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COUNTRY PROGRAMME FOR MALAWI (1998-2001)

ABSTRACT

Under the proposed Country Programme, the Board is requested to approve, subject to the availability of resources, 16.8 million dollars in direct operational costs in support of basic programme activities and close to 12.2 million dollars for supplementary activities for the period 1998–2001. Some 6.6 million dollars have already been committed. Basic programme activities will be targeted at approximately 938,000 direct beneficiaries over four years.

Malawi is a least developed country (LDC) with a GNP per capita of 170 dollars in 1995. Rural poverty and household food insecurity are pervasive. It is estimated that 60 percent of the rural population is unable to meet its basic daily nutritional requirements. The vast majority of the population derives its main income from subsistence farming, although many of the poorest and chronically food insecure derive the largest portion of their livelihoods from off-farm income-generating activities. A high proportion of these households are headed by women. The country remains disaster prone due to the limited asset base of most farmers and has been repeatedly affected by droughts and other disasters since 1995.

The Country Programme's strategy focuses on building beneficiary assets to promote household food security, assisting vulnerable groups at critical times in their lives and promoting human resource development, especially through the education of girls. Expandable safety nets are also included as a supplementary activity. A new Vulnerability Assessment and Mapping (VAM) system will be used to help sharpen the geographic focus of interventions.

Programme activities will be implemented through the mainline ministries in close collaboration with the National Economic Council. WFP will be closely coordinating its efforts with those of other United Nations agencies within the context of a United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). Joint activities will also be undertaken with other key bilateral food aid donors and NGOs. These will be closely monitored to try to develop a comprehensive understanding of the impact of programme activities on household food security.

This document is produced in a limited number of copies. Delegates and observers are kindly requested to bring it to the meetings and to refrain from asking for additional copies.

NOTE TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

This document contains recommendations for review and approval by the Executive Board.

Pursuant to the decisions taken on the methods of work by the Executive Board at its First Regular Session of 1996, the documentation prepared by the Secretariat for the Board has been kept brief and decision-oriented. The meetings of the Executive Board are to be conducted in a business-like manner, with increased dialogue and exchanges between delegations and the Secretariat. Efforts to promote these guiding principles will continue to be pursued by the Secretariat.

The Secretariat therefore invites members of the Board who may have questions of a technical nature with regard to this document, to contact the WFP staff member(s) listed below, preferably well in advance of the Board's meeting. This procedure is designed to facilitate the Board's consideration of the document in the plenary.

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STRATEGIC FOCUS: FOOD INSECURITY AND POVERTY

1. This Country Programme Document (CPD) presents WFP's programme of activities for Malawi for the period 1998 to 2001. The CPD is based on the Malawi Country Strategy Outline (CSO) reviewed by the Executive Board in 1995. The four-year period for the Country Programme (CP) is a result of WFP's decision to harmonize its planning cycle with that of UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA. The CP involves a core allocation from WFP of 16.8 million dollars¹ for direct operational costs, and supplementary activities valued at close to 12.2 million dollars. The basic programme targets an estimated 938,000 beneficiaries over four years.

Food insecurity, poverty and vulnerability

2. Malawi has an estimated population of 11.6 million (mid-1997) with an area of 118,000 square kilometres, making it one of Africa's most densely populated countries. According to UNDP's Human Development Report for 1997, Malawi's Human Development Index (HDI) was 0.32 and the country was ranked 161st out of 175 countries. The HDI was also below the average for sub-Saharan Africa, which is 0.38. The under-five mortality rate was estimated at 219 per 1,000 live births. The country's average household food security index (AHFSI) was estimated at 74.3 in 1990-92. Until recently, Malawi had widely been considered able to produce enough food to satisfy most of its domestic consumption needs. However, a recent FAO study projected that the national annual food deficit would increase substantially from an estimated 24,406 million tons in maize equivalents in 1996.
3. The Government's main response to the sharp decline in the food and agricultural sector has been the introduction of structural reforms. Many of the reforms, although urgently needed to reverse the long-term decline, have negatively impacted on household food security in the short term. The fertilizer subsidy has been removed resulting in much higher prices while interest rates on rural credit schemes have also been significantly increased. As a consequence, the use of fertilizer and credit by poor smallholder farmers has been declining, resulting in further production losses, especially for women and female-headed households.
4. Available nutrition data suggest that many Malawians, perhaps the majority of the rural population, face repeated bouts of seasonal food deprivation. The harvest normally begins in April, but many households run out of self-produced food within three months and must then depend on the exchange of labour for food and other coping mechanisms to survive until the next harvest.
5. An estimated 70 percent of all smallholder agricultural work is done by women, who represent 52 percent of the population. Thirty percent of rural households are headed by women. On average their landholdings are smaller than those of households headed by men, and they engage less in cash crop production. Women face very heavy seasonal workloads and must balance their time between attending to crops, carrying out labour in exchange for food and taking care of children. Two thirds of Malawi's women are illiterate and lack knowledge of appropriate feeding practices, thereby contributing to the pervasive problem of child malnutrition.

¹ All monetary values are expressed in United States dollars, unless otherwise stated. One United States dollar equalled 21.20 Malawi kwacha in January 1998.



6. Chronic undernutrition of infants and young children is a major contributory factor to Malawi's extremely high rates of infant and child mortality. According to the 1992 *Malawi Demographic and Health Survey* conducted by the Ministry of Health, approximately 135 of every 1,000 children born die before their first birthday and 234 of the 1,000 will have died before reaching the age of five. Widespread micronutrient deficiencies—lack of iodine, iron and vitamin A—are another serious problem, and contribute significantly to food and nutrition insecurity throughout the country and to high morbidity and mortality rates among infants and young mothers.
7. Other factors also contribute to the very high levels of food and nutrition insecurity in rural areas. Droughts occur quite regularly, particularly in the southern region, while high population densities accelerate the process of land degradation, leaving large numbers of people vulnerable to recurrent natural disasters.

