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**Executive Board
Third Regular Session**

Rome, 21 - 24 October 1996

COUNTRY STRATEGY OUTLINES

Agenda item 6



Distribution: GENERAL
WFP/EB.3/96/6/Add.4
20 September 1996
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

REPUBLIC OF YEMEN

ABSTRACT

Yemen is classified as a least developed and food-deficit country, with an estimated per capita gross national product (GNP) of 280 dollars in 1994 (World Bank). Over the past two decades, the country has been subjected to a number of major disasters, both natural and man-made. The national health profile is distressing, with the mortality rate of children under five at 137 per 1,000, double the average of low-income countries. School enrolment is about one third of the average in low-income countries. With cultivable land constituting only 1.3 percent of the total area, Yemen has to rely on imports for about 70 percent of its food supply. The immediate impact of structural adjustment measures, which call for the elimination of subsidies, including for wheat, is expected to adversely affect the employment, income and household food security of the most vulnerable groups. There is an urgent need for countermeasures to stem the increase in hunger and food insecurity. It is estimated that at least 3.1 million Yemenis (21 percent of the population of 15 million) have insufficient resources to meet their basic food requirements, with 83 percent of these absolute poor living in rural areas. It is to this most vulnerable population that WFP will extend its assistance, giving particular attention to women and children. WFP has taken far-reaching corrective measures, including a one-year suspension in 1994 of all but one of its development assistance projects, to overcome previously entrenched bottlenecks and irregularities in food management arrangements and monitoring and accountability systems. Conditions have now been created to enable WFP to continue its assistance on a sounder footing and with greater effectiveness and efficiency. Future WFP assistance to Yemen is to be centred primarily around the social sector (health and education) and expanding, gradually, with food for work in support of agricultural production and environmental rehabilitation, contributing to enhanced household food security and local communities' participation in defining their own priorities.

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NOTE TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

**This document contains recommendations for review and comments by
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 focal points for this document are:

Regional Manager: M. Hammam tel.: 5228-2208

Desk Officer: L. Ehecopar tel.: 5228-2326

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



FOOD INSECURITY AND THE POOR AND HUNGRY

1. The Republic of Yemen (ROY) was formed in 1990, merging the previously separated countries of the Yemen Arab Republic (YAR) in the North and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY) in the South.
2. Attempts at political and economic integration met with serious difficulties, leading to the 1994 military confrontation between the Northern and Southern armies. This armed conflict compounded the country's economic and social problems, leaving many in war-impacted areas with a heavier burden of economic hardship than had already been borne before the outbreak of hostilities.
3. Before unification, both the YAR and the PDRY had been affected adversely by the Gulf War of 1990, which led to the loss of an estimated one billion dollars in remittances, in addition to oil refinery fees once paid to the Southern administration by oil-producing countries of the region. The influx of returnees from the Gulf contributed to an unemployment rate of over 25 percent, with some estimates at 35 percent. Moreover, the Gulf crisis terminated aid from Saudi Arabia and other countries of the Gulf.
4. The outbreak of the civil war in Somalia at the end of 1991 led to a massive exodus of Somali refugees to neighbouring countries, including Yemen. UNHCR estimates that 65,000 Somalis and 40,000 Somalis of Yemeni origin fled to Yemen during the civil war, placing a strain on an already weak economy, and on social infrastructure and services.
5. Since unification, Yemeni women have come to represent a "contested terrain" in the political struggle between religiously motivated and secularly inclined political factions. The influence of the former factions is particularly evident in the southern governorates, where women had previously enjoyed more opportunities for economic and social development.
6. Yemen is classified as a least developed country with an estimated GNP of 280 dollars per capita. (World Bank figures for 1994). According to the Human Development Report (1995), the ROY ranks 137th out of 174 countries listed. It has a population of almost 15 million, of which over 70 percent is under 16 years of age. Seventy-five percent of its population lives in the rural areas and is dependent on agriculture. The yearly population growth rate of 3.7 percent is one of the highest in the world.
7. After unification, the GDP declined by about three percent in 1990 and inflation averaged 58 percent a year during 1990-94. By the end of December 1995, the national debt had reached 8.8 billion dollars and the stock of arrears amounted to 5.2 billion dollars.
8. With a commitment to private-sector, export-led growth, the Government of the ROY began implementation of a series of structural adjustment measures in 1995. The Government's IMF-supported Stabilization Programme is intended to reduce the fiscal deficit for 1996. Related measures include the reduction of subsidies and the civil service wage bill.

