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SUMMARY OF THE WORK OF THE SECOND 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.2/2003/10.

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WEST AFRICA REGIONAL PORTFOLIO

1. The Regional Director gave an overview of the situation in West Africa, outlining recent events since the last update, in February. He stressed that the epicentre of the crisis in Western Africa was Liberia, where ports had been commandeered by rebels, placing constraints on the delivery of food. In addition, refugees from bordering countries who had crossed into Liberia were now inaccessible to humanitarian assistance.
2. In Côte d'Ivoire, assessments showed that food security in the north had deteriorated since October; the situation in neighbouring Liberia was affecting access to internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the west; and in the rest of the country, prolonged displacement was depleting the reserves of IDPs and placing a strain on their host families. Also of concern was the situation in IDP camps in Monrovia, where food distributions were attracting violence; the Regional Director stressed that it was important that security be ensured for beneficiaries and WFP staff.
3. Despite this, he commended the extraordinary efforts of governments in the region to help ensure that there was capacity to deal with the movement of people that these crises had precipitated.
4. There had been good donor response to the situation in the Western Sahel, but WFP had not asked for a lot of food initially, and needs were higher than expected. In Mauritania, malnutrition rates were contained and stocks were in place, but the food basket was not complete; food security reserves had been depleted in Mali; and there was stress expected for the lean season in Senegal and Gambia. It was explained that, with government reserves already exhausted, the next rainy season would be critical for the Western Sahel.
5. The Regional Director referred to western Africa's silent emergency, offering grim statistics on the region's poverty; low school enrolment and retention; high illiteracy, malnutrition and HIV/AIDS rates; and the burden that out-of-control population growth placed on an already fragile environment.
6. The Board thanked the Regional Director for his presentation, describing it as useful and containing just the right amount of detail. The Board also thanked the Secretariat for efforts made in the region, especially as regarded school feeding, and thanked donors for their timely contributions, stressing the need for pledges to be made early, in time for next year.
7. In response to the Board's desire to see more local purchases, the Regional Director stated that it was WFP's policy to purchase food locally whenever possible, reporting that in 2002, WFP purchased 56,000 tons of food locally for school feeding programmes in the region. He explained, in response to Board concern, that WFP was closely monitoring the dollar conversion rate.
8. The Board looked forward to greater United Nations organization cooperation with the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The Regional Director agreed with the importance of cooperation but stressed that partnerships needed to be built with the governments first. He pointed out that 80 percent of food distributed for emergencies was done with the support of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), following a joint assessment of the situation.
9. Regarding the creation of an HIV/AIDS strategy for the region, the Regional Director responded that WFP had HIV/AIDS programmes in nine countries in the region, all of them linked to a country programme (CP) or emergency operation (EMOP). He projected



that in five to seven years, the HIV/AIDS crisis in the region would be similar to that in southern Africa, and therefore it was critical that dedicated programmes in response to HIV/AIDS be implemented as soon as possible.

Evaluation Reports

Summary Report of the Mid-Term Evaluation of Country Programme—Benin (2000–2003) (2003/EB.2/1)

10. The Board thanked the Secretariat for the relevant information contained in the evaluation. It appreciated the achievements and difficulties highlighted in the document, but would have liked to see more specific information on the level of resources used by the WFP country office during the period of the programme.
11. The Board applauded the CP's relevant objectives, its assistance to vulnerable refugees, and the follow-up carried out in response to requests for the identification of additional partners. The Board stressed the need for local purchases and the use of non-food inputs. Also mentioned was the need for WFP and United Nations agencies to coordinate efforts.
12. In response to comments, the Secretariat explained that the CP's original design did not correspond to the reality on the ground and that the country programme approach did not add to the previous project-based approach in the Benin context. Specifically mentioned was the lack of flexibility inherent in donors' earmarking food for a given activity, thus placing constraints on borrowing among activities.
13. Responding to questions about the practical implications of operating in a small country with poor governance, the Regional Director explained that WFP had country offices in countries that were both well and poorly governed. He emphasized that rather than abandoning needy people who just happened to live in countries with bad governance, WFP should instead look for ways to continue to operate its programmes in those countries, focusing on: targeting more precisely, to reach children in need; building capacity; tapping into the expertise of national officers; and building partnerships. He also alluded to the constraints placed on country offices financed with direct support costs (DSC) alone.