Government strategies for food security and disaster mitigation

8. The Government has made food security one of its top priorities, and has taken a number of policy initiatives in the economic and social sectors. In the area of broad economic policy, the Government is instituting a series of market reforms under a multi-donor-supported Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). The SAP aims, among other things, to revitalize Malawi's agricultural-based economy and lay the foundations for future sustainable growth with a view to liberalizing the country's grain markets and boosting production levels.
9. The Government maintains a Strategic Grain Reserve (SGR) to ensure adequacy of supply from one year to the next and price stability. Decisions on the use of the SGR are made by the National Economic Council (NEC), located within the Office of the President and Cabinet. The SGR can be used to provide immediate quantities of maize as a borrowing facility for sudden emergencies and to fill gaps in the incoming pipeline. The main donors supporting the SGR are the European Union (EU) and USAID.
10. In the social policy arena, the Government has placed poverty alleviation at the top of its agenda. As a follow-up to the joint 1993 United Nations/Government of Malawi *Situation Analysis of Poverty in Malawi*, the Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP) was launched in 1995. The PAP is a multi-sectoral programme which aims to bring about sustainable poverty reduction in a wide variety of sectors. The first phase of this programme has been supported by the World Bank, which has contributed 70 million dollars. German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) and IFAD are also expected to contribute funds under this programme.
11. Another key food security policy instrument is the 1995 National Plan of Action for Nutrition. The Plan identifies a number of key intervention areas including: a) improved household food security; b) measures specifically designed to address micro-nutrient deficiencies; c) targeted assistance for the most nutritionally vulnerable groups; d) improved child feeding practices; and e) the incorporation of specific nutritional objectives into all future national food security programmes.
12. The Government formulated a National Disaster Management Plan in 1996 which spells out response procedures to emergencies and specifies disaster preparedness measures. The Plan calls, among other things, for a strengthening of drought early warning systems, household and food security monitoring, distribution of relief through district administrations and NGOs, and rehabilitation of disaster-affected areas including formerly refugee-impacted areas and food-for-work programmes. UNDP and the Department of



Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) funded the preparation of this plan. The planned activities will be funded by the donor community and they will be implemented at the district level.

Government food aid policies

13. Although its food aid policy is still being formulated, the Government acknowledges that food aid can play an important role in its overall poverty reduction and disaster mitigation strategy. Currently, the bulk of the food aid arriving in the country is intended as direct support for the commercial market and restocking of the SGRs.

Relationship to the Country Strategy Note (CSN) process

14. The CSN for Malawi is currently in draft form. It has been developed in such a way as to reinforce the PAP launched by the Government in 1995. The CSN identifies four key areas for collaboration United Nations agencies and the Government. These are: a) the provision and improvement of basic social services for the poor; b) the promotion of sustainable livelihoods and employment; c) the mainstreaming of gender concerns; and d) environmental and natural resources development.
15. To strengthen the CSN process and Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP) cooperation, UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and WFP have agreed to harmonize their respective programming cycles to cover the period 1997–2001. The Country Programme for Malawi will therefore only cover the four-year period from 1998 to 2001. Malawi is one of the pilot countries for the preparation of the UNDAF, which will provide a common framework for all United Nations funds and programmes and will help to achieve a collective impact. A Common Country Assessment (CCA) is currently being undertaken. This will build a common database and select common indicators for measuring progress and assessing the impact of United Nations agencies' efforts in key sectors. WFP is a full member of the steering committee of UNDAF and chairs its Sub-Committee on disaster preparedness and management.

Programmes of the United Nations, donors and NGOs that address hunger and poverty, and disaster prevention and preparedness

16. The United Nations agencies in Malawi have identified food security and poverty alleviation as two key areas for enhanced collaboration and joint programming. The Sustainable Livelihoods Programme (SLP) funded by UNDP and costing some 63 million dollars will over a four-year period promote United Nations inter-agency collaboration in the areas of food security, poverty alleviation and disaster management. A donor working group on food security and agriculture chaired by FAO and consisting of WFP, UNDP, UNICEF and WHO was established in 1996 to review modalities for enhanced coordination on such issues. The provision of safety nets is an important part of the food security strategy. WFP plays the lead role within the framework of the donor working group on issues related to safety nets.
17. The EU has established a Food Security Unit in Malawi. This unit is providing assistance with improved strategic food security policy and planning, broad measures for increasing agricultural productivity, labour-intensive rural roads projects, NGO-implemented food security programmes, the provision of seeds and emergency food aid assistance.
18. Most NGOs present in the country pursue food security objectives, and have in the past been extensively involved with the provision and distribution of relief aid. An NGO Food Security Network in which WFP participates was established in 1995 as a means of



promoting information sharing and improved responses to food security problems. The most active NGOs using food aid include World Vision, CARITAS, Canadian Physicians for Aid and Relief (CPAR) and the Lutherans/World Federation. Other key NGOs working in the broader area of food security include Concern Universal and SCF UK.