Food insecurity at the national level

National food security

9. With cultivable land constituting only 1.3 percent of Yemen's total area, reliance on imports, amounting to about 70 percent of the national food supply, contributes significantly to the country's balance of payments deficit and its substantial foreign debt. Although the



majority of agricultural producers devote land to cereal cultivation, the food gap is particularly wide for grains but also extends to rice, sugar and vegetable oil. FAO estimates the Government's annual expenditure on these commodities to exceed one billion dollars.

10. In 1995, local cereal production was 839,000 tons, compared to 813,000 tons in 1992. Overall productivity is very low, at 1.13 tons per hectare. Wheat-cultivated area increased from 97,000 hectares in 1992 to 106,000 hectares in 1995. Production in 1995 was 171,000 tons, representing a mere nine percent of total wheat consumption of 1.8 million tons that same year (Annex III).
11. According to the latest food consumption survey carried out by FAO for 1990-92, cereals comprise 65 percent of the total calories and 73 percent of the total protein consumed in the average Yemeni diet. Wheat and wheat products account for 62 percent of total cereal consumption, approximately 40 percent of the total calories and 45 percent of the total protein.
12. Although the sorghum- and millet-cultivated areas have remained stable over the past few years, the yield has dropped mainly because of low rainfall and poor seed varieties. All sorghum produced in the country is consumed internally.
13. A number of factors compromise agricultural production and impede the realization of its potential. Prominent among these is male migration from the rural areas and attendant neglect of terraces (to the detriment of water harvesting), the misallocation of extremely scarce water resources, (particularly in relation to the commercial cultivation of qat), the absence of water conservation schemes, and environmental degradation associated with deforestation in areas of rain-fed agriculture.
14. According to government figures, about 60 percent of crop production is rain-fed-most of it grains such as wheat, sorghum, millet and barley. Qat cultivation accounts for the bulk of agricultural inputs and irrigation water used in Yemen.
15. There are no major surface rivers in Yemen, but there are small mountain streams. Irrigation is used for fruit, vegetables and qat. Fossil water is being depleted at alarming rates, prompting the Government to look at alternative methods such as drip and pivot, as opposed to flood irrigation.
16. In the absence of men, responsibility for agriculture is often shouldered by women and children. On average, 13 percent of rural households are headed by women; for the southern uplands, it is estimated that women head about 30 percent of rural households. In addition to agriculture, Yemeni women in rural areas are also in charge of main activities related to livestock.
17. As is the case for other parts of the OMM¹ region, women who are actively involved in agricultural production have limited control over the means of production. With the exception of women-headed households, women seldom own land and their access to credit is very limited.
18. Investment in enhancing food security through the development of agricultural infrastructure continues to be limited. At the same time, the potential of Yemen's fisheries and livestock remains less than adequately tapped. Moreover, the problem of shortage of locally produced food, and attendant increased reliance on imports, is exacerbated by the country's high fertility rate.

¹ Mediterranean, Middle East and CIS Bureau (WFP).



19. As World Bank proposals are implemented, the removal of wheat subsidies will mean a definite and sharp increase in wheat and wheat flour prices which the poor will be unable to afford: although prices for a 50-kg bag of wheat and wheat flour doubled between the last quarter of 1995 and the first semester of 1996 (from 4.95 to 9.60 dollars for wheat flour and four to eight dollars for wheat), they are still well below international FOB prices, reflecting the importance of the remaining subsidies.

