need for further capacity-building, training and empowerment of the internal oversight function in WFP.

LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN REGIONAL PORTFOLIO

81. The Secretariat gave an overview of the situation in the region as a whole. Public-sector social spending was high among the various countries, but over the last years had decreased in South America as a result of the economic slowdown. Despite an expected improvement in the food supply, at least nine countries would not reach the MDGs by 2015. A UNICEF study showed inequality within and among the countries of the region



regarding nutritional status. Results of this and other studies would be used to improve beneficiary targeting.

82. In Bolivia, where a new President had been installed and a Cabinet formed; the situation was returning to normal, despite infrastructure losses of US\$5 million. The Secretariat thanked donors for their contributions to efforts in Central America, but reported that this month, five years after Hurricane Mitch had devastated the region, low coffee prices and floods were still impeding full recovery there. In 2004, WFP would be working with the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC) in these countries. The situation in Haiti continued to be troubling; the planned country programme still had no funding, and the PRRO very little, a matter that would be discussed further at the resource consultation on Friday.
83. The Executive Director took the opportunity to thank both Nicaragua, for hosting the WFP regional bureau for many years, and Panama, the bureau's new location. He promised that this region was an area of the world that would receive a lot of attention, and reminded the Board of the dire internally displaced person (IDP) situation in Colombia. WFP would collaborate with other United Nations organizations.
84. The Board thanked the Secretariat for the presentation and for the important work done by the regional bureau. It also expressed its appreciation for the new grouping of agenda items by region.
85. The Board stressed the urgency of the situation in Haiti and encouraged donors to respond by funding WFP interventions there.
86. The Board supported the resource mobilization strategy based on joint evaluations of resources that could be mobilized at the national and international level. It was felt that WFP should continue to respond to the needs of medium-income countries with pockets of food insecurity.
87. In response to questions, the Secretariat explained that it was collaborating with UNICEF: a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) had been signed and a working group established to examine operational issues, especially relief in Central America with UNICEF's technical support.

EASTERN EUROPEAN REGIONAL PORTFOLIO

88. The Secretariat outlined the difficult living conditions in the region. An exit strategy was in place in the Balkans, and operations had closed in Kosovo and Macedonia; these moves had been well planned, and beneficiary and staff concerns had been fully addressed. WFP was preparing to exit from Serbia and Montenegro in March 2004. In Albania, poverty and unemployment continued at serious levels, as indicated by the numbers of people volunteering for food-for-work activities; operations would therefore continue after the end of the current project. The situation in Chechnya was still volatile, with large numbers of IDPs and other vulnerable people to be assisted. The republic was under security phase 5, so no United Nations staff could be posted there, and field visits had been curtailed. Living conditions were desperate; WFP would continue to provide essential food aid for 290,000 people.
89. Assistance was essential to large numbers of people in the southern Caucasus, especially Armenia and Azerbaijan, which continued to hover between war and peace. IDPs, many in desperate conditions, were receiving WFP assistance. Vulnerability assessments in Armenia showed that continued assistance was needed; a new operation would therefore follow the current programme. Refugees from Chechnya and war-affected people in



Abkhazia were being assisted in Georgia under a relief and recovery programme. The Eastern Europe Bureau had been assisting 1.3 million beneficiaries; the pipeline was sound.

90. Following the completed phase-outs and in view of the imminent completion of operations in Serbia and Montenegro, there was little need for a separate bureau. Therefore, from January 2004, the remaining operations in the Caucasus would be absorbed under the Middle East, Central Asia and Mediterranean regional bureau (ODC).
91. The Board noted a need for future WFP activities in Eastern Europe, where agriculture accounted for 50 percent of the labour force and a high percentage of the gross domestic product (GDP), and where the per capita calorie supply was low in several countries. List E countries expressed a wish to see future WFP activities in the region. The Secretariat acknowledged these comments and would attend to them.
92. The outgoing Regional Director thanked all his colleagues for their support over the years. The Executive Director closed the session with a warm tribute to him, in which he was joined by the Executive Board.