ASSESSMENT OF WFP COUNTRY ACTIVITIES

19. WFP started its operations in Malawi in 1965 with a multi-purpose development project implemented through the Ministry of Agriculture until 1980. In addition, three forestry development projects implemented through the Forestry Department on the Viphya plateau between 1974 and 1987 were successful in establishing a 40,000 hectare artificial forest, one of the largest of its kind in Africa. Since 1972, however, the bulk of WFP's development assistance has been provided through the Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) Programme implemented by the Ministry of Health and Population (MOH&P). By the end of 1997, WFP had provided a total of 58 million dollars in support of VGF activities. An evaluation of the project in 1994 found that food aid had been successfully distributed to selected vulnerable groups; however, it also observed that inadequate data collection and monitoring did not permit a clear demonstration of the impact of the project on malnutrition. Recommendations were made to improve targeting and training to ensure the project's long-term effectiveness.
20. Experience with food for work (FFW) in Malawi suggests that it has been an effective means of reaching poor women. Women often prefer food payment on public works schemes and, particularly during the lean season, food is preferred to cash payment. Based on recent experience with FFW, it is estimated that 55 percent of the beneficiaries under such schemes will be women.
21. By far the largest volume of WFP food assistance over the last decade has been supplied through the Mozambican refugee operation, which ran from 1987 to 1995, as well as various drought relief interventions. The total value of WFP assistance to date provided to the refugee programme is 330 million dollars while the amount contributed for emergency relief for drought victims and other natural disasters stands at 156 million dollars. Although relief operations have not always been targeted specifically at women, recent changes have been made that will require all future WFP relief assistance to be distributed to female heads of households.

Effectiveness in preparing for and reducing disaster-related food shortages

22. During the three drought emergencies that have affected the country since 1992, WFP has proven to be an efficient channel for delivering emergency food aid resources and reaching vulnerable groups.
23. The Vulnerability Assessment and Mapping project undertaken jointly with the USAID-supported Famine Early Warning System (FEWS) produced a baseline study of vulnerability patterns across the country in 1996. The report is now being widely used by other donors and NGOs to understand better the geographic and social distribution of poverty in Malawi and to improve targeting efforts. The VAM unit has also successfully carried out Rapid Food Security Assessments. The VAM database is currently being used for contingency planning and preparedness for the "El Niño" phenomenon.



Implications for Future WFP programming

24. In view of the success of VGF programmes in targeting and assisting vulnerable groups, these activities will make up 40 percent of the programme core allocation. The Country Programme will continue to pilot new food-for-work and school feeding activities in order to assess their effectiveness in reaching needy groups. The pilot activities will primarily target women and female-headed households with small landholdings. Each new core activity will be allocated a 30 percent share of the budget. Emphasis will also be placed on developing suitable modalities for responding quickly and effectively to situations of heightened vulnerability through timely, coordinated disaster mitigation measures, improved monitoring and impact assessment.

THE COUNTRY PROGRAMME

Country programme goals and objectives

25. The overall goals of the Country Programme are consistent with the core strategies and mission statement of WFP and the 1995 Country Strategy Outline. They are:
- a) to strengthen the ability of targeted households to provide for their own sustained food and nutrition requirements; and
 - b) to decrease vulnerability levels of targeted groups to nutritional insecurity and the adverse effects of recurrent disasters.
26. In line with these goals, the four principal objectives of the programme will be:
- a) to bring about sustainable improvements to rural infrastructure for household food security through the provision of short-term employment and community self-help incentives;
 - b) to contribute to the better utilization of Mother and Child Health Centres (MCHs) and community-based health services through the provision of dietary support;
 - c) to alleviate the negative impact and likelihood of natural disasters through rapid response to localized food shortages and disasters; and
 - d) to enhance human development through improved access to education, especially for girls.

Targeting strategy and groups

27. The geographic focus of WFP assistance is based on a number of criteria used to assess the level of vulnerability in different areas. These criteria have been consolidated and refined under an integrated targeting procedure by the VAM project. The main effect will be to bring about a much sharper geographical focus to WFP assistance. The core programme activities targeted at select Extended Planning Areas (EPAs) will be chosen according to what the VAM baseline analysis determines to be the most suitable blend of interventions. Out of a total of 154 EPAs in the country, the database and analysis has identified 21 to be targeted for VGF activities, 46 for FFW activities and 20 for school feeding schemes.
28. The CP's main target groups will be: a) marginal farmers, especially women and their families in food insecure areas; b) acutely and moderately malnourished children and their caretakers; c) primary schoolchildren, especially girls in chronically food deficient areas; and d) groups undergoing temporary critical food stress and heightened vulnerability. An



estimated 938,000 people will be targeted over the four-year life of the Country Programme.

Collaboration with United Nations agencies and other donors

29. As the United Nations system develops its programming activities in Malawi, there will be new opportunities for joint programming of technical, financial and food resources among United Nations agencies. This offers an opportunity to enhance the developmental impact of future food aid resources. The following specific modalities are envisaged.
30. UNDP will collaborate on food for work as part of the aforementioned sustainable livelihoods programme, which uses the district planning and management system as a starting point for community-based initiatives. UNCDF will collaborate on the upgrading of rural and village access roads through the provision of non-food items and will help to strengthen of the government unit responsible for maintaining village access roads. UNICEF has also expressed its readiness to collaborate on school feeding in primary schools through the provision of quality improvement packages, de-worming tablets, water supplies and sanitation development, and nutritional education. UNFPA will provide assistance for reproductive health in the schools and family planning through the VGF health clinics.
31. Other bilateral food aid donors (the European Union, USAID and the United Kingdom) present in Malawi have expressed an interest in working through WFP channels as part of their own efforts to assist vulnerable groups and meet relief needs as they arise. In 1997, the EU Food Security Unit worked through WFP channels to support a large relief intervention in the Shire Valley for flood victims. The unit covered all of the food and transport costs. The unit has also expressed its interest in supporting additional WFP-assisted activities that can help establish a safety net.

PROGRAMME OF COUNTRY ACTIVITIES

Justification for proposed resource allocation

32. Given Malawi's status as an LDC and the Government's resolve to improve and expand food-assisted programmes, the level of regular development programming will gradually be increased. Due to the pilot nature of some of the activities, annual disbursements during the first two years will not exceed 5 million dollars, a figure which represents less than one third of the total core allocation of 16.8 million dollars. During the final two years, the balance of the allocation will be disbursed. Additional resources will continue to be solicited for non-food items and supplementary activities including safety net expansions to core programmes. The following table shows the core allocation.