The poor and food-insecure

20. Yemen's Human Development indicators are currently among the lowest in the world, even when compared to countries in the same income category. Infant mortality is double the average of low-income countries and primary school enrolment is about one third.
21. The national health profile is distressing. Infant mortality and under-five child mortality stand at 91 and 137 per 1,000, respectively. UNICEF's 1995 State of the World Children documents a mere 16 percent of births attended by trained health workers, and low birth weight is registered for 19 percent of infants. Access to health services is limited, and distribution is skewed in favour of urban populations.
22. The World Bank's 1993 Health Sector Review identified the leading causes of morbidity among males and females of all ages as parasitic infections, injuries and poisoning, as well as diseases of the digestive, respiratory and circulatory systems. Among women, specifically, complications of pregnancy and childbirth account for almost 50 percent of the leading causes of morbidity.
23. While 61 percent of urban residents have access to safe drinking-water, the corresponding figure for rural areas is about 30 percent. Similar asymmetry applies to access to health services, which UNICEF estimates at 81 percent for urban areas, compared to 32 percent for rural areas.
24. UNDP's Mid-Decade Review of Education for All shows a slowing down in the rate of primary school enrolment in recent years. As for the gender gap, the UNDP study shows that boys' enrolment remains higher than girls'. Even in the primary phase (grades 1 to 6), a high drop-out rate among girls contributes to the widening of the gap.
25. The urban bias complicates the picture further. While enrolment ratios for urban boys and girls and rural boys have either reached or are approaching the Government's goal of 85 percent by the year 2000, the corresponding figure for rural girls is a mere 24.2 percent. The enrolment of girls undergoes a marked drop after grade 6, when they are about 12 years of age.
26. While the national illiteracy rate is 54.5 percent, a report on The Situation of Women in Yemen (March 1996, National Women's Committee) shows that 45.9 percent of urban females aged 10 and above are illiterate, compared to 16.3 percent for males. For rural areas, the corresponding figures are 84.6 percent and 35.4 percent.
27. Shortage of water and firewood is particularly taxing on women, since they are responsible for collecting these essential resources, devoting much of their time to the task. This shortage also contributes indirectly to rationalizing the interruption of girls' education, since girls generally share their mothers' responsibility for collecting water and fuel.
28. Malnutrition, which is widespread in the ROY, represents a serious underlying health problem and a leading contributing factor to morbidity and mortality. Maternal malnutrition constitutes a chronic underlying cause of compromised health. Anaemia, which is particularly prevalent in rural areas and in the marginal peri-urban areas, increases



women's delivery-related risks. By contributing to low birth weight, maternal malnutrition also adds to the health burden of infant morbidity and mortality.

29. In a country where an average of 65 percent of daily caloric intake derives from cereals, as compared to 0.3 percent from oils and fats, wheat is highly valued. This will no doubt continue to be the case with further withdrawal of government subsidies for this staple.
30. While low income is a major cause of households' limited access to food, there are other factors which are also relevant. Significant among these, in addition to the major problem of qat consumption, is the inadequacy of distributive/marketing networks.
31. The ROY is a highly disaster-prone country. Over the past two decades, Yemen has been subjected to a number of major disasters, both natural and man-made. Earthquakes, droughts and floods are frequent, and the human and financial resources to manage these emergencies are clearly insufficient. International assistance is required in each case. From 14 to 16 June of this year, heavy rains and floods caused extensive damage and the loss of human lives and cattle to many villages and towns of four governorates which had to be declared disaster areas. The Government requested assistance from the United Nations system and the donor community; this is now being provided.

