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SUMMARY OF THE WORK OF THE ANNUAL SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD, 2002

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.A/2002/10.

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CURRENT AND FUTURE STRATEGIC ISSUES

Current and Future Strategic Issues (2002/EB.A/1)

1. The Executive Director gave an oral presentation on the strategic issues facing the Programme. He began by emphasizing that dividing interventions into two distinct categories, emergency and development, might not reflect the realities facing the hungry poor. Crises were not caused only by civil war or natural disasters, but also by chronic hunger, HIV/AIDS and children not attending schools. Through its Enabling Development policy, WFP was committed to helping people for whom hunger had always been a crisis.
2. In addition to the critical food aid operations in Angola, Colombia, Ethiopia and Zambia recently approved by the Board, the Executive Director identified a number of emergency operations where additional donor resources were required. These included operations in Afghanistan, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Palestinian Territory and southern Africa. In the southern Africa region, where 8 million people were at risk, the operation would be jump-started using WFP emergency funds. Pledges were needed, however, to keep the operation going.
3. The Executive Director raised the issue of the allegations of sexual abuse by humanitarian workers in West Africa. Although the report prepared by Save the Children Fund and UNHCR on child abuse in refugee camps did not mention the involvement of any WFP international staff, the Executive Director emphasized that WFP had a zero-tolerance policy. Further, the Programme had contributed to the prevention of such abuse, in particular by hiring more women as food monitors and revising Memoranda of Understanding with non-governmental organizations (NGOs).
4. The Board welcomed the zero-tolerance course of action mentioned by the Executive Director, and stressed the importance both of increased vigilance to prevent such occurrences and the need to adopt the policy of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) as the official policy of WFP.
5. In relation to the Global School Feeding Campaign, the Executive Director welcomed the many contributions of donors to the campaign and to WFP school feeding operations. He stressed the demonstrated link between education and health, and noted the importance of deworming efforts in Africa for ensuring that beneficiaries received the full nutritional value of the food they consumed.
6. The Executive Director underscored the importance WFP attached to inter-agency collaboration, including its support to the Millennium Development Goals and the Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP). He stressed that WFP would work closely with its Rome-based partners, FAO and IFAD, in reaching the World Food Summit target and reversing the downward trend in spending on food and hunger issues. He pointed out that the new commitments made in Monterrey, Mexico, should facilitate these collaborative efforts.
7. The Executive Director reaffirmed WFP's commitment to women as a way of halting the inter-generational cycle of hunger. WFP would continue to target women and children. This included ongoing efforts to reach the General Assembly goal of gender balance in staffing as soon as possible. He pointed out that the target for employing staff from developing countries, on the other hand, had already been met.



8. The Executive Director expressed his regret at the loss of two WFP staff members in 2001 and reaffirmed WFP's continued commitment to ensure the security of staff. He reviewed progress to date, including the selection of a WFP staff member to head the United Nations office for security coordination. He also pointed out that Member States should do more to bring to justice the perpetrators of violent crimes against United Nations staff.
9. Regarding improved effectiveness and efficiency, the Executive Director stressed that WFP was committed to minimizing fixed costs, reviewing indirect support costs (ISC), providing more frequent project and financial reporting, and streamlining the procedures and practices for emergency operations (EMOPs). He also expressed his commitment to working closely with Board members in the area of governance. He noted the need for WFP to be creative in broadening its donor base to obtain new resources and expressed his intention to seek support from all sources, including "small donors", non-traditional donors and the private sector.
10. The Executive Director stressed that funds raised within the private sector would be considered as additional to those that member governments provided. He responded to the advice given by two representatives, on both the cost implications of the exercise and the need to maintain transparency, by assuring members that the issue of private-sector fundraising would be handled with the necessary caution.
11. The Board congratulated the new Executive Director on his appointment. Representatives welcomed his commitment to be candid and frank with them and to continue implementing the strategic goals established by Ms Catherine Bertini.
12. The Board expressed its condolences towards the families of those who had lost their lives in the line of duty and reiterated the importance of Member States' bringing to justice the perpetrators of crimes committed against United Nations staff.
13. Several members expressed their concern over the decline in resources allocated to WFP's development portfolio. They welcomed the Executive Director's commitment to diversifying WFP's donor base and expressed the hope that the significant additional contribution for development activities announced at the Financing for Development Conference in Monterrey would result in greater support for food-aid interventions. The importance of WFP's dual mandate in providing food assistance in development and emergency situations was emphasized. Other members, however, expressed reservations about WFP's role in development, and one delegation noted that there was not universal support for WFP's Global School Feeding Campaign outside the Programme.
14. Several members underscored the importance of close collaboration between WFP and its partners, including UNDG, IASC and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). They emphasized that WFP operational activities, as formulated in Common Country Assessments (CCAs) and United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs), should be based on national poverty-reduction plans and priorities, including Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers. They highlighted the importance of the Millennium Development Goals as a basis for United Nations system-wide programming and urged WFP to clarify its role in reaching those goals.