Core activity	Percent of total allocation	Total food requirements (tons)	Total direct operational costs (dollars)	No. of direct beneficiaries per year	No. of beneficiaries over four years
Assistance to malnourished groups	40	18 231	6 720 000	82 500	330 000
Rural infrastructure,	30	18 406	5 080 000	87 500	350 000



rehabilitation and development					
School feeding	30	14 918	5 000 000	64 500	258 000
Total	100	51 555	16 800 000	234 500	938 000

Co-financing and implementation capacity

33. Most of the co-funding for the programme will come from government sources. The government contribution will cover major items such as staff costs and a portion of the food transport, storage and handling costs and some capital expenditure. The Government will also be responsible for non-food items for the core food-for-work programme, valued at one million dollars. Due to the serious financial constraints now faced by the Government, the WFP office will play a key role in helping it to mobilize complementary resources for non-food items through other bilateral donors and NGOs. WFP will also work with the Government to amend to the 1991 Disaster Management Act to include vital new provisions for budgeting of non-food items for food-for-work schemes. The Government's direct contribution to the implementation of programme activities has been estimated at approximately 4.5 million dollars over the four-year period.
34. Implementation capacity already exists at the district level and through mainline technical ministries, and all programme activities will be delivered through such structures. To further strengthen capacity, WFP will involve local communities and NGOs in the delivery of programme activities. NGOs will assist with social mobilization, planning of activities and monitoring and evaluation.

CP preparation process

35. The preparation of the Country Programme Document has primarily involved the Ministry of Finance section responsible for multilateral affairs as well as the Food Security and Social Affairs section of the NEC, within the Office of the President and Cabinet. Separate discussions have been held with different technical line ministries.
36. The Country Programme Advisory Committee (CPAC) will be established under the chairmanship of the Ministry of Finance and include representatives of the mainline ministries and representatives from key bilateral food aid donors and United Nations agencies involved with food security matters. During programme implementation, the CPAC will be responsible for monitoring progress and ensuring inter-ministerial coordination and cooperation. The Committee will also review progress reports and provide future programme guidance. Specific projects within the programme will continue to be guided by their respective steering committees.
37. A national workshop was held in October 1997 to discuss earlier drafts of the Country Programme, and was attended by key bilateral food aid donors, United Nations agencies, government technical and policy departments as well as NGOs and church groups. A workshop report was produced and many of the comments and suggestions have been incorporated into the final programme of activities.



BASIC PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES

Core activity one: Assistance to malnourished groups

38. **The strategic focus** is support Malawi's food security and nutrition policy, which aims to improve the food security and nutritional status of all households in Malawi.
39. **Problem analysis.** According to a 1992 demographic and health survey, malnutrition is widespread and estimated at 28 percent with approximately half of all children under five, mostly in rural areas, showing signs of stunting. Malnutrition among expectant and nursing mothers in rural areas is also high. The mortality rates for infants and children under five years old are estimated at 135 and 234 per 1,000 live births respectively, and are among the highest in the world. The leading causes of child deaths are malnutrition, malaria and AIDS. The importance of community health services continues to be undervalued while poor traditional weaning and nutritional practices are widespread.
40. **Objectives and intended outcomes.** The immediate objectives will be: a) to contribute to the rehabilitation of severely malnourished children through wet feeding; and b) to contribute to the package of primary health care services provided to expectant and nursing mothers at risk and children under five attending community-based health activities. The intended outcome is a reduction in malnutrition and morbidity rates within the 21 target EPAs.
41. **Role and modalities of food aid.** Food aid will: a) provide a nutritional supplement to severely malnourished children in Nutritional Rehabilitation Units (NRUs) and dietary support for 42 days to severely malnourished children in NRUs/paediatric wards throughout the country; and b) provide dietary support to the moderately malnourished in mother and child health centres and under a community-based supplementary feeding programme (CBSF). All maize meal provided under this programme will be fortified with a vitamin pre-mix. The number and function of the commodities for this core component is determined by nutritional objectives. NRUs will require a blended food, vegetable oil, dried skim milk (DSM) and sugar. Under the CBSF, maize and soya flour are distributed separately as a teaching tool so that women learn to make their own weaning food.
42. **Implementation strategy.** The National Economic Council will coordinate project activities at the national level. The existing Project Management Unit (PMU) of the Ministry of Health and Population will be responsible for coordinating project implementation. The NRUs run by the MOH&P will provide technical support to project activities. District-based MOH&P health surveillance assistants, who function as village health workers, supervise the work of community health volunteers. Each village or community has a village health committee. Food assistance at the local level is coordinated and carried out by those committees, workers and volunteers.
43. Under the community-based supplementary feeding programme, mothers and caretakers will be taught how to prepare suitable home-made weaning food. The scheme will be complemented by a soya-seed revolving-fund loan scheme, which will facilitate the production of home-made weaning foods.
44. **Beneficiaries and intended benefits.** WFP assistance will cover all NRUs in the country. Clinic-based and community-based supplementary feeding will be provided in the 21 EPAs identified as those where food aid is most likely to have a positive impact. The main criteria used to select these EPAs included the existence of chronic food shortages combined with high levels of chronic malnutrition. Most of the 21 EPAs are located in five



of the 25 districts. These are: Thyolo, Phalombe, Dedza, Lilongwe and Ntcheu. The project will benefit a total of 190,000 children between six months and five years of age. Screening procedures will be based on a weight-for-age rating: those below 80 percent will be considered malnourished, those below 60 percent severely malnourished. An estimated 140,000 accompanying mothers or caregivers will receive take-home rations. Traditional birth attendants and community health volunteers under the community-based programme will apply established medical criteria to assess women at risk. The main benefits of the activity will be improved nutritional status for acutely and moderately malnourished children.