Food aid assistance to Yemen

32. Food assistance to Yemen under PL-480 was discontinued in 1993. Since then, about 800,000 tons of wheat a year were imported on a commercial basis from the United States, at reduced prices. This bonus was discontinued in 1996 and all imports are now made at international market prices.
33. During 1995, France provided 4,000 tons of wheat flour and the European Union donated another 14,000 tons, while Italy contributed 1,000 tons of cereals. For the year 1996, France is expected to provide 9,840 tons of wheat flour. These commodities are usually monetized at prices below c.i.f. and generated funds are used by the Government for mutually agreed projects.
34. The total bilateral food aid in 1995 amounted to 19,447 tons, while WFP provided 7,440 tons of commodities, including 6,000 tons of wheat flour. For that same year, the total local production of wheat was only 171,000 tons, while commercial imports amounted to 1.6 million tons. Therefore, food aid to Yemen in 1995 represented only 14.6 percent of the local consumption.

The target population

35. The poor in rural areas represent 84 percent of the national total. A recent poverty assessment report (World Bank internal document) estimated that, in 1995, around 3.1 million Yemenis (21 percent of the population) had insufficient resources to meet their basic food requirements. Of these, about 1.4 million in the rural areas (83 percent of the absolute poor) and 300,000 in the peri-urban areas suffered from extreme poverty and food insecurity (See Annex II).
36. In Yemen, the extreme poor are mainly concentrated in the provinces of Sana'a (excluding Sana'a city), Taiz and Ibb (43 percent), while an additional 28 percent live in Hodeidah, Dhamar and Hadramout provinces. They are unemployed and illiterate (84 percent of women). Although they represent one fifth of the total population, their share of GDP is only six percent. The World Bank estimates that 80 percent of the



employed poor work in the private sector, either as self-employed or employees, and have no access to other sources of income.

37. Available studies of limited scope and the interviews conducted during a recent WFP mission shed some light on dietary patterns among the rural poor. Breakfast basically consists of bread and tea. Milk is generally beyond the means of the poor, except in cases where the family owns a milk-producing farm animal. Pulses and bread, or rice with some vegetables, are consumed for lunch, along with tea. For coastal areas fish is a daily lunch food. Supper consists of the same foods as those eaten for breakfast.
38. Although clearly inadequate, the nutritional value of this diet is commensurate with the economics of rural poverty. The official national poverty line is set at 3,000 Yemeni rials (25 dollars) per month per family. The 1,987 kilocalories per adult provided by this basket are derived from beans and bread for breakfast; vegetables, rice, fish (for the coastal areas) and ghee for lunch; and beans, bread and bananas for supper. A more balanced diet which includes eggs, milk products and vitamin-rich fruit would cost 4,500 Yemeni rials (37.50 dollars) per family per month.

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION AND FOOD SECURITY POLICIES

39. Due to recent political developments in the country, government policies remain at the stage of formulation. Their provisional nature is exemplified by regulations pertaining to agriculture, health and education. For example, the text of Law No. 18 for 1994, which regulates the formation and activities of agricultural cooperatives, designates this legislation as "tentative". Cost recovery programmes related to public health services are considered experimental, and the status of religiously-oriented public schools is currently under review.
40. With the Five-Year Plan 1996-2000 still in preliminary form, the Ministry of Planning and Development's guidelines for its preparation underscore the Government's commitment to a market-led growth strategy and encouragement of the private sector.
41. The agricultural sector, along with fisheries, is considered a priority. However, the guidelines contain no elaboration of the specific relation of this priority to issues of food security. Commitment to reduction of the balance of payment deficit may only be interpreted as an indirect and implicit reference to food insecurity.
42. Although the agriculture sector generates no more than 20 percent of the GDP, it is the primary sector for employment and one in which women play a significant role in familial household production. According to official statistics, female labour force participation in rural communities is as high as 95.15 percent. While the Government has recognized the significance of women's role in agriculture, and has, since the eighties, included a women's component in its agricultural projects, this attention has been far from regular, generally ending when external assistance runs out.
43. However, Decree number 65, which stipulates the allocation of land to those who have been dispossessed and the prevention of further dispossession of tenants until suitable compensation can be provided, remains a powerful tool for increased assistance to women in the agricultural sector.
44. As the Poverty Assessment study remains under review, and while the Government's commitment to economic liberalization is already in the implementation phase, there are no official and comprehensive poverty alleviation schemes for Yemen, with the exception of a



few specific programmes targeting returnees from the Gulf, and certain categories of government employees.