MEDITERRANEAN, MIDDLE EAST AND CENTRAL ASIA REGIONAL PORTFOLIO

14. In an overview of the work of the Mediterranean, Middle East and Central Asia Bureau, the Regional Director outlined the situation in the countries in the region. In Central Asia, harvests appeared to be promising but there were continuing problems of insecurity and violence in Afghanistan, which limited the movements of WFP staff. Activities were moving toward recovery in Tajikistan, in spite of problems associated with the civil war and drought. The Iraq crisis had overshadowed work in Iran, with consequent delays in some planned protracted relief and recovery operation (PRRO) activities. The situation in Pakistan was generally improving, though poor women and children continued to suffer disproportionately and there were commodity shortages. The anticipated food and refugee crises had not emerged in Iraq, where problems were associated with poor security and coordination difficulties. Conflict was continuing in the Palestinian Territory, which affected delivery of humanitarian aid. The new CP was in operation in Egypt; in Algeria, the impasse regarding political settlement meant that no solution was yet in sight, leaving refugees in a difficult situation of dependence.



15. Responding to questions and comments on Iraq, the Regional Director pointed out that there had been no delays in payments for harvest, but the procurement operation was constrained because security was poor, there were no functioning banks and no effective government or administrative services, and silo facilities required repair. The priority was to get the situation back to normal, which would take time. The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General was tasked to coordinate humanitarian activities. Some improvements in the situation were already evident. These points were noted by the Board.

Operational Matters

Draft Country Programme—Pakistan 10269.0 (2004–2008) (2003/EB.2/2)

16. The draft Country Programme for Pakistan was well received by the Board. Several Board members strongly supported the three main intervention areas retained by WFP for this CP and indicated that, based on the thorough analysis undertaken by the country office, these three fields of intervention seemed to be justified. The focus on the education of girls and women was particularly appreciated.
17. Board members expressed appreciation for the coordination and harmonization of this draft Country Programme with the Government's Poverty-Reduction Strategy Paper.
18. With regard to comments on the monitoring system, the Secretariat stated that measures were in hand to improve monitoring and evaluation capability. The Board was informed that the contribution of the Government of Pakistan would be utilized to fund salaries, storage facilities and transport, although it was shown in aggregate terms in the draft CP document. The Board noted the need to extend partnerships with NGOs and also noted a call for contributions to prevent an anticipated pipeline break that could occur in August 2003 for the emergency operation in favour of Afghan refugees.
19. The Secretariat stressed that the Pakistan CP draft closely followed Board guidelines and the Common Country Assessment (CCA) and that it was in line with three of the four United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) priorities: poverty reduction, health and education; the need to restrict the length of draft CPs prevented inclusion of full detail of all aspects, although WFP would endeavour to make this connection more explicit. The Secretariat also stressed the need for technical assistance to complement food aid; such assistance could be provided by the Government of Pakistan working in coordination with WFP, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).
20. The Board welcomed and endorsed the draft document, expressing appreciation for the work that had gone into it. The Board authorized the Secretariat to prepare the definitive Pakistan CP 10269.0 for 2004–2008 in light of UNDAF priorities and points raised at the meeting.

SOUTHERN AFRICA REGIONAL PORTFOLIO

21. The Regional Director began her presentation by thanking donors for their help in averting a major crisis in southern Africa, but stressed that much remained to be done. She explained that WFP would be taking into account the data currently under review from the recent FAO/WFP crop and food supply assessment missions and WFP/SADC (Southern Africa Development Community) assessments when deciding future actions in the region.



22. She went on to describe the outlook for southern Africa, where cereal production, despite a projected increase, was still expected to be below the last five-year average for Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Lesotho and Swaziland. Access to food remained a problem in many countries of the region, as did troubling socio-economic conditions.
23. HIV/AIDS continued to be a major problem, with the majority of those affected being women between the ages of 15 and 49, the most productive years. In Zambia, 65 percent of households that had lost a mother to HIV/AIDS had dissolved, and the number of HIV/AIDS orphans was increasing. Given these grim statistics, and given the importance of food aid for mitigating the affects of HIV/AIDS, it was imperative that food aid be continued.
24. The Regional Director outlined the enormous challenges facing the countries in the region, including: the accelerated household economic decline, escalation in deaths from HIV/AIDS, doubling of infant mortality rates, and lack of resources for agriculture. Zimbabwe was particularly hard hit, as the country was currently facing acute shortages of food, fuel and the basic commodities necessary to sustain life. She was pleased to report a fairly healthy pipeline in Angola (66-percent resourced), under which Angolan refugees in Zambia would receive a food package for their return trip to Angola. At the same time, however, she pointed out that a fracture in the pipeline of the Madagascar EMOP (55-percent resourced) was hurting food-for-work (FFW) activities, particularly due to shortfalls in non-cereals, and influencing people's coping mechanisms.
25. The Regional Director proposed the creation of a transitional EMOP for Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The strategy of the EMOP would aim for a focus on targeting, the integration of food and social services, and a transition from relief to recovery.
26. She spoke briefly about the development project in Lesotho, where poverty and unemployment, coupled with HIV/AIDS, had deprived children of education. Through the provision of school feeding and take-home rations, 285,300 students would benefit over a four-year period.
27. The Board thanked the Regional Director for her presentation. It applauded her efforts and those of WFP staff in the region to mobilize the international community and provide support to countries in crisis.

