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World
Food Executive Board
Third Regular Session

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Rome, 21 - 24 October 1996

PROGRESS REPORTS ON APPROVED PROJECTS

Agenda item 8 d)

PROJECT GUYANA 4889

Multipurpose agricultural and community development

Total food cost	3 078 200 dollars
Total cost to WFP	5 139 800 dollars
Date approved by the CFA	6 November 1992
Date plan of operations signed	1 February 1993
Date of notification of readiness accepted	30 March 1993
Date of first distribution	1 January 1994 ¹
Duration of WFP assistance	Four years
Duration of project as at 29 February 1996	Two years and two months

All monetary values are expressed in United States dollars, unless otherwise stated. One United States dollar was equivalent to 140 Guyana dollars in February 1996.

¹ A pilot project for 21,000 beneficiaries with a loan of 200 tons of wheat flour from project Guyana-4142 was implemented in 1993.

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NOTE TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

This document is submitted for consideration to the Executive Board.

Pursuant to the decisions taken on the methods of work by the Executive Board at its First Regular Session, 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.

The WFP staff dealing with this document are:

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Should you have any questions regarding matters of dispatch of documentation for the Executive Board, please contact the Documents Clerk (tel.: 5228-2641).

PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT AND OF WFP ASSISTANCE

1. The project's objectives are to develop agriculture and improve the living conditions of the poor by rehabilitating existing infrastructure, expanding employment and self-employment opportunities through community and NGO efforts, and supplementary feeding and provision of social services to vulnerable groups.
2. The project comprises three sub-projects:
 - a) ***agricultural sub-project***: targets 9,700 workers and aims at repairing and constructing agriculture infrastructure through the construction of sea walls, the improvement of drainage and irrigation, and the production of improved seeds;
 - b) ***community development sub-project***: supports 17,500 intended beneficiaries in community self-help productive and training activities aimed at women and youth, and community rehabilitation of social infrastructure; and
 - c) ***social support sub-project***: provides food assistance to 10,800 vulnerable beneficiaries, especially children and the elderly in institutions.
3. WFP assistance acts as:
 - a) an income transfer to low-paid government workers in the agriculture and health sectors by supplementing their daily wages;
 - b) an incentive for undertaking community self-help activities;
 - c) a dietary support to selected vulnerable groups by providing well-balanced meals on a regular basis.

IMPLEMENTATION

4. The project is implemented by the Social Impact Amelioration Programme (SIMAP), a semi-autonomous corporation represented on its Board of Directors by the Government, the private sector, NGOs and the University of Guyana. The project manager reports to the Executive Director of SIMAP, and is supported by a staff of six project officers and 14 field officers stationed across the country's 10 regions in which the project is implemented. Regional government officials, Ministry of Health and Agriculture staff, and numerous small community-based NGOs assist in transporting supplies, and monitoring and reporting on project execution. The project has also cooperated closely with charity organizations such as Mother Teresa's Sisters of Charity, providing meals for orphaned children and the elderly.
5. The most effective feature of the project, related to point 2 b) above, is its support to more than 600 community-based organizations involved in small but essential self-help projects, from the construction of bridges, access roads and nursery schools in rural and indigenous communities to interethnic cottage industry projects and community agricultural projects among former bauxite workers.



FOOD MANAGEMENT

6. WFP has committed 9,768 tons of commodities (6,436 tons of wheat flour, 1,384 of pulses, 544 of vegetable oil and 1,404 of rolled oats). As at 29 February 1996, a total of 5,645 tons had been provided by WFP, representing 58.8 percent of the total commitment.
7. Fluctuating arrivals of supplies to WFP-assisted projects in Guyana from donors were partly compensated by loans of 475 tons of flour from project Guyana 4142 in 1994 and the local purchase of 700 tons of rice in the first half of 1995; these supplies compensated for undelivered wheat flour. Daily food rations combining the four items supplied by WFP vary from 250 grams for one meal at on-site feeding centres to salary supplement and community self-help family rations of 1.2 kilogram.
8. There are two major storage-cum-distribution centres for WFP supplies in the capital, maintained by SIMAP. Supplies are issued from these store-rooms to beneficiary Agriculture and Health Ministry Departments, feeding institutions and smaller regional store-rooms supervised by SIMAP field officers, from which distributions are made monthly.
9. Post-delivery losses over the period amounted to 1.27 percent of the total value of commodities received. Losses were due mainly to the deterioration of supplies of wheat flour and rolled oats in local conditions of high humidity.
10. WFP receives monthly commodity reports from SIMAP as well as quarterly reports on outputs and achievements for all the subgroups benefiting from the project. WFP, through the Dutch Quality Improvement Fund, provided the services of a United Nations Volunteer (UNV) data manager during 1994 to set up a computerized system for tracking all data required.

GOVERNMENT'S CONTRIBUTION

11. The total government contribution includes 15 dollars a ton to cover the estimated 50 percent of ITSH costs. It totalled 349,792 dollars, or 110 percent of the prorated commitment as at 29 February 1996.
12. SIMAP covered 4,397 dollars of the costs of regular training seminars for project and field personnel, and WFP also contributed from its M&E allocation.



EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE

13. Funds amounting to 25,000 dollars were received from the Dutch Quality Improvement Fund. The funds were used to hire a UNV data manager to the project for the duration of 1994. Non-food items in the form of hand tools valued at 26,245 dollars and two computers to facilitate SIMAP data collection and analysis were provided by the Canadian Government.