ANNUAL REPORTS

Annual Report of the Executive Director: 2001 (2002/EB.A/2002/2)

15. The Board thanked the Executive Director for producing a useful and well-structured Annual Report.
16. A number of representatives reiterated their support for WFP's dual mandate of humanitarian and development assistance. They expressed concern about the decline in resources and urged WFP to seek new ways of attracting resources to the development portfolio, including facilitating non-traditional and private donors. It was stressed that private-sector donations should nevertheless be approached with caution, after the assessment of any possible implications.
17. Members suggested an external evaluation of the implementation of the Enabling Development policy.
18. The Board also emphasized the following points:
 - the importance for WFP of demonstrating results better, especially in its development activities, in order to attract resources to the development portfolio;
 - the need to support WFP's multilateral nature by increasing unrestricted multilateral contributions and supporting flexible response mechanisms, such as the Immediate Response Account;
 - the need to integrate WFP's work with country-level strategies—for example, Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and sector-wide approaches, the Consolidated Appeals Process—and within regional mechanisms, such as the New Partnership for Africa Development, and to coordinate and harmonize programming through the CCA/UNDAF process;
 - the importance of consolidating decentralization efforts to ensure improved country-level coordination, and using WINGS to further improve transparency and accountability;
 - the crucial role of monitoring and evaluation in improving accountability and demonstrating results;
 - the need for women to be assigned the central position in WFP's programmes and the importance of community mobilization and participation;
 - the value of WFP's Global School Feeding Campaign as an important initiative to reach children and make a difference in their lives;
 - the usefulness of including more information in future annual reports on the progress of the governance project, on the balance between cash and in-kind contributions, and on local purchases and procurement in developing countries; and
 - the need to review the form and content of the Annual Report to better demonstrate results, with a view to making next year's Annual Report a step towards the 2004 Annual Performance Report.



POLICY ISSUES

Consolidated Framework of WFP Policies: A Governance Tool (2002/EB.A/3)

Consolidated Framework of WFP Policies: Establishing and Maintaining a Governance Tool (2002/EB.A/4)

19. The Board welcomed the two documents, with members expressing appreciation for the policy framework and citing its usefulness as a governance tool. It endorsed the Secretariat's proposals for keeping the framework current and under the Board's review. Members suggested several ideas that the Secretariat and the Informal Steering Groups of the Executive Board Bureau might consider for improving, expanding and updating the document, such as the inclusion of an index.
20. Several members expressed their desire to use the policy framework to inform their future deliberations on policy work. They requested that the Secretariat identify any policy gaps or existing policies that should be revisited. In this regard, members agreed that the Secretariat should propose policy topics for future discussion at the Third Regular Session in 2002.