Operational Matters

Development Project for Executive Board Approval—Lesotho 10266.0 (2003/EB.2/3)

28. The Board welcomed the document on the development project in Lesotho, citing the project as a good example of international community efforts made through one United Nations agency in support of a national strategy. It was felt that the project met WFP and Millennium Development Goals, and that its focus was in line with UNDAF priorities. The Board was also pleased with the phase-out strategy, the coordination with UNICEF and NGO partners on HIV/AIDS, and the focus on obtaining quality inputs for schools. Also welcomed was the envisaged role of the Ministry of Education, the pilot activity on school gardens, to be jointly supported by FAO and UNICEF, and the details given on transportation, storage and distribution.
29. The Board was generally concerned about the sustainability and duration of the project, the state of school infrastructure, and planned exit strategies, all of which, the Secretariat explained, fell under risk analysis. The Secretariat assured the Board that, despite weak



government capacity, it had confidence in the Government's commitment to the project. Several Board members welcomed the opportunity to assess progress following the mid-term technical review of the project, planned for the end of 2005. After the review it would be determined whether it was appropriate to have a full country programme.

30. In response to questions from Board members, the Secretariat explained that efforts to encourage herd boys to attend school was constrained by families' dependence on the boys' incomes and by traditional attitudes toward the herd boys' place in society. The possibility of devising a non-formal schooling programme for the boys, perhaps in the form of remote learning through radio, was being considered.
31. Regarding the elimination of fortified biscuits from the food ration, the Secretariat explained that the biscuits had been dropped owing to a lack of resources but agreed that they would be a welcome alternative to cooked food in a country where fuelwood was in short supply. It was explained that this scarcity of fuelwood was also why the Government paid school canteen workers, to induce them to collect fuelwood.
32. One member commended the project's inclusion of collecting statistics indicating the percentage of school feeding children who completed the school year.

EAST AND CENTRAL AFRICA REGIONAL PORTFOLIO

33. The Regional Director outlined the situation in the East and Central Africa region, focusing on the many challenges facing the humanitarian community. Most countries in the region were suffering from food shortages in general, and Eritrea and Ethiopia were facing a food crisis. Malnutrition was evident in many areas, especially among children. This was exacerbated by the unstable security situation in six of the countries, where widespread violence had disrupted the lives of large numbers of people, forcing them to become refugees and internally displaced persons completely dependent on WFP food aid. Delivering food to beneficiaries had become a risky undertaking. Drought in some countries and floods in others had also contributed to the serious food situation in the region.

Operational Matters

Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation for Executive Board Approval—Kenya 10258.0 (2003/EB.2/4)

34. Introducing the Kenya PRRO, the Secretariat stressed that supply shortfalls had resulted in reduced rations for refugees in Kenya. The nutrition situation was fragile and the pipeline was unreliable.
35. Responding to questions and comments from the Board, the Secretariat agreed that the programme had focused on relief rather than recovery because refugees were unable to achieve self-reliance, as government policy did not allow them to engage in income-generating activities outside the camps. It was noted that up to 15 percent of food aid was sold or bartered for non-food items.
36. The Secretariat pointed out the need to facilitate gardening to produce food, and noted the success of projects already in operation. The danger of food aid's being a disincentive to work was seen as negligible. Security procedures were in force to protect the refugees, especially girls travelling to school; WFP was cooperating fully with other humanitarian agencies in this and other matters.