Support, coordination and M&E arrangements

45. At the local level health staff will receive training in data collection, health education and communication with beneficiaries. The World Bank and other NGO implementing partners continue to support community-based supplementary programmes with assistance in planning and funding shelters, warehouses and equipment. WFP will provide the services of two United Nations Volunteers who will assist the PMU on monitoring and evaluation issues.
46. **Cost estimate.** The proposed VGF programme will involve an estimated total direct operational cost to WFP of 6.7 million dollars over the four-year period. This activity is expected to require 15,316 tons of basic cereals, 2,017 tons of blended foods, 284 tons of DSM, 378 tons of vegetable oil and 237 tons of sugar.

Core activity two: Rehabilitation and development of rural Infrastructure

47. **The strategic focus** is to bring about sustainable improvements in food security for poor vulnerable households through the alleviation of short-term hunger and the creation of community assets.
48. **Problem analysis.** Malawi's poorest households are heavily reliant on the rural unskilled labour markets to ensure their survival. For the majority of households, on-farm food reserves are exhausted by December, only six months after the main harvest. For the remainder of the year, households rely mostly on the exchange of labour for food. There are limited employment opportunities in most areas and remuneration levels are low. Women are especially disadvantaged since what few cash-earning opportunities arise are usually taken by men. Rural populations often lack access to infrastructure including good roads, domestic water supply and irrigation schemes, which could improve long-term food security. Environmental degradation is also quite advanced in some of the poorest areas. As a result of these problems, sizeable segments of the rural population remain highly vulnerable to chronic food insecurity.
49. **Objectives and intended outcomes.** The main objective will be to bring about sustainable improvements to rural infrastructure for household food security in the target areas through the provision of short-term employment and community self-help incentives. The main outcomes will be the construction and improvement of secondary and village access roads, earth dams, domestic water supply schemes and small-scale irrigation schemes as well as other environmental improvement and protection measures such as soil and water conservation and tree planting. The main outcomes will be reduced short-term hunger through increased employment opportunities and improved beneficiary assets for food security and disaster preparedness.



50. **Roles and modalities of food aid.** Maize will serve to alleviate short-term hunger and as an incentive to participate in self-help schemes.
51. **Implementation strategy.** All food-for-work (FFW) activities will be closely linked to broader government initiatives being undertaken with the support of other donors including the EU-supported Roads Maintenance Initiative (RMI) and other programmes concerning water and the environment supported by the EU and USAID. All activities will be technically supervised by the mainline ministries in close collaboration with local communities and women's groups. Projects will be identified in discussions with communities to ensure that they respond to real needs and constitute an effective use of food aid. NGOs will also be utilized as channels for delivering FFW programmes.
52. **Beneficiaries and intended benefits.** Out of a total of 154 EPAs, 46 will be targeted. Basic criteria used for selecting these EPAs included the existence of chronic food shortages, a high prevalence of female-headed households and a lack of employment opportunities. Most of the intervention EPAs are located within six districts. These are: Mulanje, Phalombe, Thyolo, Nsanje, Mwanza and Ntkhatabay. Rural communities will benefit from the completed infrastructure such as feeder roads for better access to markets and small-scale irrigation projects. Domestic water supplies and community plantations will directly benefit women who currently expend substantial energy and time in the collection of water and firewood. At least 25 percent of the total food-for-work resources will be allocated for activities in which women have a direct stake. The total number of beneficiaries will be 350,000.

Support, coordination, and M&E arrangements

53. The implementing line ministries together with local and international NGOs will monitor and report on FFW activities. The Office of the Commissioner for Disaster Preparedness Relief and Rehabilitation and the WFP country office will coordinate reporting and evaluation procedures while the WFP Internal M&E Unit will be responsible for tracking progress against individual project objectives, effects of project activities, particularly on women, and the overall impact on household food security. Periodic evaluations and management appraisals will be undertaken as required.
54. **Cost estimates.** Total direct operational costs for this activity are expected to be 5.1 million dollars and 18,406 tons of maize will be required.

Core activity three: Human resource development through increased primary educational opportunities for girls

55. **The strategic focus** is to support the Government's policy of universal access to primary education with a special focus on girls.
56. **Problem analysis.** Over two thirds of women and half of men remain illiterate in Malawi. Since the introduction of free primary education in 1993, enrolment rates have increased unevenly across districts. Attendance rates remain highly irregular, and most children arrive at school hungry resulting in poor attention span and early departures. Early drop-out rates, particularly for girls, remain high. In some areas, the enrolment of girls as a percentage, related to that of boys, drops to 50 percent by the fifth or sixth grade. These problems are most pronounced in highly food insecure areas where child labour is of relatively greater importance to the household's livelihood strategy than it is in others. Boys are often favoured over girls for limited educational opportunities for a variety of reasons,



which include parents placing a low value on education for girls, the need to keep girls at home for child care and the high opportunity costs associated with education.

