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EVALUATION REPORTS

Agenda item 6

For consideration

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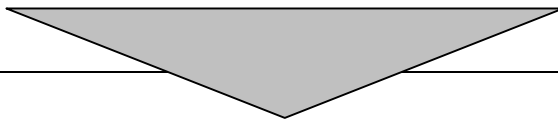
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SUMMARY REPORT OF THE THEMATIC EVALUATION OF WFP'S COMMITMENTS TO WOMEN (1996–2001)

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Note to the Executive Board



This document is submitted for consideration to the Executive Board.

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

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Executive Summary

Overall, the Commitments to Women (CW) have had a positive impact in terms of gender-sensitizing policies formulated by WFP during 1996–2001. Various mechanisms have been put in place, and tools developed and refined to support the process of gender mainstreaming. A positive shift in focus is discernible in WFP operations, accompanied by an evident transformation of the Programmes's corporate working culture. This indicates that the topic of gender is no longer dealt with in the abstract at Headquarters, but is being addressed increasingly at the field level. Investment in gender training has generally been impressive. However, there is a prevailing attitude that gender is primarily the concern and responsibility of female staff.

Assessment of the Commitments' impact on the implementation of emergency operations (EMOPs), protracted relief and recovery operations (PRROs), and development operations is hampered by weaknesses in the monitoring system and the fact that baseline studies were not routinely carried out. Gender mainstreaming in EMOPs continues to lag behind that in other types of operations, though more progress is evident where EMOPs are extended or are transformed into PRROs. The mainstreaming process is more advanced within development activities.

Human resources data show clear progress in achieving the overall objective of gender balance in the recruitment of WFP international professional staff. However, disaggregated data show that gender balance has not yet been achieved in higher management positions: While the targets have been achieved at the lower professional levels, women are clearly underrepresented in such strategic posts as Country Director and Deputy Country Director.

Some of the challenges facing WFP with the introduction of the Enhanced Commitments to Women (ECW) 2003–2007 include:

- Providing unambiguous guidance to staff on how to effectively address and operationalize the ECW. This is particularly relevant for concepts that are subject to different interpretations in the various regions and cultural settings in which WFP operates.
- Supporting the appointment of gender focal teams in regional bureaux and country offices as an interim means of mainstreaming gender, and providing clear guidelines for phasing these out over time.
- Reviewing the rationale and framework of the gender action plans and providing clear guidelines for integrating them into annual work plans and WFP operations.
- Introducing a career development strategy that effectively supports the goal of gender equality in WFP staffing.
- Reviewing current directives pertinent to the personal situation of WFP staff to ensure those directives are gender equal.



Draft Decision



The Board takes note of the recommendations contained in this evaluation report (WFP/EB.3/2002/6/6) and of the management action taken so far, as described in the associated information paper (WFP/EB.3/2002/INF/16). The Board encourages further action on these recommendations, with considerations raised during the discussion taken into account.



EVALUATION OBJECTIVES AND METHOD

1. The evaluation of WFP's Commitments to Women 1996–2001 was carried out between January and April 2002.¹ The objectives were to:
 - assess the extent to which the Commitments have been achieved;
 - assess the relevance, achievements, impact and longer-term sustainability of the Commitments; and
 - formulate recommendations for the development and implementation of WFP's ECW 2003–2007.
2. The scope of the evaluation included policies, activities, mechanisms and programme/project implementation undertaken by WFP during the period 1996–2001. In this context, the evaluation looked closely at five country case studies to determine how the implementation of the Commitments had affected WFP's operations, staff and beneficiaries in those countries. The evaluation also took into account the results of five other case studies undertaken by the Strategy and Policy Division (SP) in 2001.²
3. In addition, a programming desk review provided an overview of corporate measures introduced by WFP between 1996 and 2001 to implement the Commitments. Key inputs to this desk review included the gender survey and the Review of Experiences of Implementing the Commitments (both undertaken by SP in 2001). A second desk review on human resources provided an overview of measures undertaken to achieve gender balance in WFP staffing and improve management accountability. Finally, interviews with key staff were carried out in April 2002 to obtain additional views on WFP's experience during the preceding five years.

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE COMMITMENTS TO WOMEN³

4. WFP's attempts to address gender equality in its policies and programme strategies can be traced back to the 1980s. Based on a Women in Development approach, the term *gender*⁴ was perceived to be a critical variable through which to increase the efficiency of programme planning and project implementation. Some progress was discernible by the mid-1990s in terms of incorporating gender issues in WFP programmes, but significant gaps still existed at the implementation level.

¹ The evaluation team, which undertook five country case studies and two desk reviews, comprised six international consultants (including the team leader), five local consultants, a WFP regional programme advisor, and a WFP evaluation officer.