Budget Increase to Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation—Uganda 10121.0 (2003/EB.2/5)

37. With regard to this item, the Secretariat emphasized that Uganda was facing its worst humanitarian crisis in many years and that the budget revision was needed to meet the needs of increasing numbers of IDPs and to provide assistance for severe malnutrition among children.
38. In response to questions from Board members, the Secretariat stated that the security situation was being addressed and that distributions were escorted by military personnel and vehicles. The refugee situation was being monitored by WFP in collaboration with the Office of the Prime Minister and UNICEF; it was noted that most refugees were unwilling to reside in camps. The Board and Secretariat welcomed a proposal that the Programme could give institutional support to Ugandan line ministries through training in food-needs assessments for government personnel. The Secretariat informed the Board that 40 percent of food commodities were locally purchased, and the need for contributions and support remained urgent.
39. In approving both PRROs, the Board noted that they were for communities in conflict situations, and that political settlements were necessary for improved security and for a resolution of the refugee problem. The need to find ways to enable refugees to become self-reliant was noted, but until solutions were found, the large cost of feeding them would have to be borne. The Board recognized the risks taken by WFP staff in carrying out their work and expressed its admiration for their commitment.

ASIA REGIONAL PORTFOLIO

40. The Regional Director began by thanking the Board for the opportunity to brief it and pledging to be responsive to its concerns. He then gave an overview of the situation in the region.
41. Following monsoon rains in May, Sri Lanka was hit by its heaviest flooding in 50 years, which affected 164,000 families and led to the loss of homes and crops. WFP responded with immediate aid for 20,000 families and was now working with FAO on damage assessment and with the Government on a recovery programme that would include FFW and supplementary feeding. WFP was also hard at work on its PRRO in favour of IDPs in camps.
42. In Indonesia, WFP had set up a sub-office in Aceh Province, after the cease-fire between the Government and the Free-Aceh Movement (GAM). However, poor security had forced the Programme to suspend activities in the province. Following the renewal of hostilities, the key humanitarian issues were now protection and access to IDPs. There was no food crisis in Aceh. Responding to an assessment of the Indonesia PRRO, WFP would seek to phase out the urban poor, whose needs would be met by the Government, and would extend the PRRO for three years, refocusing it on the rural poor.
43. The Regional Director outlined the situation in other countries in the region: A nutrition survey in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) had shown improvements in the areas of child underweight, wasting and stunting. A Maoist insurgency in areas of WFP assistance was affecting the Programme's operations in Nepal. And in East Timor, a recent WFP/FAO assessment mission estimated that 150,000 to 200,000 vulnerable people might need approximately 7,500 to 10,000 tons of food during the lean season.



44. The Regional Director gave an update of the situation regarding Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in the region. Despite formal restrictions, the WFP office in China had been able to continue its operations. In the DPRK, authorities had recommenced issuance of multiple-entry visas, thus facilitating access to the country or WFP staff, but had kept two restrictions in place: the ten-day quarantine requirement for anyone entering the country from any of the 30 countries the DPRK considered “SARS affected”, and the cancellation of commercial flights, with the exception of one weekly flight from Vladivostok. These restrictions posed practical challenges for WFP, but the Regional Director underlined that the Programme understood DPRK authorities’ concerns and was doing its best to work with them to find a way both to prevent SARS from entering the country and to meet ongoing operational requirements.
45. The Board thanked the Regional Director for his presentation. It welcomed him to his new post and applauded the strategy WFP was employing to be able to continue assistance to the region. The Board stressed that it was important that financial resources be mobilized so that WFP could pursue its programmes in Asia.
46. The representative from Indonesia, while thanking WFP for assistance to Indonesia, took umbrage with the use of the term “Aceh conflict” in the Regional Director’s presentation and in any future document, stating that there was “no active conflict in Indonesia”. He described the situation as a “separatist rebellion movement”, and explained that the Government was doing its best to keep casualties to a minimum. He added that the Government had worked to resolve the food availability problems in that province. The President responded by stating that the Board understood Indonesia’s desire to have its Government’s view on this issue entered into the record.

LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN REGIONAL PORTFOLIO

47. The Regional Director thanked the Board for the opportunity to present an overview of the situation in Latin America and the Caribbean. She informed the Board that in recent months attention had been given up to the presidential level to reducing hunger and poverty in the region. A study, coordinated with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and supported by the Department for International Development (DFID), would be completed in October 2003, setting out the progress made in the region with regard to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on hunger.
48. The Regional Director emphasized that the hurricane season had started earlier and that the El Niño phenomenon might be replaced by La Niña. She expressed concern for the nutritional situation in Guatemala and also in Haiti, where worsening drought in the Far West and in central areas had led to crop losses. The situation in Colombia was under observation, and work was ongoing with refugees in neighbouring countries in collaboration with UNHCR and UNICEF.
49. In terms of resources, the PRRO of Central America had received a satisfactory support. The Regional Director appealed to the donor countries and the Board for due attention to be given to the recently approved PRRO for Haiti.
50. The Regional Director noted that although available resources in the region had fallen drastically in recent years, the issues of resource mobilization and regional visibility of WFP’s work were receiving full attention: efforts were under way to encourage governments to make the fight against hunger a policy priority and to develop more effective partnerships to combat hunger.