MEDITERRANEAN, MIDDLE EAST AND CENTRAL ASIA REGIONAL PORTFOLIO

93. The Secretariat outlined the insecurity, suffering and conflict in the wide geographical area covered by ODC, to which WFP's response had been unprecedented: the value of operations was US\$3.4 billion, 95 percent devoted to emergency PRRO/special operation (SO)/bilateral assistance and 5 percent to development.
94. The scale of WFP's re-entry into Iraq was described; the costs of the operation had, however, affected other WFP activities elsewhere. Three WFP activities had been critical to success: The United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS), the United Nations Joint Logistics Centre (UNJLC) and information technology (IT). WFP was facilitating the acquisition of the Iraq wheat harvest; the current delivery cycle was under way. The EMOP was scheduled to end in October 2003, but had been extended to the end of the year, with no additional commitment. The Oil-For-Food Programme (OFFP) would end 21 November 2003, when WFP would hand over renegotiation of food contracts to the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) and Ministry of Trade in Baghdad. WFP sought to participate in the reconstruction of Iraq, supporting school feeding and nutrition programmes and providing advisory technical support to CPA and the ministry in the management of logistics, pipeline, procurement and poverty and food security analysis. The attack of 19 August had disrupted operations, but they were continuing at a reduced level. The Secretariat paid tribute to WFP staff in the Iraq operation for their fortitude in extremely difficult circumstances and thanked donors and neighbouring governments for their support.
95. Good rains in Afghanistan had led to an improved food situation, but poverty, insecurity and vulnerability continued for millions of people, especially in the southern and central areas. The operation was moving into recovery mode, but the risk of a return to crisis remained in some areas. Winterization was under way, with 38,800 mt of food supplies already in place.



96. The assessment mission to the occupied Palestinian Territories showed that restrictions on movement were having severe impacts on food security. Delivery of food had always been difficult, but recent Israeli actions had rendered it virtually impossible. The new EMOP scheduled for July 2003 targeted 530,000 people to preserve assets and prevent deterioration of the situation of women and children.
97. Relief and recovery operations were in progress in Tajikistan, Iran, Pakistan, Yemen and Algeria. Refugees were being assisted, partly through NGOs. There were country programmes in Egypt, Yemen and Pakistan, and projects in other countries. Agricultural development was the major objective, pursued in Egypt through the development of new lands and in Jordan and Syria through increased production. Women were especially targeted in Yemen and Pakistan. Many relief and recovery operations, and country programmes, were facing serious resource constraints; these would be discussed in resource consultations with donors.
98. The Board expressed its appreciation of the work of ODC. It deplored the situation in the Palestinian Territories and hoped that WFP could continue to assist Palestinians. Condolences and sympathy were expressed for victims of the Baghdad bombing. The Board raised questions as to when the Iraq EMOP would end and whether OFFP would continue, whether the Morocco office would close and how ODC would handle hunger pockets and vulnerable group needs in the region.
99. The Secretariat stated that the Iraq EMOP would be extended up to the end of the year; OFFP contracts had been negotiated to guarantee food deliveries until June 2004 and WFP would continue renegotiating food contracts until the end of the current mandate under Security Council Resolution 1483, on 21 November 2003. The Morocco office would close at the end of 2003, but could return should an emergency occur and WFP assistance be requested. Under WFP's concentration strategy, activities in other countries would be reduced from multilateral resources, but offices would not be closed as long as resources could be mobilized locally, for example through debt-swap programmes or private-sector funding.

SOUTHERN AFRICA REGIONAL PORTFOLIO

100. The Secretariat gave an overview of the situation in southern Africa, where WFP was active in ten countries with a combined population of 123 million people. Six of those countries were covered by a regional EMOP, which currently faced severe shortfalls and which would be discussed at Friday's resource consultation.
101. HIV/AIDS continued to be an enormous problem in the region, home to nine of the top ten highest prevalence countries in the world, several with prevalence rates of over 30 percent. The situation was having massive negative effects on development indicators, and was expected to worsen. In response, the regional bureau was preparing a PRRO designed to help vulnerable populations in high HIV/AIDS prevalence areas.
102. The Secretariat touched upon WFP's current EMOPs, PRROs and SOs in the region, and then went on to describe the worrying food security situation in Mozambique and Zimbabwe, Madagascar's largely forgotten drought emergency and the scheduled realignment of responsibilities for the United Republic of Tanzania under the ODK regional bureau, which would take effect from January 2004. The Regional Inter-agency Coordination for Southern Africa (RIACSO) was cited as an important mechanism for coordinating multisectoral assistance in the region. Efforts to strengthen WFP collaboration with the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) were also mentioned.