² In November–December 2001, the Strategy and Policy Division commissioned case studies in China, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Nicaragua and Sierra Leone. In February–March 2002, the Office of Evaluation and Monitoring (OEDE) commissioned case studies in Colombia, Mali, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Sudan. See the background paper on methodology for more details.

³ See Annex for the content of the individual Commitments.

⁴ *Gender* is defined as the differences between women and men within the same household and within and between cultures that are socially and culturally constructed and change over time.



5. The 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women (FWCW) in Beijing was the catalyst that led various United Nations agencies, including WFP, to address gender equality concerns more strategically. A number of WFP staff believe that WFP would have begun according more attention to women and children even without Beijing, because these issues were being raised increasingly at that time. The 1998 mid-term review of the CW describes the process within WFP for drafting a set of goals for 2001. These goals were linked to the 12 critical areas of concern in the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA), with WFP focusing specifically on poverty, education, health and women in situations of armed conflict, as part of its mandate.
6. Further enquiry into the process of formulating the Commitments revealed that during the mid-1990s there was an increasing conviction within WFP that more concrete policy guidelines were required to implement the goals as a means of addressing WFP's mandate to feed the hungry poor. This provided the impetus to translate these goals into percentage targets. No country-level baseline or gender profile was carried out prior to this or to the formulation of the Commitments, but WFP staff believe that much less would have been achieved without these percentage targets, however unrealistic or ambitious they may seem in retrospect.
7. The Gender Task Force (GTF) created in November 1995 played an important role in supporting the process of implementing the Commitments, advising regularly on programme strategy, and monitoring and reporting on overall progress. The importance accorded to the GTF is reflected by the fact that the Chair was the Deputy Executive Director, and GTF's members were appointed from among senior management.
8. While WFP's preparations for Beijing Plus Five in 2000 reflected the continuing efforts to address the Commitments, they also revealed that WFP did not have a detailed overview of progress to date. The 2001 gender survey attempted to address this gap. The survey provides an aggregate overview of how country offices have interpreted and implemented the Commitments, the extent to which quantitative targets have been achieved, and reasons for gaps in implementation. (However, it should be noted that attempts to verify the survey results during the ten country case studies indicate that the data may not be sufficiently reliable.)

ASSESSMENT OF INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS PUT IN PLACE TO SUPPORT THE COMMITMENTS

9. During the period under review, various corporate policies, guidelines and directives pertinent to WFP's mandate, to capacity-building, and to programme implementation were formulated and disseminated. Overall, efforts to gender-sensitize the different types of WFP operations are obvious, though the trend is not always consistent. Mainstreaming of gender in emergency guidelines generally lags behind the more evident progress made as part of development interventions. This is not surprising given that EMOPs in particular are subject to intense time pressure and more frequent staff turnover.
10. A recent review of the planning documents presented to the WFP Programme Review Committee confirms that while there has been overall progress in mainstreaming gender, it has not been uniform throughout all project planning documents. Some of the weaknesses noted include limited gender analysis, the use of gender-neutral language that masks gender bias, and limitations that constrain the collection and use of gender-disaggregated data.



11. Various programme-related mechanisms have been put in place or further developed to operationalize the Commitments. At Headquarters, this includes the creation of two posts: a Senior Gender Adviser to oversee gender-related technical aspects at the operational level, and a Policy Analyst/Gender responsible for inter-agency coordination and development of WFP's new Gender Policy. Though regional gender advisers (RGAs) have played an important intermediary role between Headquarters and the country offices, the posts continue to rely on external funding. The establishment of the gender focal point (GFP) system as a means of supporting gender mainstreaming in the field has followed the trend in other United Nations agencies: namely, the posts have generally been filled by female junior staff who have relatively limited authority and who must shoulder this responsibility in addition to their usual tasks. Moreover, there is no consistency in the type and scope of gender training received by GFPs.

Recommendation

- ⇒ Appoint gender focal teams (GFTs) in regional bureaux and country offices as an interim means of furthering the gender mainstreaming process, increasing the involvement of male staff, and strengthening institutional memory. Provide clear guidance on the eventual phase-out of the GFT system.

12. One of the first tasks carried out by the GTF in 1996 was supporting country offices in their formulation of gender action plans (GAPs). Discernible (though also variable) progress in developing and using GAPs as a management tool is evident during the period under review. However, the ten country case studies examined reveal that there is no consistency in how GAPs are formulated, nor is there clear guidance on how to integrate them into regional bureau and country office work plans, CPs, and other WFP operations.

Recommendation

- ⇒ Review the rationale and framework of the GAPs and provide clearer guidance on how to integrate them into annual work plans and WFP operations.