- 57. Objectives and intended outcomes.** The main objectives will be to: a) improve child attendance and reduce girl drop-out rates leading to a 20 percent increase in enrolment and a more stabilized pattern of attendance at assisted schools; b) improve all children's capacity to concentrate and assimilate information by relieving short-term hunger; and c) contribute to reducing disparities in enrolment and drop-out rates between boys and girls in the target primary schools resulting in a more equitable ratio of boys to girls, with a minimum of 85 percent girls enrolment as a percentage of boys enrolment at all standards.
- 58. Role and modalities of food aid.** Food aid will serve as a means of a) encouraging enrolment and regular attendance of children in targeted primary schools; b) improving the attention span of children at school; and c) transferring income to beneficiary families. Primary schoolchildren will be served a blended cereal drink upon arrival and a stiff porridge later in the morning. Take-home maize rations will be provided to households whose girls attend school for a minimum of 18 days per month.
- 59. Implementation strategy.** The project will be implemented by the Ministry of Education. WFP will collaborate with UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA to achieve a collective United Nations food security and educational impact. UNDP will support project administration and technical capacity-building while UNICEF will focus on improving the quality of education and sanitation in schools. UNFPA will support reproductive health education as part of a broader Information and Education Campaign. The project will rely heavily on community co-management and will include an advocacy campaign focusing on the need for girls' education.
- 60. Participants and intended beneficiaries.** Pilot activities will begin in Dedza during 1998 and 1999. Based on the positive experience gained, activities will later be scaled up to target 24 EPAs from the original 20 identified for schoolfeeding interventions. Selection criteria included the presence of chronic food shortages and high malnutrition rates combined with low female enrolment and literacy rates. Most of the pre-targeted EPAs are found in the following eight districts: Dedza, Phalombe, Mulanje, Salima, Mwanza, Ntcheu, Thyolo and Nsanje. The total expected number of beneficiaries is 258,000.

Support, coordination and M&E arrangements

- 61.** The new pilot project will be implemented by the Ministry of Education district-level staff who will be responsible for the social mobilization process as well as monitoring and evaluation of project results. One UNV and two Domestic Development Service (DDS) volunteers will also be involved. External funding for the project will be provided through UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA to support the non-food aspects of the programme. The EU Food Security Unit has expressed an interest in supporting classroom construction, improved sanitation facilities and providing educational materials.
- 62. Cost estimates.** A core allocation of approximately 5 million dollars will be needed for this activity over the four-year period. Commodity requirements will be: 11,300 tons of cereals, 3,400 tons of blended foods and 171 tons of sugar.



SUPPLEMENTARY ACTIVITIES

Expandable safety nets

63. Since the core country programme activities will only meet a portion of the total food aid requirements in any given year, many bilateral donors have expressed a willingness to provide additional food resources on an annual basis as expansions to core activities. To determine which additional EPAs are most likely to experience food shortages, an annual assessment will be undertaken using established monitoring procedures. An annual appeal will then be launched that clearly identifies additional safety net activities that could be carried out to meet these additional needs. EPAs identified could be either those already covered under the core programme or others that may face unusual levels of food access stress. Expandable interventions would be approved on an annual basis. Activities supported could be VGF, FFW or school feeding. Based on past experience, an indicative budget of 2.5 million dollars annually covering food, transport and internal transport, storage and handling (ITSH) has been set for these activities.

Supporting activities

Improved targeting through vulnerability assessment and mapping (VAM)

64. The VAM unit will continue to work with the FEWS project located within the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development (MOALD) to develop and refine the database and the different analytical and household food security monitoring techniques that have been developed since 1994. The VAM unit operational budget has been set at 50,000 dollars per year.

65. A vital element in the effective functioning of the new VAM system is the regular collection of household food security data at the EPA level. Since 1995, WFP and FEWS have worked closely with the MOALD and MOH&P on the development of a food security monitoring system known as Monitoring for Empowerment. Household level data is collected on a monthly basis by government enumerators operating at the village level. Key indicators include number of meals eaten per day, household food stocks and coping mechanisms. The data is analyzed to identify EPAs that may require an expanded donor-supported WFP intervention. Neither ministry is currently able to support fully the costs associated with these additional data collection activities. Some donors have expressed a willingness to provide additional support to the Monitoring for Empowerment programme on an annual basis. The annual cost of these data collection activities is put at 450,000 dollars.

Gender activities, monitoring and evaluation and training activities

66. The country office in collaboration with the Government will continue to strengthen gender programming activities through the preparation of Gender Action Plans and special training in gender problem analysis and methods for increasing women's participation in all WFP-assisted interventions. The cost of gender activities has been estimated at 30,000 dollars per year.

67. Monitoring and Evaluation systems will be established to assess the quality of progress against key programme-level indicators and qualitative data on WFP interventions will also be collected. Training opportunities for both WFP and counterpart staff will be made



available in key areas such as computer software, commodity tracking, food for work, participatory planning techniques and qualitative monitoring. The total cost of the activities has been estimated at 50,000 dollars per year.

Soya seed revolving fund

68. To contribute to the sustainability of WFP's Vulnerable Group Feeding efforts, a soya seed revolving fund was established in 1994 as a means of promoting the production of weaning food at the household level. Under the scheme, soya seed is provided to vulnerable households through NGOs on a revolving loan basis. The scheme provides training to mothers of malnourished children who learn how to process soya beans into a flour that can be used in the preparation of a home-made weaning food. The scheme has already proven to be highly successful and reached an estimated 2,600 smallholders during the most recent agricultural season. It is proposed to continue with the scheme, targeting an estimated 10,400 smallholders over a four-year period. The total additional cost for this programme would be 100,000 dollars.

KEY ISSUES AND RISKS

69. **Key policy assumptions.** It is assumed that the policy environment in Malawi will continue to place strong emphasis on household food security, social development and the alleviation of poverty through improved household food security. It is also assumed that both donors and Government will remain fully supportive of the additional benefits possible through food-assisted programmes and confident in their ability to reach certain groups, especially (as already demonstrated) poor vulnerable women.
70. **Country Programme funding issues.** By adopting a slow phase-in approach over the four years, the Country Programme will gradually build capacity and lay the foundations for future expansions in WFP core activities.