Evaluation Reports

⇒ *Summary Report of the Real-Time Evaluation of WFP's Response to the Southern Africa Crisis, 2002–2003 (EMOP 10200.0) (2003/EB.3/14)*

103. The Secretariat gave an overview of OEDE's pilot initiative, a real-time evaluation (RTE) of one of WFP's largest emergency operations. With a focus on process, the evaluation sought to provide immediate feedback to managers as the operation unfolded. The exercise encouraged self-reflection and corporate learning, even in emergency situations. The Secretariat described the complexity of the evaluation and reported that the Office of Evaluation planned to carry out a review of the RTE experience in the coming months, with a view to improving the methodology and approach.
104. The results of the evaluation were then described. Production failure, erratic rains, and governance weaknesses were cited as contributing factors to the food-insecurity in the six countries of the southern Africa EMOP. The real-time evaluation mission concluded that the needs assessments for the southern Africa EMOP were credible, and that the SADC-led vulnerability assessment committees (VACs) were a unique example of good inter-agency collaboration and cooperation.
105. Delays in the start of distributions resulted from the need to build up adequate pipeline and logistics capacity; complications arising from the genetically modified (GM) foods issue; and a lack of implementing partners or partners' limited capacity. A positive side-effect of the GM issue had been the increase in regional purchases and the opportunity for fortification of cereals.
106. The Board supported the RTE approach, which it felt allowed for prompt implementation of corrective measures for ongoing operations and demonstrated WFP's commitment to learning. It commended RTE for its transparency and welcomed more such evaluations. It applauded the recommendations made in the evaluation report and looked forward to WFP's implementing them.
107. In response to questions and comments, the Secretariat assured the Board that WFP took seriously the need to communicate with all the embassies in the six countries. The failure to plan adequately for local purchases was explained by the fact that at the start of the EMOP, maize prices in southern Africa were about US\$180 per ton and at the end of the EMOP prices had fallen to US\$120 per ton; this clearly changed the opportunity for making local/regional purchases. The Secretariat also promised that all food procured in southern Africa came with GM-free certification. The Secretariat assured the Board that WFP did not have a one-size-fits-all approach to operations in the region; even in a region as cohesive as southern Africa, approaches were tailored to the various countries.
108. Regarding the lessons it had learned from the RTE approach, the Secretariat reported that the approach had been useful in highlighting difficulties with the computer-based systems such as the commodity movement processing and analysis system (COMPAS) and the WINGS, and the lack of sufficient training related to them. It had also learned that it was not helpful to start RTE too early as there was still too little evidence from which to draw conclusions, and the evaluation ran the risk of disturbing the operation.



Operational Matters

⇒ *Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation for Executive Board Approval — Angola 10054.2 (2003/EB.3/15), and Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation for Executive Board Approval — Zambia 10071.1 (2003/EB.3/16)*

109. In Angola, WFP was seeking to help 1.3 million beneficiaries during 2004 and 2005, of whom 800,000 were expected to be resettled. With the support of the Ministry of Education, the Programme expected to be able to make a major contribution towards encouraging children to attend school regularly again.
110. The PRRO in Zambia was designed to assist refugees currently hosted by the Government of Zambia. In 2004 provision was being made to provide food to an estimated 108,000 refugees principally from Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The return of Angolan refugees was being constrained by the difficult conditions in remote parts of Eastern Angola. UNHCR and WFP would be stepping up assistance to those people in 2004 in an attempt to accelerate voluntary return.
111. The Secretariat pointed out that the proposed Zambia PRRO was one of five pilot case studies in which WFP would take over from UNHCR direct food management in the camps.
112. The Board stressed the need for continued donor engagement in Angola and Zambia. It supported WFP's approach and urged colleagues to lend their support. It reiterated its support to both PRROs.
113. The Secretariat responded to questions and comments raised by the Board regarding the **PRRO in Zambia**. The Secretariat explained that the royal establishment, and not the Government, controlled land allotment, so the negotiations undertaken by UNHCR and WFP were not at the national level. Lands were allocated by UNHCR and the royal establishment to the first in, the able bodied and by family. Inputs were provided to those who received land, a process managed largely by UNHCR and implemented by NGO partners.
114. The Secretariat explained that the Zambia PRRO was a pilot initiative under which WFP would take over the management of the extended delivery points from UNHCR. Hence, WFP would have greater control over food distribution; it was intended that women would make up 70 percent of refugee committees. The four other countries where WFP would assume responsibility for food distribution in refugee camps were Kenya, Pakistan, Sierra Leone and Uganda.
115. WFP and UNHCR were considering implementing food-for-work (FFW) programmes in host communities, and this component needed more support. WFP was currently working with the World Bank to encourage it to steer some of its social-sector spending towards this FFW initiative, and WFP was considering directing some of the FFW activities under its country programme to the local communities surrounding the refugee camps.
116. The Secretariat reported that WFP had been supporting a community school feeding programme for orphans. WFP was currently feeding 200,000 orphans, a figure that the Programme wished to expand.
117. The Secretariat also responded to Board comments regarding the **Angola PRRO**. It agreed that it was important to ensure the participation of NGOs in implementation and logistics responsibilities. WFP would be reviewing the landside transport, storage and handling (LTSH) rate in November to take into account further changes in the balance between land and air transport. Regarding a query about WFP's and FAO's efforts to help



increase agricultural productivity, the Secretariat informed the Board that WFP was currently working with FAO on the implementation of a seeds and tools programme aimed at ensuring an adequate crop next year. WFP also worked closely with FAO on the crop assessment exercise. Responding to a question on air operations, the Secretariat said that WFP would continue to use the Luanda and Lobito corridors to carry out the necessary transport operations, and it stated that the related SOs focusing on passenger and freight transport were in serious need of resources.