51. The Regional Director reminded the Board that the Regional Bureau had moved to Panama City, where several other United Nations agencies were based; an inter-agency operative control centre had been established with support from DFID. Due to the move, ODM from now on would be called ODPC.

EASTERN EUROPE REGIONAL PORTFOLIO

52. The Regional Director gave an overview of the situation in the Balkans, the Caucasus, and the Russian Federation. He stressed that WFP food aid was critical for maintaining beneficiaries' nutritional status and for preventing hunger in those made vulnerable by conflicts and the region's economic decline following the break-up of the Soviet Union.
53. The largest challenge for WFP in the region was ensuring that food aid reached those most in need. The Regional Director explained that careful monitoring had already led to the gradual phase-down and phase-out of WFP assistance in Kosovo and the Federal Republic of Macedonia, and a recent joint UNHCR/WFP assessment mission would lead to phase-out in Serbia and Montenegro; all phase-outs were planned to minimize adverse impact on beneficiaries and local staff. The future of WFP programmes in Albania was under review. The Regional Director stressed that the phase-outs he had described confirmed the success of WFP's exit strategy for the Balkans region.
54. WFP assistance continued to be essential in Armenia and Azerbaijan, where IDPs created by the 15-year-old stalemate over the Nagorno-Karabakh enclave had been living in deplorable conditions in makeshift shelters. And in Georgia, WFP provided relief assistance to Chechen refugees and conflict-affected people in the Pankisi Gorge. The Regional Director added that a significant recent development in the region had been the inclusion of the Russian Federation as a WFP donor.
55. He informed the Board that owing to the reduction in the Bureau's responsibilities in the region, the Regional Bureau for Eastern Europe would close down on 31 December 2003, and its remaining operations in the Caucasus would be absorbed under the Regional Bureau for Middle East and North Africa (ODC), in Cairo.
56. The Board praised the excellent work that the Eastern Europe Bureau had succeeded in doing under less than ideal conditions.

REPORTS BY THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT

Reports by the Joint Inspection Unit for 2002 (2003/EB.2/9)

57. In introducing the agenda item, the Secretariat thanked the Joint Inspection Unit for its comprehensive reports and practical recommendations. It stressed the great importance that WFP attached to the implementation of the Joint Inspection Unit recommendations relevant to the work of the Programme.
58. The Board welcomed the document, strongly supporting the efforts aimed at enhancing United Nations evaluation capacity. In general, it was pleased that WFP accepted and was implementing the relevant recommendations outlined in the reports.



59. One member was encouraged by the evaluation aspects of the United Nations response in East Timor, which showed, as in recommendation 8, that the United Nations should consider adjusting its development programmes and activities in order to better address the impacts of serious humanitarian crisis situations.
60. Regarding the report on multilingualism (JIU/REP/2002/11), another member mentioned that there was a feeling that in all its operations around the world WFP had not taken the subject of multilingualism as seriously as it might, and that it might improve its approach in that area. This referred not only to the language proficiency of staff but also to the messages/guidance received by field staff from Headquarters. Also, now that WFP was paying increasing attention to the capacity-building of its implementing partners, multilingualism was a very important issue.
61. Regarding partnership, the Board felt that when WFP addressed the involvement of civil-society organizations, it should ensure that what emerged was a *true* partnership. The Secretariat responded by stressing the need to determine which *type* of civil-society organization could work with the Programme. In response to a question, it explained that the creation of profiles would take time but that such profiles would be elaborated on the basis of WFP's major operations. It reported that WFP currently had more than 1,200 partners and that the Programme had intensified its work in this area over the last year.