Urban Food Insecurity: Strategies for WFP (2002/EB.A/5)

21. The Board expressed appreciation for the policy document on urban food insecurity, citing it as a clear and forward-looking approach to a complex and growing problem. Many members expressed the need for caution concerning food assistance in urban areas, and there was a strong call for WFP's programming focus to remain predominately rural. There was lengthy debate concerning striking the right balance between urban and rural programming. The Board concluded that the location of food-insecure populations and the priorities of host governments would guide WFP country offices in the nature and scope of their urban interventions. The Board approved the recommendations made for further work on urban programming.
22. Regarding the establishment of operational guidelines for urban programmes, the Board drew attention to the need for:
 - further analysis on rural-urban linkages;
 - careful assessment of food insecurity to ensure appropriate targeting;
 - clear criteria for initiating programmes in urban areas;
 - appropriate partners, in particular for health and sanitation programmes;
 - more programming to address the needs of street children;
 - caution against providing the wrong incentives for urban migration;
 - the anchoring of urban interventions to both government policies and PRSPs; and
 - careful analysis concerning markets and the potential effect of food aid on prices.
23. As a general consideration, the Board requested that, whenever possible, draft decisions in Board documents include the recommendations as set out in the documents themselves. However, in cases where the recommendations were too numerous or lengthy, it would be preferable to make a reference to the relevant section in the original document.



A Policy for Results-Oriented Monitoring and Evaluation in the World Food Programme (2002/EB.A/6)

24. Endorsing the general thrust of the document, the Board stressed the importance of the policy in its emphasis on WFP's commitments to results-based management, considering it a major step forward. It stressed also the need for an implementation plan. It was felt that the policy paper should be expanded to take into account the observations made during the discussion.
25. Regarding monitoring, some members cited minimum standards as an area for further enhancement. Others stressed the importance of maintaining flexibility. The Board strongly urged that WFP go beyond output monitoring and reporting to monitor outcome, or the effects on beneficiaries. (For humanitarian operations, the measurement of nutritional improvement was cited as an example of such a performance indicator.) It was acknowledged, however, that for many operations the monitoring of outcome would not be possible. The Board went on to recommend that mechanisms for corrective action to be taken when negative findings were obtained through monitoring be included in the policy.
26. With regard to evaluation, some members suggested that there was further scope for clarification of roles within WFP and with United Nations agencies, donors and partner governments. Joint evaluations and thematic and policy evaluations with United Nations and other partners were much welcomed. An independent evaluation for Enabling Development to be undertaken in 2003 was specifically recommended. It was recommended also that Country Portfolio Evaluations be included in the policy covering development and relief operations. Joint evaluations and joint lessons-learned exercises, especially with United Nations sister organizations, were identified as highly desirable.
27. The evaluation function of the Office of Evaluation and Monitoring (OEDE) was recognized as highly valuable to the Executive Board. It should be impartial and independent with respect to its terms of reference, staffing and clearance procedures. The possibility of OEDE's reporting to the Board was raised. This suggestion was not unanimous, however, because it would require institutional change.
28. The Board sought greater clarity with regard to the role of external evaluation. The Secretariat explained that it was already routine procedure to use independent consultants to undertake OEDE-led evaluations. This principle would be clarified in the revised policy document.
29. The Board queried the system for undertaking and monitoring self-evaluations and other evaluations conducted by country offices. Concern was expressed about the readiness of regional bureaux to undertake M&E technical functions and provide support to country offices without additional skilled staff. The Secretariat noted that the culture of self-evaluation was being pursued to enhance learning. Further clarification was sought regarding the division of work between OEDE and the regional bureaux.
30. The Board considered that an implementation plan, indicating financial and human resource commitments, time frames and conditions critical to implementing the policy, was a requirement. Support was given to the suggestion of intensive training for field officers as part of the implementation plan.
31. The Board stressed that M&E was crucial to the Programme and that the necessary core funding should be made available, to avoid having to rely on ad hoc sources.
32. The Secretariat appreciated the endorsement of the overall thrust of the policy.



33. The President noted that members were not ready to approve the policy paper as it stood. Therefore, a revised version that addressed implementation feasibility and other issues raised by members would be submitted to the First Regular Session of 2003. A consultation process to obtain additional views was recommended. An information note on the status of the revised policy would be submitted to the Board at its October 2002 session.