118. The Board asked what WFP's exit strategy would be. The Secretariat explained that it would be accomplished progressively and by component. For example, WFP was discussing with the Ministry of Education the Government's takeover of the school feeding component in certain provinces.
119. As Chair of the thematic group for HIV/AIDS in Angola, WFP was in the process of developing the United Nations integrated approach to supporting the recently established HIV/AIDS commission and the national strategic plan.
120. One Board member questioned whether WFP would provide a progress report on the Angola PRRO to the Third Regular Session in 2004. The Secretariat confirmed that a report on progress achieved would be available to the Board.

EAST AND CENTRAL AFRICA REGIONAL PORTFOLIO

121. The Secretariat gave an overview of the situation in the region, where WFP was currently implementing five country programmes, two development projects, ten PRROs, seven EMOPs and six SOs, at a total cost of US\$1.6 billion. Nine of the 11 countries in the region suffered low food production, and all had very poor rankings on the Human Development Index.
122. Peace remained elusive in Burundi, which in July experienced its worst internal conflict since 1994. In Djibouti, 7,000 people in transit camps were still in need of WFP assistance. Drought remained a problem in Eritrea, but there were indications that the crop situation there might improve. The prognosis for Ethiopia was better than last year's, but it was crucial that a solution be found for that country's chronic food shortages. The peace agreement in the Republic of Congo was holding. In Rwanda, political changes — a new constitution, new president and parliamentary elections — marked the end of the transitional arrangement of the past nine years. Unfortunately, there had been no change in the situation in Somalia, where the peace process had broken down. In Sudan, the low-intensity conflict had grown, creating 450,000 IDPs in the western region and sending as many as 60,000 refugees fleeing into Chad; WFP had halved the general ration in order to cover this increased caseload. Uganda too had seen a worsening of its civil conflict, with rebel forces attacking the eastern part of the country, swelling the number of beneficiaries from 800,000 to 1.2 million.

Operational Matters

⇒ Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation for Executive Board Approval — Democratic Republic of the Congo 10288.0 (EB.3/2003/18)

123. Speaking of the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), for which WFP was presenting a PRRO for Board approval, the Secretariat urged members to visit the country and for those involved politically to step up efforts to bring about peace.



124. The Board thanked the Secretariat for the informative presentation, and made a number of comments.
125. Responding to questions, the Secretariat assured the Board that WFP was aware of the negative impact of the good harvest of two years before on market prices in Ethiopia. WFP was appealing to the donor community for additional funds, especially cash, for local purchases. It was felt that Ethiopia could no longer continue on yearly handouts and that a solution to the root causes of the country's problems needed to be found. Studies had called for a refocusing of efforts on protecting Ethiopians' livelihoods; WFP had a large country programme with such a focus and planned to encourage the Government to scale up the Managing Environmental Resources and Enabling Transitions (MERIT) scheme.
126. The Board had a number of queries regarding the DRC in particular, to which the Secretariat responded. For contingency planning, WFP was counting on the new Government to operate well and for the rebels to cooperate. There was enough production in the eastern part of the country to sustain needs. WFP had been engaged in local purchases for some time, and this would continue. The Secretariat agreed that there was a need to insert the PRRO into government programmes, and it would make every effort to do so. To ensure proper monitoring, an M&E unit had been set up in the country office, and five sub-offices were being opened, each with adequate M&E capability. The Secretariat agreed that it was important to distribute land to target groups according to their needs, but explained that land distribution was a complex issue that did not rely on WFP decision-making alone. The Secretariat explained that more beneficiaries were ex-combatant girls than boys, because many girls, while not soldiers *per se*, had been used for sexual and other demeaning purposes.
127. The Executive Director thanked donors for their support to the operation in the DRC. He added that he was encouraged by the Ethiopian Prime Minister's commitment to the Coalition for Food Security, and that WFP would be participating in the Government's food security meeting in Addis Ababa in December.