13. From the outset, gender training was perceived to be crucial to supporting the implementation of the Commitments. Impressive efforts have been made in gender-sensitizing WFP staff and imparting gender-analysis skills to programme staff through regional and country-level workshops. However, the evaluation indicates that additional efforts are required, specifically in further developing gender-analysis skills and reinforcing existing skills through follow-up training. A training strategy would need to take into account the turnover and reassignment of staff, and ensure that gender is fully integrated into all corporate training.

Recommendation

- ⇒ Develop an effective gender training strategy that is mainstreamed in all corporate and operations-related training, and provide guidance on how to integrate this strategy into annual work plans.

14. Various tools have been developed or refined to strengthen the process of gender mainstreaming as a means of implementing the Commitments. This has included gender-sensitizing vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM), although reliance of this tool on secondary sources of data has imposed some limitations. Participatory approaches have also been increasingly gender sensitized, and the related guidelines make clear references to the Commitments.



Recommendation

⇒ Further develop VAM as a targeting mechanism that includes the community and household level, and provide guidelines for its effective gender-sensitization.

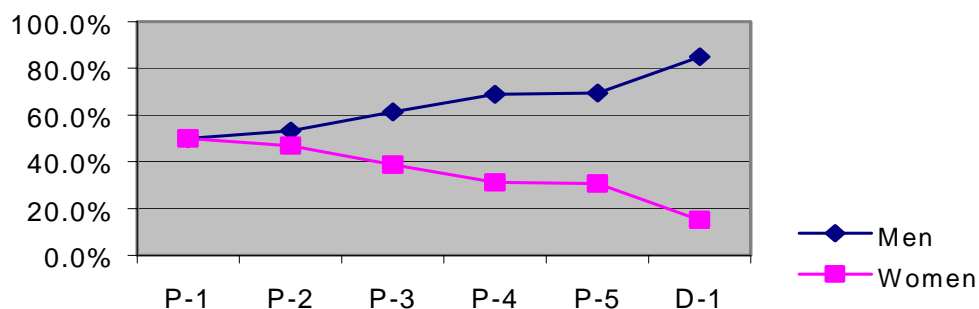
15. Monitoring is another area that has been increasingly gender sensitized, though overall progress has been variable. Moreover, there remains a challenge, faced not only by WFP but by other agencies as well: how to use monitoring data more effectively for programme planning, and how to develop cost-effective qualitative indicators that provide insight into the structural causes of gender gaps, and not just into their symptoms. It should be noted here that the output and quality of monitoring (including post-distribution monitoring) has often been affected by implementation constraints—for example, funding shortages, implementing partner (IP) capacity, and conflict-related security concerns.
16. Advocacy is not referred to explicitly in the Commitments,⁵ and though it is reflected in the relevant parts of WFP’s annual reports, the stress has been on the hungry poor rather than on the gender aspects of food aid. Nonetheless, as the responses to the gender survey indicate, many country offices use advocacy as a means of sensitizing government counterparts and partners on gender-related concerns, though few appear to have developed an explicit advocacy strategy.
17. During the period under review, financial resources were made available for implementing the Commitments through the Gender Action Facility (GAF). Available data indicate that around 46 percent of the US\$3.9 million allocated for this purpose came in the form of extrabudgetary resources provided by donors. Criticism has been voiced within WFP that gender-related activities are too often perceived to require extrabudgetary funding, such as for gender training and RGA posts.
18. There is consensus among WFP staff that various human resources directives have attempted to address gender concerns and recognize that female staff with dependents carry the primary responsibility for parenting—some of the country case studies reveal, for example, that “regulations” have been put in place that support nursing mothers, or preclude (or at least avoid) assigning female staff with dependents to weekend field trips. However, there is equally a consensus among WFP staff that more effort is needed to develop a human resources policy to address any gender imbalance in staff retention and reassignment. It is believed that various directives overlook the needs of single parents, and of male staff and female staff without dependents. Some male staff believe that, because of prevailing views of women’s social reproduction role, their own needs as spouses and parents are not accorded equal priority.
19. Available aggregated human resource data indicate impressive efforts to reach gender balance in international professional staffing levels, resulting in a discernible increase in female international professionals. However, as the 1998 mid-term review pointed out, it is evident that application of the 50-percent female recruitment rule would not result in gender balance by 2001.

⁵ The relevant CW/III/D refers to the use of food aid as leverage to obtain complementary resources. By contrast, *advocacy* refers to efforts to influence the legal, political, social, and economic environment as a means of addressing WFP’s mandate to feed the hungry poor and improve household food security.