ASSESSMENT

Quality of performance

14. At the outset, the project lacked sufficient counterpart staff. There was also a tendency by the executing agency to direct more resources to the social support sub-projects than to rural infrastructure, community development and income-generating sub-projects, which take more effort to develop but promote longer-term sustainable benefits for communities. Consequently, the number of hospital beneficiaries exceeded significantly the target set by the plan of operations. Project authorities decided to phase down food rations to urban hospital staff from September 1995, while maintaining support for needier rural and indigenous hospitals and clinics, which was expected to reduce the number of hospital beneficiaries to the plan of operations target by April 1996. In a number of other areas in the community development sub-project, targets have exceeded planned goals (e.g., roads upgraded and water pipes laid). WFP assistance has often enhanced ongoing self-help efforts rather than provided the sole *raison d'être* for the activity. Many of these community development activities are in remote and neediest areas involving groups with a high rate of female participation.

Factors contributing to successful project implementation

15. Eighty-five percent of Guyana's 60,000 indigenous peoples live mainly in remote hinterland communities, and fall below the poverty line, in comparison to the rural coastal population and households in the capital, Georgetown. The project is one of the few development initiatives in the country to place a consistently high priority on supporting community self-help initiatives in marginalized indigenous communities. Five out of 14 field officers are indigenous. Non-food-item hand tool supplies have been directed mainly to indigenous agricultural communities implementing sub-projects. The project has recently launched a pilot programme providing wage supplement rations to teachers in the poorest, indigenous Region 9, to help the Ministry of Education attract and retain more and better-qualified teachers to this marginalized region.
16. The executing agency is a semi-autonomous entity with adequate budgetary allocations and financial flexibility and significant support from the IDB. The Government's solid support to SIMAP's role in implementing the national priority of poverty alleviation coincides with the priority of poverty alleviation programmes and strategies indicated in the Country Strategy Outline (CSO).



Factors hindering project implementation

17. While the project authorities place high priority on supporting sub-projects among the poorest rural and indigenous communities, acute communications and transport difficulties in these areas make it difficult to identify, monitor and support such activities among the neediest.
18. The programme has undergone some pressure from supporters of both main political parties to favour one or the other political or racial group. To date SIMAP has been able to resist these pressures.
19. The Executive Director of SIMAP, who had given important leadership and supervision to the WFP-assisted project, resigned at the end of November and has not yet been replaced. This has delayed completion of the review of project objectives and priorities and finalization of the M&E programme for 1996.

Involvement of women in the project

20. In Guyana, 70 percent of the poorest families are headed by women. The appointment of a woman as project manager who is active in gender issues and the development of indigenous peoples has resulted in a strengthening of support for community projects led by women and training female leadership. Of 863 beneficiaries of WFP support who are engaged in income-generating projects, 754, or 87 percent, are women. In another key area of empowerment - technical and vocational training - of 818 beneficiaries, 643, or 79 percent, are women. In the course of the project a number of groups have graduated from training programmes to income-generating projects; this a key factor in promoting long-term benefits for the poorest.

CONCLUSIONS

21. The performance of the multipurpose agriculture and community development project has been successful. WFP-assisted non-partisan community initiatives have notably improved interethnic cooperation in project areas. The project has also set an example in targeting most marginalized and neglected indigenous communities.
22. As general poverty levels begin to fall, it is important that the project target more specifically and effectively those areas - particularly in indigenous and rural areas - where extreme poverty and food insecurity levels are highest. Consideration should be given by WFP and project authorities to revising targets to shift focus on indigenous communities where food insecurity and malnutrition levels are highest.
23. A notable legacy of decades of state control policies that discouraged the involvement of international and local NGOs alike in Guyana is that the NGO movement in the country is still weak, despite current policies strongly encouraging NGO activity. The multipurpose project should further prioritize its role in supporting vibrant community-based organizations, particularly in economically depressed areas.
24. Over the last four years of the Guyana Structural Adjustment Programme, the GDP has had an average annual growth of seven percent. Nevertheless, the long period of negative growth and the high poverty levels of the population place Guyana among the



countries with the lowest Human Development Index in the hemisphere and fully supports the rationale for WFP assistance during this critical period of reconstruction.



ANNEX

**TARGETS AND ACHIEVEMENTS FOR KEY INDICATORS
(to 31 december 1995)**

	Unit	Target according to plan of operations	Prorated 31.12.95	Actual 31.12.95	Achievement as % of prorated
Agricultural production support sub-project					
Drainage and irrigation canals rehabilitated and maintained	Km	20 000	10 000	10 193	102
Farmers trained in improved seed production	No.	400	200	108	54
Sea defences rehabilitated	Km	417	210	168	80
Community development sub-project					
Schools, community and health centres rehabilitated	No.	96	48	64	133
Roads repaired and water pipes laid	Km	2 170	1 035	1 718	170
Beneficiaries in income-generating activities	No.	2 000	1 000	846	85
Persons trained in small business, crafts	No.	2 000	1 000	786	79
Social support sub-project					
Children, elderly receiving on-site meals	No.	6 800	6 800	9 796	144
Beneficiaries of meals in residential homes for the elderly or orphans	No.	1 500	1 500	1 722	114
Hospital workers on wage supplement rations, patients' meals	No.	2 500	2 500	6 941	278

**PROJECT BENEFICIARIES
TOTAL BENEFICIARIES AT 29 FEBRUARY 1996**

	Target according to plan of operations	Actual at 29.2.96	Achievement as % of target
Agricultural workers	9 700	6 179	64
Community groups	17 500	17 284	99
Social institutions	10 800	13 751	127