OTHER BUSINESS

Report of the Executive Board Members' Field Visit to Mauritania, Senegal and Guinea (2003/EB.2/11)

62. In his presentation on the Board Members' field visit to Mauritania, Senegal and Guinea, the representative from Mali thanked the Secretariat for having organized the visit so well, and expressed his appreciation to country offices and their staff and to the host countries' authorities. He explained that one of the aims of the visit had been to give Board members the opportunity to meet and exchange information with WFP field staff, local authorities and beneficiaries.
63. In his presentation the representative highlighted the following: In drought-affected Mauritania, many areas of the country relied on WFP food distributions and school feeding programmes. In Senegal, the mission appreciated the importance the Government placed on education through the "Education for All" initiative, and the excellent service provided by the WFP Regional Bureau. And in Guinea, where border areas were affected by conflicts in neighbouring Sierra Leone, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, the needs of refugees were evident.
64. In general, the mission felt that WFP programmes were in line with national priorities. It stressed that WFP had a vital role to play in the development and well-being of the countries of the region, and it pleaded for continuing the Programme's role in development activities there. The representative closed by expressing his regret that no donor countries had joined the field visit, stressing the importance of such field visits as a way for Board members to see first hand how WFP operated and to exchange information with WFP staff; in this way, the Board could better mold WFP policy.
65. The Board thanked the representative from Mali for his presentation and underlined his request for donor presence on such visits. It urged that the recommendations from the field visits be taken into consideration by WFP.



Report of the Joint Field Visit of Members of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP to Mozambique (2003/EB.2/12)

66. The Vice-President of the Board made a presentation on the Joint Boards' field visit to Mozambique. Regarding the task of the United Nations in the country and how it influenced the national development strategy, he explained that there was a need to strengthen government capacity and improve human resources. The team supported the Government's disaster mitigation strategy and applauded the efforts of the United Nations in the area of HIV/AIDS. In the area of coordination and harmonization, he praised the coordination efforts made at the central level in line with the PRSP. However, he pointed out that there was a discrepancy between the Government's capability to generate plans at the central level and its ability to implement them country wide. In closing, he emphasized the importance of the exchange of information and knowledge and urged other Board members to participate in these kinds of visits.
67. The representative from India then gave a presentation on the individual (WFP) segment of the visit. He outlined the potential in the country and its current handicaps, namely, its nascent school system; weak government infrastructure; need for capacity building; and the country's vast size and the burden this placed on its infrastructure.
68. He pointed out that many schools lacked non-food inputs and that United Nations agencies on the ground should work in closer coordination with NGO partners to respond to this need. Overall he cited good community participation, but stressed that this could be strengthened through training.
69. The mission was impressed with the work by NGOs in the area of HIV/AIDS, and by the willingness of communities to involve themselves in the lives of children orphaned by AIDS. He noted in particular the community-driven Food for Development Fund, pointing out its sustainability and how it allowed communities to identify projects to be carried out. He reported that the team was most impressed with FFW projects in the areas of seed development, soil preparation and watershed management. In closing, he added that the team was pleased with the enthusiasm of WFP staff, but recommended closing the knowledge gap between WFP field staff and the Executive Board.
70. The President of the Board stated that further discussion of the joint field visits would take place after the Joint Meeting of the Boards, in New York, 6–9 June.

The Horn of Africa Crisis

71. The Board expressed its concern about the critical situation in the Horn of Africa, including the threat to 12–14 million people in Ethiopia and 1.5 million in Eritrea, and the need for immediate action to save lives. It applauded WFP's efforts to feed nearly 8 million people and to mobilize resources for the region.
72. The Board urged the United Nations system and donor governments to recognize the magnitude and severity of the situation and to work together to make a response to this crisis the top priority and to prevent a future occurrence.
73. It looked forward to a report on how the international community dealt with the transition from relief to development set of issues, to be available to the First Regular Session, 2004.



“Emerging Donors”

74. In a statement, the delegation from India responded to a suggestion of some members that WFP discourage contributions from Member States with food security problems, as it was felt that those States should use their resources to feed their own populations first. He stressed that this was fraught with consequences that threatened to create a division between rich and poor donors. He reminded the Board that broadening the donor base was one of the most important objectives of the Programme, and explained that the problems of distribution in a food-insecure country were separate and distinct from those associated with production and surpluses. He added that India was proud to have graduated from a recipient to a donor country. Other members echoed these points and expressed support for the Executive Director’s approach to reaching more donors.

Scheduling of Executive Board Sessions

75. A number of members referred to the Italian National holiday celebrated on the 2nd of June, and expressing on that occasion their best wishes to the Italian Republic. They requested that the Bureau take such events into account when scheduling future sessions in order to show more sensitivity to the host country and allow the members to observe the celebrations.