WEST AFRICA REGIONAL PORTFOLIO

128. The Secretariat outlined developments in the region. School feeding in the Sahel was proceeding well with support from Italy and Canada. The Niger country programme was also proceeding well, with support particularly from the Netherlands. A crisis had been avoided in the Western Sahel, and a better harvest was anticipated. There would be an external evaluation of the EMOP in November 2003. Cash donations were being sought to enable local purchasing in Mali and Niger. An assessment mission was in Chad to prepare a new Sudanese refugee EMOP to be started in the near future. The situation in Côte d'Ivoire was tense: violence was widespread and large numbers of displaced people needed assistance; a new phase of the EMOP would begin in November 2003. Fighting in Liberia in the summer had resulted in an influx of 1.3 million people to Monrovia; malnutrition and serious looting had followed. Recently, IDPs had returned to camps in Montserrado. WFP support was needed for 500,000 people. The Programme was assisting movements out of Monrovia; a special programme for children under 5 was under way, and WFP was supporting a promising UNICEF back-to-school programme. A particularly acute problem was the large numbers of child soldiers who needed rehabilitation. Security was expected to improve with the deployment of 15,000 United Nations peacekeepers.



Evaluation Reports

⇒ *Summary Report of the Mid-Term Evaluation Country Programme — Burkina Faso (2000–2004) (EB.3/2003/19)*

129. The Secretariat introduced the item, reporting that the findings of this evaluation were similar to those of last year's thematic evaluation. The focus was therefore on identifying areas of improvement and setting up the next phase of the operation for 2006–2010, and increasing the emphasis on analysis and coordination with stakeholders; complementarity and synergy with government and partner inputs was vital. Reporting could be streamlined. Limited linkages between results and food delivered were recorded. Enrolment in schools and drop-out levels had evolved favourably. Rural development activities had ended in 1999, and new ones had been introduced only in 2002, so no conclusions could be reached regarding them. DSC levels had improved since the start of the operation, but were still not on target. The Board's attention was drawn to the full report and the management response matrix. The need was noted for a logical framework and performance indicators, as well as a better link between food assistance, achieved results and the objectives of the Burkina Faso country programme. UNHCR and FAO had important food-security roles to play in refugee situations; UNHCR would provide non-food items so that food was not bartered; FAO would provide agricultural inputs and training.
130. The Board recognized the scale and seriousness of the humanitarian situation in West Africa, and encouraged WFP to take appropriate action, emphasizing the importance of accurate monitoring and respect for women's needs; there should be zero tolerance of sexual abuse. Donors should be encouraged to visit the region to see conditions and WFP's work for themselves.
131. Concern was expressed that WFP rations were being downsized in 2004 rather than 2003 as planned; food production in refugee camps had increased; the Secretariat was urged to continue systematic monitoring with a view to promoting self-sufficiency, particularly post-distribution monitoring, for which LTSH funds could be used. It was important to ensure that food was consumed by the beneficiaries, not traded. Clarification was requested regarding the possible effects on WFP rations of rice produced in Sierra Leone.
132. The Board asked for clarification regarding WFP's role and future operations in the region, particularly with regard to development. The importance was noted of partnerships with governments and complementarity of activities, and of globalization and market liberalization; innovative actions would be needed. Clarification of the policy of running one-year operations was sought, and of variances in partnerships and focus across the region. The Secretariat was asked to define more clearly how WFP identified displaced people.
133. The Board expressed satisfaction with the contingency measures that had been taken in the preparation of the document and supported de-activation of the contingency provision.
134. In response, the Secretariat welcomed the proposal for post-delivery monitoring as a means of saving food resources. It would heed the Board's comments on women's needs. The Board was reminded that UNHCR was the agency responsible for determining the refugee status of individuals and groups. There was scope to downsize rations in refugee camps in Guinea, given the reduced malnutrition and greater self-sufficiency; a working group was looking into the matter. Activities designed to increase self-sufficiency were in place, supported by FAO; a joint programme with UNHCR was being discussed. Women would be targeted, and there would be a focus on income-generation; host populations would be assisted. A report on the situation in Sierra Leone would be presented very soon.



The Secretariat was of the opinion that in two year's time, Liberia could be stable, but that the situation in Côte d'Ivoire could threaten peace in the region. One-year PRROs were the best way of addressing rapidly changing situations.

135. The Executive Director paid tribute to the regional team.

Operational Matters

⇒ *Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation for Executive Board Approval — West Africa Coastal 10064.2 and Addendum (EB.3/2003/21)*

136. The Secretariat stated that the original projections had been modified in light of a joint assessment with UNHCR in June 2003 and fighting in Liberia: a contingency component covering 150,000 IDPs had been included. The Board was asked to approve the PRRO including the contingency element, which would be used in Liberia. The tense situation in Liberia called for integration of the various operations; an office had been set up in Abidjan to manage this. Needs could exceed projections, so a budget revision was a possibility. The pipeline was in good shape, but with a lead time of five months new pledges were sought. The Secretariat expressed thanks to the donors.