FINANCIAL AND BUDGETARY MATTERS

Preliminary Review of the Indirect Support Cost Rate (2002/EB.A/7)

34. The document Preliminary Review of the Indirect Support Cost Rate chronicled the evolution of ISC recovery as a mechanism for funding the programme support and administrative (PSA) budget. It also provided historical information on ISC rates and the trend of the ISC income and PSA expenditures, including the funding of PSA in 2000-2001. The document had already been reviewed by the FAO Finance Committee and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), and their reports, as well as a note by the External Auditor on accounting methods for recording income and expenditures, were provided to the Board.
35. The Board's discussion centred on the "next steps", presented in paragraph 78 of the document, and the recommendations in paragraph 79. The Board agreed to keep the ISC rate of 7.8 percent for 2002, pending review and a decision in October 2002.
36. In view of time constraints and the need to have a document available by early August, the Board agreed that in preparing the final review document for the October session of the Board, the Secretariat should focus on the steps outlined in paragraph 78 (a)–(c). Some members suggested that the next steps agreed by the Board should include reference to the need for an analysis of PSA cost structures to permit an assessment of the cost-effectiveness of the PSA; while others emphasized that the level of PSA should be appropriate to allow WFP to perform according to its mandate. The need for the ISC mechanism to be transparent and applicable to all donors was stressed.
37. The Executive Director assured the Board that the Secretariat would undertake a zero-based budgeting approach for the next biennium (2004–2005) to determine the appropriate level of PSA.
38. While a number of members spoke in favour of a comparative study of administrative and support budgets of other United Nations organizations, it was agreed that a study of relevant United Nations organizations and NGOs, although desirable, was not essential. Hence, it was suggested that the Secretariat should undertake the study to the extent possible, but that it should not be considered an essential element on the basis of which the Executive Board would take a decision on the indirect support cost rate in October 2002.
39. The Board agreed with a proposal from the Chair that the Secretariat circulate to members of the Board in the first week of June 2002 an annotated outline of the document to be submitted in October 2002, and that the Secretariat hold an informal consultation with the Board in September 2002.



Implementation of Funding Arrangements for United Nations Staff Safety and Security (2002/EB.A/8)

40. The Secretariat presented the information paper on the Implementation of the Funding Arrangements for United Nations Staff Safety and Security, which had been requested for discussion by the Board. The Board welcomed the paper and thanked the Secretariat for providing updated information concerning the progress made on the implementation of the General Assembly decision, funding and resourcing of security, and governance and accountability. The Board noted the actions taken by the Secretariat to implement the Board's decision on the funding of WFP's share of the costs of staff security and on ensuring propriety in the expenditure of these funds.
41. The Board expressed its concern regarding the way in which the burden of the overhead costs of staff security was shared by all United Nations organizations, as those organizations were already paying for staff security directly in countries where they had significant operations. It requested the Executive Director to continue to advocate for this issue and took note of the steps taken by the Secretariat to put this on the agenda of the ACABQ and of the High Level Committee on Management (HLCM) in the course of the budget review for the biennium 2004–2005.
42. The Board also took note of the Secretariat's efforts to make Security Awareness Training mandatory for all staff. It commended the progress WFP had made in training more than 9,000 staff and consultants to date and expressed its commitment to working with United Nations Headquarters and agencies to improve the security and safety of all United Nations personnel.
43. The Board expressed its desire to be kept informed on the progress in implementation of the new arrangements for the security management system.

Report of the Executive Director on the Utilization of Contributions and Waivers of Costs (General Rules XII.4 and XIII.4(g)) (2002/EB.A/9)

44. The Secretariat introduced the information document on the utilization of unrestricted cash for the purchase of commodities in developing countries (General Rule XII.4) and the waiver of indirect support costs (General Rule XIII.4(g)) for the year 2001.
45. In response to a request for clarification of the expression "unrestricted cash resources", the Secretariat responded that these were cash resources from donors with no restriction or direction as to their utilization, and which in the past had been credited to the General Fund. The Board requested that, in future reports, technical terms be defined and that comparative data from the past be provided.