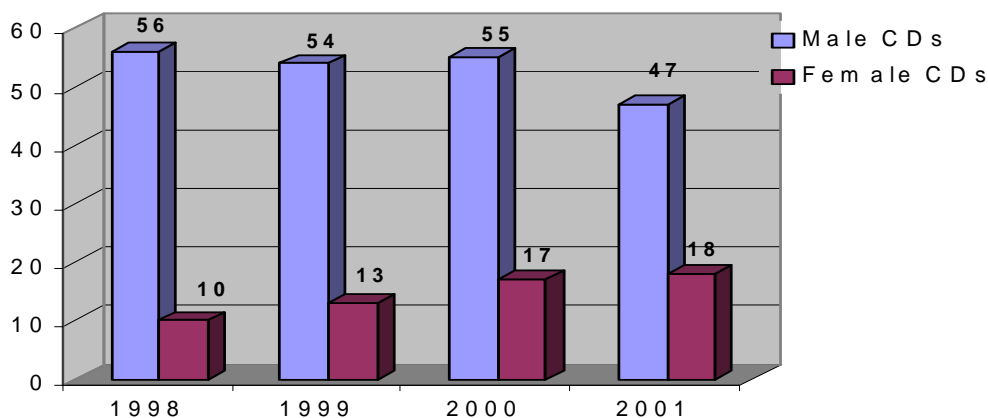
20. In spite of overall impressive achievements, disaggregation of the data on staffing levels reveals some staff gender imbalance. For example, data on the various international professional levels indicate that the higher the grade, the lower the percentage share of women staff.

Percentage of Staff Represented at Each Grade Level (2001)



21. Data on Country Directors (CDs)—a strategic managerial position in a decentralized WFP—indicate that, in spite of a growing trend since 1996, the share of women CDs across all regions is relatively low, at 28 percent of total. Moreover, the even lower share of female Deputy Country Directors (17 percent of total) reveals that WFP is not using this position to groom a pool of potential female CD candidates for the future.

Gender Distribution among Country Directors (1998–2001)⁶



22. It was only in 2001 that gender balance among locally recruited staff was explicitly addressed through a directive from the Executive Director. By 2001, only 27 percent of all locally recruited staff were women. Among national professional staff, the numbers were more commendable, at 38 percent.
23. In respect of recruiting qualified women and supporting their promotion to strategic positions within the organization, a more proactive strategy is required. However, the objective of attaining gender balance and equity in employment and reassignment must be

⁶ These figures reflect staff in posts on 31 December of each year.



balanced against the reality that WFP deals primarily with humanitarian aid in areas where living conditions are difficult.

Recommendations

- ⇒ Review WFP's recruitment policy, taking into account the reality that if the current pace of moving towards gender balance in human resources continues, the strategic goal of placing more women in decision-making posts is not likely to be achieved during the implementation period of the ECW, 2003–2007.
- ⇒ Identify effective measures to speed up the process of achieving gender balance at P-4 levels and above, as well as among national staff.
- ⇒ Develop a career-development strategy that ensures a pool of competent female staff who have received management and leadership training, enabling them to move into key management positions. In preparation for this strategy, commission a representative study of how (and to what extent) gender may be a variable influencing retention and reassignment, including among Junior Professional Officers (JPOs) and national Professional staff.
- ⇒ Review current directives pertinent the personal situation of WFP staff, ensuring that they apply to men and women equally.

RELEVANCE AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE COMMITMENTS⁷

24. In general, the Commitments are relevant at the global level, and are in agreement with documents such as the United Nations Millennium Declaration, which refers to equal rights and opportunities for women and men, the right to be free from hunger and poverty, and the right to benefit equally from development opportunities. The vision and objectives of the Commitments are consonant also with the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, and the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). In the countries reviewed, the Commitments do not contradict national development strategies in general, or national action plans aiming to improve women's socio-economic status in particular. However, it is recognized that not all the countries where WFP operates have ratified CEDAW, and that there is often a gap between the objectives of national plans and actual implementation on the ground.
25. There is a wide range of experiences in implementing the individual Commitments, some of which require different time spans. Not surprisingly, this has implications for assessing achievements.

Commitment I: Providing Direct Access to Appropriate and Adequate Food

26. The relevance of this Commitment is perceived as linked to women's role in household food security and social reproduction.⁸ However, there appears to be some confusion when interpreting the percentage benchmark.

⁷ See Annex for details of the individual Commitments.

⁸ This refers to women's traditional responsibilities as wives and mothers, in caring for the elderly, and in accomplishing unpaid economic activities that support the household.