Major risks

71. As the programme of assistance is gradually re-oriented away from its previous emphasis on emergency relief and refugee assistance towards rehabilitation and development activities, many of the proposed programme activities will be new. As such they will require considerable staff time and support to ensure appropriate partnerships, cost-effective implementation and broad participation in the planning of activities. There is also the risk that activities could be executed poorly or that beneficiaries will not be properly screened. However, reliance on NGOs will be heavy and special emphasis will be placed on health staff training. Due to heavy financial constraints, there is also the risk that the Government will not be able to meet all non-food item costs as proposed for the food-for-work programmes, and that WFP will have to assume a significant role in assisting it to mobilize these additional resources. Other major risks include the prospect of another major drought affecting the country, which might slow the development and expansion of food-for-work programmes as people receive free relief.



PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT PROCESS

Appraisal

72. Most of the core activities described in the Country Programme Document were proposed in the 1995 Malawi CSO. The food-for-work activities were appraised in April 1996 as part of the formulation mission for the new project. The mission found that food for work could be expanded in Malawi in view of its effectiveness at reaching the poorest segments of the population. The pilot school feeding activities were appraised by a consultant in August 1997 and judged to be feasible, with start up planned for 1998.
73. In view of the high level of support among food aid donors, VGF activities will be continued, with adjustments to improve targeting and monitoring procedures. A technical appraisal is in preparation to redesign these activities based on the lessons learned and the new targeting and monitoring techniques recommended by previous evaluation missions.

PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

Country office staffing capacity

74. In carrying out the Country Programme, the country office will rely on present Programme Support and Administrative staffing levels and additional staff support through direct support cost budgets. Additional support at the field level will be provided through the use of DDS volunteers. Staff capacities need strengthening through increased training opportunities in programme and project management, geographic information systems (GIS), monitoring and evaluation systems and procedures, accounting, participatory rural appraisal (PRA) techniques including gender analysis, and computer training, especially in commodity tracking.

Coordinating and executing authorities

75. At the national level, the Development Division of the Multilateral Aid Section within the Ministry of Finance is responsible for coordinating all multilateral donor aid projects, providing guidance on policy matters and obtaining approvals for all WFP projects from the Minister of Finance. The Principal Secretary to the Treasury chairs a National Food Security Steering Committee under whose authority the Country Programme Advisory Committee will be constituted. The CPAC will be made up of representatives from key technical ministries, members of the donor community and United Nations agencies.
76. At the operational level, National Project Steering Committees chaired by mainline ministries will be responsible for overseeing implementation of each WFP project and for operational issues. Meetings will be held quarterly and will be composed of representatives from key mainline ministries and other relevant or interested parties.
77. Mainline technical ministries such as that of Health, Agriculture and Irrigation, Education, Public Works, and Forestry and Environmental Affairs will be responsible for actual project execution. The Department of Relief and Rehabilitation located within the Office of the President and Cabinet will continue to coordinate and organize most food-for-work activities at the national level.



Facilitating the involvement of beneficiaries

78. All programme activities will be planned and executed with a high degree of community involvement. Under VGF activities, major emphasis will be placed on building local capacity through broad-based participation so that mothers, other caretakers and primary health care workers can manage improved feeding practices for children without WFP support. School feeding activities will also require a high degree of community commitment and willingness to co-manage the schemes at community schools. Food-for-work activities will be planned and executed by the communities through the Village Development Committees (VDCs). Some areas of Malawi have advanced further with the adoption of participatory planning methods than others. In acutely vulnerable areas where food aid is needed and where participatory models are less well established, the Country Programme will rely on NGOs and other community-based volunteers to strengthen the implementation process.

Gender considerations

79. In all programme activities, gender considerations figure prominently from the early project design and problem analysis stage. In activities such as school feeding where there is a special danger that WFP's commitments to women might not be met, agreements with partners will ensure proper and adequate targeting of female students. Efforts are already well under way through the Malawi Gender Action Plan (MGAP) to ensure that women are more involved in project planning and management than in the past and that new participatory methods are introduced that will ensure that women have a stronger voice overall. In future relief activities, memoranda of understanding will ensure that women are the main distributors and direct beneficiaries of the food aid through the hiring of more female relief clerks and distributing food directly to the senior female in the household.
80. Monitoring and Evaluation methods and indicators will be reviewed and developed in line with WFP's commitments to women. More evidence will be gathered regarding the effects of the CP on the share of benefits to women and their positions in planning committees.

Food logistics arrangements

81. The Country Programme will adopt a flexible procurement strategy, buying locally when surpluses are available and importing at times of drought or massive import gaps. Sugar, vegetable oil and dried whole milk will need to be imported on a regular basis. All commodities will be delivered to central project warehouses. In consultation with local authorities, WFP will assume greater direct control of internal transport, storage and handling, and the monitoring of food commodities movements from central storage sites to the final beneficiaries. The Government will meet 20 percent of the ITSH costs.

Preparation of annual work plans and allocation of resources

82. For each basic activity, the WFP office, in consultation with the concerned implementing authority, will prepare annual work plans based upon the indicative resource availability figures and operational performance. Up to 10 percent of resources may also be reallocated between activities depending on the level of need and the success of new activities within the country programme.



PROGRAMME MONITORING AND AUDIT

Institutional arrangements

83. Consistent with the Country Programme's key stated goals and objectives, assessment of performance will primarily be the responsibility of the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit, which will be established within the WFP country office. The officers in charge of VAM, Gender and Monitoring and Evaluation will have a special role for carrying out M&E activities at the level of the country programme, and these officers will collect data and monitor beneficiaries with the aim of assessing the process, outputs and effects of WFP assistance. Key indicators will be a) the cost-effectiveness of food aid management; b) coordination with Government, bilateral donors and NGOs; c) the effectiveness of food aid as a relief and development tool; d) the effectiveness of food aid in meeting the needs of vulnerable groups, particularly from a gender perspective; e) beneficiary participation in food distribution and asset management; and f) benefits analysis by beneficiary groups, gender and activity type.
84. Routine project reporting will remain the responsibility of the individual project authorities and each plan of operations will provide detailed specifications on the Monitoring and Evaluation provisions and requirements as well as reporting and audit requirements.