WFP Pledging Target: 2003–2004 (2002/EB.A/10)

46. The Board noted that less than 1 percent of the target had been pledged at the most recent pledging conference in November 2000.
47. Recognizing that the General Assembly had requested that the Secretary-General present alternatives to the current modality of the pledging conference (United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/56/562/Add.1, 13 December 2001, III, 6, 26), the Board requested that its earlier advice that—"pledging conferences had outlived their usefulness and should cease to be convened"—be conveyed to the General Assembly.
48. One member noted the importance of predictability for WFP's resources and the key role played by the Food Aid Convention in ensuring a stable base of food aid.
49. Several members noted the declining levels of food aid for development.



50. The Board approved a pledging target of US\$2,673 million for the period 2003–2004.

EVALUATION AND MONITORING WORK PLAN: 2002–2003

Evaluation and Monitoring Work Plan: 2002–2003 (2002/EB.A/11)

51. The Board had requested that the Evaluation and Monitoring Work Plan be discussed in conjunction with the Office of Evaluation and Monitoring's paper, A Policy for Results-Oriented Monitoring and Evaluation in the World Food Programme.
52. Several representatives welcomed the proposed shift by OEDE to the evaluation of larger-scale relief operations and to thematic evaluations. They welcomed proposals for a joint United Nations inter-agency evaluation on a selected theme of mutual interest and a real-time evaluation of a new emergency operation. Some representatives underlined the importance of enhanced training in M&E, as outlined in paragraph 12 of the document.
53. Regarding Country Programme evaluations, a number of representatives proposed that the issue of the evaluation of second-generation CPs be addressed at the Third Regular Session in 2002, when the thematic evaluation of the CP approach would be reviewed.

ADMINISTRATIVE AND MANAGERIAL MATTERS

Report on Post-Delivery Commodity Losses for the Period 1 January–31 December 2001 (2002/EB.A/12)

54. The Board congratulated the Secretariat for having achieved a marked reduction in post-delivery commodity losses for the third consecutive year and expressed appreciation for the importance WFP attached to minimizing such losses. The Secretariat described the various initiatives it had undertaken to reduce losses, including (i) the employment of WFP's oversight services; (ii) further implementation of WFP's Commodity Movement Processing and Analysis System (COMPAS); (iii) the opening of more sub-offices to increase food aid monitoring; and (iv) the training of WFP and counterpart staff in food aid storage and management techniques.
55. The Secretariat also mentioned WFP's calling to account of those responsible for losses, particularly its sending of formal letters from the Executive Director to recipient governments and Country Directors of countries with repeat cases of post-delivery losses. It was confirmed that WFP also sought reimbursement for losses whenever feasible. Some members, however, stressed that the Secretariat should seek to understand the circumstances under which such losses had occurred, and that capacity-building measures should be undertaken as required.
56. One representative asked if the 2-percent tolerance level for post-delivery losses was too high, and if it should be lowered to 1 percent. A few representatives urged WFP to bring donors' attention to any cases in which stronger commodity packaging was required.
57. Some representatives raised the specific case, still under investigation, of post-delivery losses in Bangladesh. The Secretariat reassured the Board that this case was being taken very seriously by WFP, other food aid donors and those at the highest level of the recipient government. The Secretariat promised to keep the Board updated on any developments in this case.



58. The Board recalled that WFP's overall performance in redressing the issue of post-delivery commodity losses had been very good. Nevertheless, it encouraged the Secretariat to continue to take all necessary steps to ensure that losses were further reduced, to seek monetary reimbursement from those governments that had lost commodities through negligence and to implement further its COMPAS system.

OTHER BUSINESS

OCHA Review of the Consolidated Appeals Process (2002/EB.A/14)