ASIA REGIONAL PORTFOLIO

137. The Secretariat outlined current objectives — to support Country Directors and develop strategic initiatives — and then reviewed WFP's work in the region. In Sri Lanka, where a fragile peace process was ongoing, the focus was on dealing with relatively high malnutrition among returnees, especially schoolchildren in the north: the current 27,000 student beneficiaries could increase to 150,000 during next year. Operations in Cambodia had been restructured, and staff re-profiling was in progress to reflect this. In the Lao People's Democratic Republic, local authorities had asked WFP to expand its school feeding programme, but resources were currently insufficient to do so; WFP aimed to start a PRRO to maintain skills in government units and to try to ensure that the country was prepared for future crises, but poor security was a constraint. Refugees in western Myanmar were in urgent need of assistance, for which resources were needed; there was a small anti-AIDS programme, and small-scale emergency assistance was being given to former poppy growers. WFP was planning to exit from China in 2005, but relations with the Government would continue; talks were in progress. The situation in Nepal was unstable, and poor security was limiting WFP's work; the country programme was ongoing, assisting the Government in difficult areas, but a change of focus was possibly needed. Talks on assistance to Bhutanese refugees were ongoing. The Bangladesh country programme was large and complex; resource shortfalls were undermining development projects, and donations were being sought; closer partnership with the Government was being sought; the priorities were to find resources and avoid leakages. The Government of DPRK was generally cooperative, but there was concern that operating conditions were deteriorating; a pipeline break was imminent. Monitoring could be improved, but there were indications that WFP food was reaching the beneficiaries.



ORGANIZATIONAL AND PROCEDURAL MATTERS

Provisional Biennial Programme of Work of the Executive Board (2004–2005) (2003/EB.3/26)

138. The President introduced the programme of work, which had been produced in response to a Board decision following the work of the Governance Project. He reminded the Board that it was a living document, subject to periodic updating, and because of that, the Board was requested to authorize the Bureau to monitor and approve the changes required. He also drew the Board's attention to the fact that, unlike its predecessors, this programme of work was annotated.
139. The Secretariat explained that the policy agenda for the next biennium had been drawn up taking into account the needs of WFP and the requests made by the Board over the past year. The objectives of the agenda were: (i) to ensure that WFP had the best analytical and policy framework for its operations; and (ii) to clarify in an analytically rigorous way where food aid had a comparative advantage over other types of assistance in non-emergencies and where WFP had an advantage and a positive role to play. Recent increased cooperation with the World Bank and a research initiative with the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) were mentioned.
140. The Secretariat explained some of the thinking behind the programme of work on policy issues, in particular why some items were included and why they were placed where they were. It highlighted the late placement of the paper on the definition of emergencies with respect to the emergency needs assessment document, the late placement of the documents on humanitarian access, local purchases, procurement, building national and regional capacities, and the inclusion of a paper on nutrition.
141. The Secretariat gave an overview of the proposed dates of upcoming Executive Board sessions, apologizing to the Board's Muslim representatives for the next Third Regular Session's falling in the middle of Ramadan. The Board would consult with the Bureau and with colleagues at FAO to determine a new date for that session. It also reassured the Italian representative that the Second Regular Session would be scheduled in such a way as to avoid falling on 2 June. Also mentioned was the upcoming BPR informal consultation. The Secretariat ended by reading through the proposed changes to the programme of work.
142. The Board made many comments and suggestions under this item. It had understood that the paper on technical assistance, which related to WFP's strategic priority 5, would be presented at the First Regular Session of 2004. The Secretariat explained that the Third Regular Session of 2004 was the soonest it felt it could produce a document of good quality on that topic; the Board accepted this.
143. The Board felt it important that the PoW include papers on: WFP's work in emergencies; donor involvement in resource mobilization; emergency needs assessment; emergency preparedness; meetings and visits by the Joint Boards; capacity-building; evaluation of the Board's governance system; development issues; unspent cash balances; WFP's policy on local procurement; an update on VAM; and WFP's humanitarian experience from an operational point of view. The Board welcomed WFP's efforts to increase the content of policy papers on humanitarian issues. It suggested that it would be worthwhile to have annual reports on operational issues, evaluation and performance, but warned of the impracticality of the Board's having so much reading material.