27. Data indicate that country offices have moved nearer to achieving, and in some cases have even exceeded, the target of 80 percent of women receiving food aid directly, which is the usual interpretation of CW/I/A. The ration card system has in some places been gender-sensitized to take account of female-headed and polygamous households, and efforts to include the wife's name on cards of male-headed households have also been increasing. Recruitment of female food aid monitors has contributed to more effective targeting and to ensuring that women are aware of their entitlements. However, other gender-sensitive measures, such as repackaging food rations and shortening the distance to food distribution points to take account of women's physical burdens and time constraints, have not been implemented in all country offices. Moreover, various country case studies indicate that more effort is required to address the physical vulnerability and security of women and girls in situations of armed conflict.
28. There are discernible efforts to address micronutrient deficiencies, though food rations do not always conform to local cooking and eating habits. This can create particular burdens for women who shoulder the responsibility for securing household fuel and water needs. Ways to address this problem include teaching women different methods of cooking unfamiliar food items, and linking this with training in family nutrition and hygiene.

Recommendations

- ⇒ Clarify the relevance of the ECW to EMOPs and PRROs, and disseminate this information broadly. Provide guidance on gender-specific targets that must be at least minimally addressed in these operations.
- ⇒ Make implementing partners responsible for addressing the physical security of women and girls in situations of armed conflict, and for ensuring transparency in the food distribution system.

Commitment II: Take Measures to Ensure Women's Equal Access to and Full Participation in Power Structures and Decision-Making

29. This Commitment is deemed relevant to national development strategies, and in particular to women's crucial role in household food security. However, terms such as "lead role" are perceived to be ambiguous and open to misinterpretation, especially in cultural contexts characterized by gender segregation.
30. Overall, the number of women serving on food management and distribution committees has increased; however, this has not translated into women participating equally in decision-making within these committees. Funding and human resources tend to be serious constraints, despite efforts to address this problem through investment in women's leadership training. Even more difficult to realize is a leading role for women in committees that manage community assets created by food for work (FFW), where the local male elite tend to dominate the decision-making process, often excluding poor men as well as women.

Recommendation

- ⇒ Provide advocacy and support for women's leadership training to promote women's equal participation in food aid committees. Solicit the support of men in the community to ensure that these efforts are sustainable.



31. Regarding gender balance in higher management positions, a few points may be added to the previous discussion on human resources in WFP. All country case studies reveal discernible efforts to recruit qualified women, including for national posts. In some cases, recruiting women may be easier when gender expertise is specified, simply because it is generally women professionals who have this background and experience. In other places there have been efforts to recruit local women for non-traditional jobs such as drivers, security guards and store managers.

Recommendation

- ⇒ Ensure that the relevant human resources directives give country offices adequate flexibility to take account of regional and country labour market demand and supply factors. This is particularly pertinent to percentage hiring targets for recruiting national staff.

Commitment III: Take Positive Action to Facilitate Women's Equal Access to Resources, Employment, Markets and Trade

32. The consensus is that the relevance of this Commitment is particularly challenging, not only because of the structural changes it requires socially, economically and politically, but also because of WFP's limited capacity to facilitate such access.
33. Overall, examination of country case studies has revealed a number of good practices, including the selection of FFW activities that are more suitable for addressing women's practical gender needs⁹ (flexible working hours, availability of childcare near FFW sites, etc.). In some cases, specific projects were created to address situations where gender segregation constrained women's wider participation in the workforce—for example, through the opening of bakeries in Afghanistan. Increasing focus on food for training (FFT) has contributed to addressing women's strategic gender needs,¹⁰ but has also enabled an individual asset-creation process that women can more easily control—for example, income-generation projects facilitated through skill training and access to micro-credit.¹¹
34. Other good practices that have facilitated achievement of this Commitment include advocacy campaigns to sensitize families and communities to the importance of girls' education, provision of valued take-home rations to girls attending school, improvement of school infrastructure, and support for boarding school facilities. Overall, decreasing drop-out rates have been noted. However, in some cases less attention has been accorded to the quality of education—for example, when increasing school enrolment has not been matched by a commensurate increase in the number of classrooms and qualified teaching staff.
35. There have been discernible efforts to use food aid as leverage, though evidence suggests that there is some confusion between leverage and advocacy. In fact, the country cases studies indicate that although few country offices use conditionalities to achieve

⁹ The term *practical gender need* is linked to women's traditional social and economic roles—i.e. supporting activities that reduce their workload and enable them to better carry out their tasks and duties.

¹⁰ The term *strategic gender need* refers to supporting the process of women's empowerment through, for example, providing literacy and skills training; providing access to productive resources, credit, and markets; improving women's legal and customary rights; and ensuring their equal participation in decision-making.

¹¹ The importance accorded by WFP to asset-creation for women is highlighted in the Executive Director's circular issued in November 2001.



leverage or advocacy objectives, many have attempted to promote women's social and economic status, and the link with household food security.