PROGRAMME ADJUSTMENTS AND SUPPLEMENTATION OF COUNTRY ACTIVITIES

85. The WFP country office will closely supervise the progress of all activities in the Country Programme using regular government progress reports on individual projects and the findings of regular site-monitoring visits undertaken by WFP staff. The country office's overall assessment will be summarized in the six-monthly Country Office Progress Report, which will be shared with all donor and Government partners involved with programme implementation.
86. The Country Programme Advisory Committee will review the six-monthly reports and assess the performance of individual projects. Whenever necessary, and depending on performance and annual resource availability, CPAC may advise on the initiation of supplementary activities and/or reallocation of resources within the CP. It will recommend phasing out or termination of activities or components that no longer require WFP support.
87. Special requests for emergency food aid will continue to be processed using the established procedures.

Evaluation

88. Arrangements for ongoing evaluation such as participatory rural appraisals (PRAs) and case studies will be built into each core activity. Each basic core activity will be evaluated at mid-term, which will serve to indicate whether corrective action is needed to revise component objectives and outcomes. Special issue and case studies will be undertaken as needed.
89. All activities involving the expenditure of WFP funds will be reviewed. Terminal evaluations will be conducted for all completed projects to assess their impact.





ANNEX I





ANNEX II





MALAWI COUNTRY PROGRAMME OPERATIONAL BUDGET 1998–2001

Basic activities	Project No.	Target beneficiaries	Direct Operational Costs (DOC)			Ocean/Insurance/Superintendence & LTSH costs (dollars)	Total DOC (dollars)
			Food requirements	Tons per year x 4 years	Food costs (dollars)		
Assistance to malnourished groups	MLW 4780/1	201 000	Cereals	3 000	675 000	228 000	
			Blended food	38	13 933	2 888	
			Vegetable oil	45	40 500	11 520	
			DSM	36	72 000	9 216	
			Sugar	23	7 705	5 888	
Planned expansion		129 000	Cereals	12 315	2 771 138	935 858	
			Blended food	1 979	725 426	150 404	
			Vegetable oil	333	299 448	85 248	
			DSM	248	495 940	63 488	
			Sugar	214	71 616	54 784	
Total		330 000	18 231	5 172 706	1 547 294	6 720 000	
Rural infrastructure, rehabilitation and development	MLW 5782	115 000	Cereals	6 900	1 380 000	524 400	
Planned expansion		235 000	Cereals	11 506	2 301 160	874 441	
Total		350 000	18 406	3 681 160	1 398 841	5 080 000	
School feeding	MLW 5934	43 000	Cereals	1 887	377 433	143 425	
			Blended food	571	252 235	43 371	
			Sugar	29	9 548	7 296	
Planned expansion		215 000	Cereals	9 436	1 887 272	717 123	
			Blended food	2 853	1 261 173	216 907	

MALAWI COUNTRY PROGRAMME OPERATIONAL BUDGET 1998–2001

Basic activities	Project No.	Target beneficiaries	Direct Operational Costs (DOC)			Ocean/Insurance/Superintendence & LTSH costs (dollars)	Total DOC (dollars)
			Food requirements	Tons per year x 4 years	Food costs (dollars)		
			Sugar	143	47 738	36 480	
Total		258 000		14 918	3 835 398	1 164 602	5 000 000
Total		938 000		51 555	12 689 264	4 110 737	16 800 000

MONITORING INDICATORS

Basic programme activity	Process indicators	Output indicators	Effect indicators	Frequency of data collection	Institution reporting to country office
Rural infrastructure	Actual versus intended number of male and female FFW participants	Quantity and quality of infrastructure assets developed	Number of households with increased availability/access to food in households	Process indicators: monthly	Department of Relief and Rehabilitation Affairs
	Number of project implementation committees formed and operating	Number of participants employed by length of contract and gender	De/increase in workload for women/men/children by season	Output indicators: every six months	Ministry of Works, Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation
	Percentage share of men and women in project committees	Number of households with access to food in time of food shortage	Cost effectiveness of assets through labour intensive or labour based technology	Effect indicators: annual	Ministry of Water, Department of Forestry, NGOs
Assistance to malnourished groups	Actual versus intended number of male and female severely malnourished children rehabilitated in NRUs	Quantity, type of food commodities and timely distribution to different beneficiaries	Child growth and birth weights of assisted beneficiaries compared to national statistics	Process indicators: monthly	Ministry of Health and Population
	Actual versus intended number of male and female moderately malnourished children provided with food supplements in CBSF	Increased number of expectant and nursing mothers utilizing CBSF services		Effect indicators: annual	
	Actual versus intended number if at risk expectant and nursing mothers provided with food supplements in CBSF	Quality and type of food distributed to male and female pupils			
Human resource	Actual versus intended	Number of canteens	Concentration, attention	Process indicators:	Ministry of Education

MONITORING INDICATORS					
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Basic programme activity	Process indicators	Output indicators	Effect indicators	Frequency of data collection	Institution reporting to country office
development	number of male and female pupils receiving wet meals	constructed by communities	and learning ability of pupils with and without project	monthly	National Economic Council, Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation
	Actual versus intended number of girls receiving take-home rations		Enrolments and drop-outs of male and female pupils with and without project	Output indicators: every six months	
Disaster mitigation	Increase in the data submission to VAM and use of VAM	Percentage share of food received by women/men and children at risk	Increase in effective use of targeting criteria produced by VAM	Process indicators: monthly	Ministry of Health and Population, FEWS
	Timely and effective planning for disasters		More effective use of food aid in safety net intervention for vulnerable groups	Output indicators: every six months Effect indicators: annual	