144. The Board requested that the proposed paper on building national and regional capacities include information on how those functions would be funded, and asked about the timeframe for the document on WFP's relationship with the private sector. It was felt that the relief-to-development transition document should be for consideration rather than for information, and that it and the documents on emergency needs assessments and the PRRO thematic evaluation should appear earlier in the programme of work. A review of the progress made in RBM, already considered for the Third Regular Session in 2005, should be reflected in the PoW.
145. The Board urged that documents be made as concise as possible, but noted the high quality of the Board documents in general. It expressed a desire that WFP examine the programmes of work of other humanitarian agencies to see what issues they examined. The number of days and hours per day spent at Board sessions per year needed to be reduced, possibly with the use of more silent procedures and pre-session consultations. It was also felt that the Executive Director should give a brief overview of the context of WFP's work at each session, but that his more substantive Current and Future Strategic Issues presentation should take place only once a year.
146. The Secretariat informed the Board of the upcoming visits to Haiti — a joint visit with UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA — and Sri Lanka. The Executive Director added that WFP was working on enhancing its reporting to the Board on EMOPs. The Programme had also been endeavouring to strengthen its business process, as evidenced in the Management Plan; now that it was under way, the Board could turn to the important work of reviewing its support for beneficiaries in the field.
147. The President proposed that the document be revised in the light of Board comments and that the amended document be redistributed with the summary record. The Bureau would revisit the programme of work when it met in late December. The revised version would be presented to the Board at its First Regular Session in February 2004.
148. The Secretaries of the Boards of UNFPA and UNICEF delivered prepared addresses, giving their impressions of the work of the WFP Board. Both Secretaries had found their experience to be educative and profitable, and praised the high quality of Board documentation and the focus and brevity of members' interventions, from which it was clear that members mastered the documents before them. The Secretaries had been particularly impressed by the Board's strategic view of WFP's work and its biannual planning process; they were also impressed by its focus on the MDGs, by its determination to achieve effective governance and by the openness of its deliberations in the face-to-face layout of the room. WFP's orientation for new Board members and its handling of the succession of the Board President were also praised. The Secretary of UNFPA noted the importance of the Bureau in preparing meetings that were focused and decision-oriented, and recommended appointing facilitators to lead discussion of particular topics; avoiding evening and Saturday sessions would help to make meetings more productive.
149. Both Secretaries noted that there was considerable scope for mutually profitable sharing of experience on governance issues.

OTHER BUSINESS

WFP's Involvement in the Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) (2003/EB.3/30)

150. In introducing the item, the Secretariat emphasized that the CAP was an important coordination process that involved many actors and promoted inter-agency cooperation.



151. Following a presentation by the Director of the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO), outlining her organization's involvement and interest in the CAP, the Board welcomed WFP's commitment to the CAP, and especially to improving needs assessments and linkages between emergency, transition and development support. It asked for clarification of WFP's coordination with other United Nations agencies and of the Programme's activities to improve the CAP's effectiveness.
152. In response, the Secretariat underlined the complexity of the CAP and the diversity of the situations in which it operated. Improvements were being made all the time, such as the launching of transitional CAPs in 2003. A network of CAP focal points at Headquarters and in the field was improving links with other United Nations agencies, including an e-mail network.
153. Responding to a question from the Board, the Executive Director emphasized the need to match food aid with sufficient non-food aid. He also drew attention to the value of viewing the emergency-to-development process as a continuous one, and to the difficulties of carrying out needs assessments in situations that were constantly changing.

Joint Session of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP (2003/EB.3/31)

154. The Secretariat introduced the report on the Joint Session of the Boards in New York, which was held on 6–9 June 2003, and reported that subsequent meetings had taken place since then.
155. The President highlighted items on the agenda of the upcoming joint session, to take place in January — HIV/AIDS, simplification and harmonization, the Resident Coordinator system, and security — and informed the Board that the WFP Bureau had been consulted on the agenda. He pointed out that the report from the upcoming meeting would be more up to date for the February 2004 WFP Executive Board session.
156. The Board thought it important for WFP to be well prepared for such meetings, and it asked the Bureau to examine how the joint sessions might be made more valuable for the work of the Programme. It also stressed the importance of reporting back to the Board on the results of the meetings and keeping the Board informed about field visits. The Board questioned WFP's main objective at the meetings, and the thinking behind the selection of agenda topics. Also mentioned was the choice of criteria for selecting who would attend the meetings and the joint field visits.
157. The Secretariat responded that the joint meetings were held in response to General Assembly resolution 52/12, which called for the Boards of the Funds and Programmes to meet. The agenda items selected were those of common concern, with cross-cutting dimensions.
158. The points raised in the discussion would be brought up at the next Bureau session, and the Board would be informed of that discussion.