Recommendations

- ⇒ Ensure that women's needs and preferences (including work norms and time/labour input) are addressed effectively in the choice of FFW activities.
- ⇒ Recognize that in some contexts FFT activities may be more appropriate and sustainable for poor and malnourished women shouldering the physical burden of supporting their families.

Commitment IV: Generating and Disseminating Gender-Disaggregated Data and Information for Planning and Evaluation

36. This Commitment is deemed relevant since it is a crucial tool for planning and implementing WFP operations. However, it is perceived more in terms of identifying quantitative rather than qualitative indicators.
37. Much effort has been expended in collecting gender-disaggregated data, and progress is evident in some country offices. However, as mentioned earlier, in most cases the information is only modestly useful in determining project outcome and impact—a task made even more difficult by the projects' variability: some projects undergo gender analysis and baseline studies, but many do not. Even where impressive efforts are being made to improve gender-disaggregated data for monitoring and reporting, indicators may not be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time bound). There is also the reality that data collection to some extent depends on IPs, whose human resources capacity and skills may not always be of the required standard.

Recommendation

- ⇒ Ensure that monitoring outputs are used effectively for evaluation and programme planning.

Commitment V: Improving Accountability on Actions Taken to Meet the Commitments

38. This Commitment was deemed to be relevant and nearly essential: without it, the other Commitments cannot be implemented easily. Contractual agreements are particularly important given WFP's reliance on government counterparts and IPs in achieving its objectives.
39. When comparing earlier with more recent contractual agreements between WFP and its partners, a positive shift can be seen in terms of the explicit mention of gender requirements. However, the country case studies confirm that there is no consistent mention of gender-sensitive implementation and monitoring requirements in contractual agreements. In some cases, contractual agreements clearly specify gender requirements, and meetings are held to disseminate the Commitments; in other places, agreements include limited reference to this issue, and IPs may not be asked to report on them. Relief operations have made the least progress in this area.
40. In terms of the accountability of WFP staff, the Management and Appraisal of Performance (MAP) form is viewed as a tool for enforcing the accountability of managers in hiring, and of pertinent programme staff for implementing the Commitments. Of the random sample of 202 MAPs requested for the evaluation, 65 percent were available. Of those, only 37 percent of those deemed relevant to the exercise included reference to programming accountability. Only 16 percent included reference to hiring targets. The



conclusion is that WFP staff, including senior managers, have not been held accountable for implementing the CW through their MAPs.

Recommendations

- ⇒ Review the standard format for contractual agreements to ensure that they are sufficiently gender sensitized and include clauses pertinent to implementing the Commitments. Agreements should also include realistic conditionalities for non-compliance.
- ⇒ Review the effectiveness of the MAP as a management tool for enforcing accountability for implementing the Commitments.

ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT OF THE COMMITMENTS

41. Overall, the CWs have had an impact on reducing gender-related inequalities and addressing women's practical and strategic gender needs. However variable the accountability among WFP staff in respect to implementing the Commitments and supporting the process of gender mainstreaming, the country case studies reveal that country offices are aware of the need to address gender gaps and to ensure that this is reflected in programming. Gender has ceased to be an abstract variable dealt with at Headquarters and has increasingly transformed the working environment at the field level.
42. A caveat to the following analysis is that assessment of impact has been hampered by the fact that baseline studies have not been carried out routinely.
43. The Commitments have had an important impact on the type and scope of policies formulated by WFP during the period under review. The desk reviews and key staff interviews indicate that without the framework provided by the Commitments, the changes required to more effectively address WFP's mandate to feed the hungry poor and support household food security would have been a slower and more uneven process.
44. The Commitments have also had an impact in terms of better targeting to vulnerable women and children, and awareness raising among implementers that general distribution does not ensure the appropriate allocation of food aid within the household. This is the case in EMOPs, even though gender mainstreaming in these types of WFP operations may lag behind other types. Ensuring that ration cards are in the women's names has had a positive contributing impact on improving women's status within the community. It has encouraged a move away from stereotyping women as victims and passive food aid recipients to promoting their image as active participants in interventions aimed at improving the livelihood of their families. But much depends on the attitude and gender-sensitivity of WFP staff and IPs, and on the extent to which they are prepared to be innovative and follow up diligently on problems related to ensuring the transparency of the food distribution system and ensuring that beneficiaries have accurate knowledge of their entitlements.
45. There have also been some adverse impacts: for example, exposing women to physical risks in situations of armed conflict, where food distribution centres are located some distance from the household and where food aid is a valued and therefore fought-over commodity; or physically burdening them with heavy weights where food rations are not repackaged and transportation facilities are limited and/or costly. Moreover, evidence suggests that being the direct recipient of food aid may facilitate women's control of food ration entitlements and their use, but does not guarantee it.