59. In its First Regular Session of this year, the Board took note of an information paper that was intended to raise awareness concerning the issue of the resourcing of non-food items in humanitarian response (WFP/EB.1/2002/INF/12). Although the paper focused on the Horn of Africa, it was recognized that the issue was a general one across emergencies and had important implications for the United Nations CAP and the way in which donors were responding to it. In order to obtain further information, the Board invited Ross Mountain, Assistant Emergency Relief Coordinator and Director of OCHA Geneva, to provide the Board with an update on the CAP.
60. Mr Mountain expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to discuss developments concerning the CAP. He informed the Board that the CAP had been subject to both internal and external reviews, with the aim of strengthening its strategic planning and coordination aspects. He highlighted a number of problems regarding the CAP, including inequitable distribution of funding among countries and the fact that food aid was funded disproportionately compared with non-food programmes. He acknowledged WFP's efforts to draw attention to the issue of underfunding of non-food items. Some of the challenges to humanitarian coordination were also noted, including the increasing number of humanitarian actors, the effect of media coverage on funding levels, and the capacity to respond quickly enough to emergencies. Finally, Mr Mountain informed the Board that contributions to the CAP as a percentage of total humanitarian assistance had dropped to 30 percent, compared with 40 percent ten years ago.
61. The United Kingdom was then asked to give an overview of the donor-led review of humanitarian funding that would take place over the next two years. The review would focus on three areas: an examination of needs assessment in practice, a comprehensive study of humanitarian funding and analysis of donor behaviour.
62. The Board welcomed Mr Mountain's presentation, and many representatives reaffirmed their commitment to the CAP. Representatives expressed concern over the discrepancy in levels of funding among countries and between food and non-food items, and asked about OCHA's role in ensuring balanced funding. Some members mentioned the importance of involving NGOs in the strategy-setting aspect of the CAP, while others questioned how far the CAP had evolved from being simply a compilation of agency projects.
63. In response to the concerns of the Board, Mr Mountain described the improvements that had been made in the CAP in the areas of strategy setting and coordination. He explained that the CAP as a strategic planning tool was now a reality in many countries. He encouraged further dialogue on the issue of funding discrepancies among countries and welcomed the donor-led review of this issue. He also noted the importance of donors in encouraging the involvement of NGOs in the CAP. He then stressed the role of OCHA in convening stakeholders for dialogue and drawing attention to important funding



discrepancies in operations as a means of improving the balance between food and non-food elements of operations.

64. The Secretariat pointed out to the Board that some discrepancies between requirements per beneficiary for food aid were a result of the cost of logistics and transport. The Secretariat acknowledged the commitment of OCHA to improving the CAP and noted the improvements that had been made in strategy setting and coordination through the CAP.

Information Note on School Feeding (2002/EB.A/15)

65. In introducing the document, the Secretariat briefed the Board on its participation at the recent United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children. One representative, speaking on behalf of her regional group, expressed the hope that governments of developing countries would examine the possibility of contributing to the Global School Feeding Campaign, and gave the campaign her full support.

WFP and the World Food Summit: Five Years Later (2002/EB.A/16)

66. The Board took note of the information document, the purpose of which was to record the Secretariat's involvement in this Summit and set out its approach to meeting the WFS goals.

Update on the Status of the Governance Project (2002/EB.A/17)

67. The Board took note of the information provided by the Chair of its Informal Steering Group on Governance, which consisted of a brief summary of the history of the governance project as well as a progress report on the implementation of the governance tools.

Housing Allowance of the Executive Director (2002/EB.A/18)

68. Pursuant to its decision 2001/EB.3/41 of 25 October 2001, the Board reviewed the level of allowances of the Executive Director and decided that the principle of the housing allowance would be reimbursement of the actual costs of a suitable property, currently set at US\$127,000 per annum, inclusive of services and utilities.
69. The Board further decided that the cost should be indexed against the Italian retail price index and reviewed at five-year intervals by the Bureau and the Board, beginning with the Third Regular Session of the Executive Board in 2006. The review would take into account market rates and the allowances paid to the other agency heads in Rome.

Briefing on Alleged Sexual Abuse of Food Aid Beneficiaries in Western Africa (2002/EB.A/19)

70. The Board took note of the information provided by the Executive Director and the Secretariat on action taken by the United Nations and the World Food Programme regarding the issue of the alleged sexual abuse of food aid beneficiaries in Western Africa. The Board supported WFP's zero tolerance policy for sexual exploitation and other abuses of power perpetrated against beneficiaries and looked forward to a further report on the matter at the Third Regular Session of 2002.