An Update on Food Losses in Bangladesh (2003/EB.3/32)

159. The Secretariat recognized the importance of the problem of food losses and was working with the Government to resolve it. An action plan had been finalized that focused on building a sense of ownership in the ministries concerned. A senior official had been appointed to manage the action plan. A major concern was that government funding was not being received at the local level and officials were compensating by selling WFP food. The needs of the poorest people in Bangladesh were increasing, and more resources were therefore required. Work was continuing, with valuable support from the Government.



160. The Board asked the Secretariat to outline what it saw as the main challenges in the region and its possible responses, and what it saw as the likely impact of the new Strategic Plan. Clarification was also sought as to the main areas for improvement and steps proposed to address them. The Board also asked the Secretariat to comment on the school feeding programme in Sri Lanka, to clarify its approaches to determining exit strategies and for further information about the situation of Muslim refugees in Myanmar.
161. The Secretariat pointed out that comment on the Strategic Plan might be premature as it had not yet been approved. The main areas of improvement had been identified as day-to-day activities, identifying strategic opportunities and developing standby arrangements. The Bangladesh country programme would be followed by a new programme to address continuing food needs, including action to maintain donors' confidence that food would reach needy people. School feeding in Sri Lanka included 1,000 schools in conflict areas in the north, where security was adequate to guarantee staff safety. Muslim refugees in Myanmar were being denied their basic rights and were generally badly treated; WFP was working with UNHCR to repatriate them to Bangladesh. The Secretariat expressed its gratitude for the support received from donors.
162. The Board welcomed the Bangladesh food-loss action plan and the appointment of an official to manage it. In particular, it was important to reassure donors that their contributions were reaching the beneficiaries. The 13.4-percent loss rate revealed by an IFPRI study comprised 8 percent losses before delivery to beneficiaries and 5 percent afterwards as a result of sharing. The Board recommended a zero-tolerance attitude with regard to food leakages. Significant improvements could be achieved by distributing fortified flour and biscuits in identifiable packaging rather than grain. This point was acknowledged by the Secretariat: it was already distributing a considerable percentage of food in this way and planned to increase the rate to 100 percent under the new country programme.

Briefing on the Follow-up to Governance Issues

163. The President outlined the work to date of the Steering Group on Governance. The group had overseen production of the governance tools agreed by the Board in 2000: the Strategic Plan, the Biennial Management Plan and the Consolidated Policy Framework; the Annual Performance Report was still in preparation. Future tasks had been mapped out: among other matters, the group would examine the issues of placement of the evaluation unit within WFP and of creating an external audit committee. An evaluation of the project had been suggested, given that it was nearing an end; the President announced a meeting of the steering group in December 2003 to take stock of work done and to plan work for 2004. There was growing interest in the progress of the project among United Nations bodies in New York; the President would brief the board of UNICEF in January 2004 and would welcome invitations from UNDP and UNFPA. Members were invited to support this process by working with colleagues in New York to raise the profile of the Governance Project.



ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

ASG	Assistant Secretary-General
BPR	Business Process Review
CFA	Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes
COMPAS	commodity movement processing and analysis system
CPA	Coalition Provisional Authority
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
DSC	direct support cost
ECHO	European Community Humanitarian Office
ECOSOC	General Assembly, Economic and Social Council
EMOPS	emergency operation
FAAD	Food Aid and Development
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations
GDP	gross domestic product
GM	genetically modified
IDP	internally displaced person
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IT	information technology
LDC	least-developed countries
LIFDC	low-income, food-deficit countries
LTSH	landside transport, storage and handling
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MERIT	Managing Environmental Resources and Enabling Transitions
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	non-governmental organization
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs



ODC	Middle East, Central Asia and Mediterranean regional bureau
ODK	East and Central Africa regional bureau
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OEDE	Office of Evaluation
OFFP	Oil-For-Food Programme
PRRO	protracted relief and recovery operation
PRSP	Poverty-Reduction Strategy Paper
PSA	programme support and administrative (budget)
RBM	results-based management
RIACSO	Regional Inter-agency Coordination for Southern Africa
RTE	real-time evaluation
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SO	special operation
SWAP	sector-wide approach
UNAIDS	United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNFPA	United Nations Funds and Programmes
UNHAS	United Nations Humanitarian Air Service
UNICEF	United Nation's Children Fund
UNJLC	United Nations Joint Logistics Centre
VAC	vulnerability assessment committee
VAM	vulnerability analysis and mapping
WHO	World Health Organization
WINGS	WFP Information Network and Global System