46. Due to the longer time span of PRROs (compared with EMOPs) and the fact that staff turnover is less frequent, some positive impacts are discernible in these operations, the most notable being gender-sensitive targeting and women's participation in food aid committees. A positive impact has also been noted where women from different ethnic groups participate jointly in food committees. This has contributed in some cases to overcoming ethnic divisions that are among the factors leading to conflict (and, in some areas, to internal population displacement).
47. Evidence suggests that supporting the repatriation of female refugees has not necessarily had the desired impact. Women refugees without male support tend to be less attracted by repatriation incentives, often because these incentives do not take appropriate account of the gender-specific constraints they may face. In addition, the skills training these women receive is sometimes not relevant to economic opportunities and labour market demand factors in their place of origin/repatriation.
48. Following the objectives of the Enabling Development policy, the Commitments have had an impact on WFP food-aid-assisted development interventions. There has been a gradual shift in focus from activities related to the economic sector, which tend to involve mainly men to activities related to the social sector, which facilitate women's participation and address their particular gender needs. Gender-sensitive participatory approaches to FFW have involved women in identifying their own needs and priorities, and have contributed to facilitating their access to (though not necessarily their control over) the assets created. However, in some cases there have also been some undesired impacts—for example, when poor and malnourished women participate in the physically arduous work required by some FFW activities.
49. The requirements of the Commitments have also increased the focus on FFT activities that address women's strategic gender needs and thus contribute to their empowerment. However, the identification of the skills that they should be trained in is not always linked to market feasibility. Moreover, available information indicates that the impact of skills training has not been assessed in WFP.
50. It should also be noted that the focus on women (deemed justified by their crucial role in household food security) has inadvertently had the impact of perpetuating the image of "altruistic" wife/mother versus "unreliable" husband/father. In fact, the country case studies reveal that households do not necessarily conform to such stereotypical female and male behaviour patterns, and point to the need to solicit male support for interventions that target women.

Recommendations

- ⇒ Ensure that gender-sensitive baseline studies are a routine part of WFP operations and are supported through appropriate funding and human resources capacity and capabilities.
- ⇒ Ensure that FFT focuses on imparting market-relevant skills based on reliable market-feasibility information, and that this is included as a conditionality in contractual agreements with IPs.
- ⇒ Identify ways of shortening the distance to food distribution points, of providing affordable transportation means, and of generalizing the good practice of packaging food rations appropriately and setting distribution times in ways that take account of women's gender-related responsibilities.



ASSESSMENT OF LONGER-TERM SUSTAINABILITY OF ACTIONS UNDERTAKEN

51. Three specific interlinked indicators are deemed relevant to assessing the longer-term sustainability of actions undertaken by WFP to implement the Commitments:

Corporate Working Culture

52. There is an evident institutional transformation taking place within WFP. Programme staff are aware of the link between the Commitments and WFP's mandate to feed the hungry poor, as well as of the importance of gender mainstreaming. Some support staff have received gender-sensitization training. However, the belief persists that gender issues are mainly of concern to female staff. This is reinforced by the fact that posts related to the process of gender mainstreaming have generally been held by female staff.

Institutional Capacity and Capability

53. This includes mechanisms and measures put in place for mainstreaming gender. While an increase in human resources has affected sustainability in a positive way, achieving gender balance therein requires more effort. In respect of the capability of WFP staff to operationalize the Commitments, more investment in gender-analysis training is required.

Stakeholder Motivation¹²

54. In its dealings with government counterparts and IPs (be they multilateral or bilateral agencies or non-governmental organizations [NGOs]), WFP has invested discernible efforts in promoting attitudes that are conducive to achieving and sustaining the objectives in the Commitments. However, this has not always been reflected in contractual agreements, or matched by compliance.
55. Stakeholder motivation also applies to WFP staff, with implications for transforming WFP's corporate culture and enforcing accountability for implementing the Commitments. Among some staff, such motivation appears to be affected by subjective perceptions that implementing gender balance in recruitment, promotion, and reassignment inevitably implies "female winners" versus "male losers". In fact, available human resources data do not support this perception.

Recommendation

- ⇒ Promote a corporate working culture where all staff, regardless of sex and position, perceive themselves to be stakeholders in the process of effectively implementing the ECW 2003–2007.

MOVING FORWARD: LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE ENHANCED COMMITMENTS TO WOMEN 2003–2007

56. An important conclusion is that WFP needs to effectively link the requirements of the ECW and Gender Policy with the reality of its mandate, the focus of its operations, its organizational structure, and its institutional capacity and human resources capabilities.

¹² The term *stakeholder* refers to all parties who are directly or indirectly involved in and/or affected by an activity or intervention.



There is also a link with WFP's resource mobilization strategy that aims to secure adequate and timely food and non-food aid resources.

57. The working culture within WFP has implications for motivating staff to support the Commitments. Though much has been achieved in this regard, the challenge remains of how to institutionalize it more effectively. Reviewing accountability tools is one way, based on the premise that there must be balance between motivating staff, providing them with the necessary skills, and enforcing directives.
58. Another important lesson is the need for an effective training strategy that does not treat gender in isolation, and addresses the complex linkages between the subjective and objective dimensions of this term.¹³ This would in turn serve to support a better understanding of the objective of achieving gender balance not only at the aggregate level but particularly in strategic and management positions.
59. There is also the question regarding the choice of IPs, in which process WFP may not always have the desired flexibility. The challenge is how to ensure that contractual agreements are clear in respect to the objectives of the Commitments (and include conditionality clauses), and how to develop leverage and advocacy strategies to achieve this.
60. The experience of implementing the Commitments indicates that terms such as *control*, *lead role*, and *empowerment* need to be used with caution, not only taking into account the social context where WFP operates,¹⁴ but also keeping in mind that WFP food aid cannot by itself achieve the necessary structural changes inherent in these terms. It can at best contribute to achieving these objectives, and strengthen the impact of its interventions through effective cooperation and coordination with other agencies and partners.

Recommendations

- ⇒ Through the regional bureaux, provide clear and unambiguous guidance to staff on how to effectively address and operationalize the ECW. This includes guidance on the meaning and application of terms that may be subject to different interpretations in the various regions and cultural settings where WFP operates.
- ⇒ Review global percentage targets to ensure that they reflect regional and national contexts adequately. Provide guidance on reasons for these benchmarks and criteria for justifying non-compliance.

¹³ This points to the complex dimensions of the term *gender*. Insofar as gender is a variable affecting an individual's social role and relations with family and non-kin (be they in the community, the market, the place of work, etc.), it has *subjective* dimensions that may consciously or unconsciously affect a person's attitudes and behaviour. The *objective* aspects of gender refer to its use as, for example, an analytical tool in development and other discourses.

¹⁴ So-called cultural boundaries are much less rigid than generally assumed. Too often the presumed lack of cultural flexibility is taken as justification for not exploring innovative approaches to addressing gender gaps.



ANNEX

WFP'S COMMITMENTS TO WOMEN 1996–2001

WFP commits itself to use its resources in interventions that seek to reduce gender-related inequalities through:

Commitment I: Provide direct access to appropriate and adequate food

- A. Target relief food distributions to households, ensuring that women control the family entitlement in 80 percent of WFP-handled and -subcontracted operations.
- B. Address micronutrient deficiencies of certain vulnerable groups of women, children, and adolescents; and consider local eating and cooking habits in all operations.

Commitment II: Take measures to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making

- A. Ensure a lead role of women within all local decision-making committees on food management and in the management of the assets created by food-for-work projects.
- B. Contribute to the United Nations goal of reaching gender equity by the year 2001, particularly in higher management positions.

Commitment III: Take positive action to facilitate women's equal access to resources, employment, markets and trade

- A. Target 60 percent of country programme resources to women and girls in those countries where gender statistics demonstrate a 25-percentage-point disadvantage (gender gap) for women compared with men.
- B. Target 50 percent of education resources within a country programme to girls.
- C. At least 25 percent of project outputs/assets created with FFW are to be of direct benefit to and controlled by women; and at least 25 percent of generated funds are to be invested in activities aimed at the advancement of women.
- D. Use food aid as leverage to obtain complementary national and international resources to improve the condition of women.

Commitment IV: Generate and disseminate gender-disaggregated data and information for planning and evaluation

All WFP monitoring and reporting will specify:

- A. percentage share of resources received from food distribution by men/women;
- B. percentage share of benefits by category of activities by men/women; and
- C. percentage of positions held by women in the management of food distribution.

Commitment V: Improve accountability on actions taken

Define the implementation and monitoring requirements of the Commitments in the performance of WFP managers and contractual agreements with partners.



ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

BPFA	Beijing Platform for Action
CD	Country Director
CEDAW	United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CW	Commitments to Women
ECW	Enhanced Commitments to Women
EMOP	Emergency operation
FFT	Food-for-training
FFW	Food-for-work
FWCW	Fourth World Conference on Women
GAF	General Action Facility (previously Fund)
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GFP	Gender focal point
GFT	Gender Focal Team
GTF	Gender Task Force
IP	Implementing partner
JPO	Junior Professional Officer
MAP	Management and Appraisal of Performance
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PRRO	Protracted relief and recovery operation
RGA	Regional Gender Adviser
SMART	Specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound
SP	Strategy and Policy Division
VAM	Vulnerability analysis and mapping