45. The immediate impact of structural adjustment is expected to affect adversely the employment, income and household food security of the most vulnerable groups. The World Bank's proposed countermeasures include a Civil Works Project, and maintenance of public expenditure on health and education at their current levels. They also include a proposed Social Action Project which involves private delivery of social services at the community level and a poverty alleviation project for the Southern governorates. There is an urgent need for these projects to address issues of hunger and food security and in particular their root causes.
46. In relation to the social sector, officials generally articulate an orientation of gender equity. The national strategy, which aims to expand basic education (grades 1 to 9) to 85 percent enrolment by the year 2000, also sets a goal of reducing illiteracy rates among males and females to 30 percent and 50 percent, respectively.
47. In a similar vein, the Ministry of Public Health's Forward Looking Policies and Strategies for Health Development set the reduction of high risks threatening mother and child health as one of the five priority areas of such policies and strategies.
48. Furthermore, the Government has a stated goal of at least 85 percent enrolment for children of basic education age (six to 15) by the year 2000, and related emphasis on the education of girls.
49. The achievement of these goals is likely to be hampered by severe economic difficulties. Health promotion, whether for females or males, requires resources for the development of water and sanitation schemes and improved nutrition. As for girls' education, this requires the construction of schools, or at least additional classrooms in existing schools, and the training of local teachers to replace the expatriates whose relatively high salaries are no longer affordable.
50. In past years, the PDRY established in South Yemen the Central Organization for Aid in Kind (COAK), to handle all food assistance to the country. Due to mismanagement of commodities, WFP decided in 1994 that food assistance should no longer be provided through this organization, which has now been dismantled. An amendment to the Letter of Understanding between WFP and the Government was signed in late 1994, and WFP has been responsible since then for all logistic arrangements, through private contractors, from port to extended delivery points (EDPs).
51. At present there is no government institution in charge of emergency preparedness. However, UNDP is supporting a programme for the establishment of a National Authority for Disaster Preparedness and Management. This entity will be responsible for enhanced preparedness to address the many natural hazards the country faces and for ensuring that response systems and resources are in place.

ASSESSMENT OF WFP'S PERFORMANCE TO DATE

52. Since its beginning in 1967 to the present, WFP assistance to Yemen (valued at 313.3 million dollars) has provided support to a number of sectors, including health, education and agriculture, in addition to public works and assistance to refugees and emergency/rehabilitation operations, through 42 development projects, (280.7 million dollars), 17 emergency operations (29.2 million dollars) and four protracted refugee and



emergency projects (3.4 million dollars). Although generally evaluated by WFP inter-agency missions as satisfactory, WFP projects met with serious difficulties.

53. A basic limitation of WFP's past assistance to Yemen relates to the obscurity of its developmental impact. This is largely due to the very broad scope of WFP projects; the resources had been spread thinly across all the Yemeni governorates, rather than being concentrated in selected ones.
54. Over the past two years decisive action has been taken by WFP to rectify problems of food management and monitoring; this includes the suspension for one full year of all development projects except one: school feeding, retained in order to test the implementation of a new system of accountability, monitoring and commodity management.
55. Past irregularities and inadequate targeting of beneficiaries were the focus of a WFP-sponsored two-day workshop held in January 1995 and attended by representatives of relevant ministries. Following due consideration of alternative organizational, managerial and logistics aspects of WFP operations in Yemen, agreement was reached between WFP and government officials on specific elements of effective management of food assistance. Significant in this regard is the Government's approval of direct, private-sector-assisted deliveries, and regular monitoring in partnership with WFP. Related provisions have been incorporated in the amended plans of operations of projects 4695 (Support to primary education) and 2453 (Exp.3) (Assistance to mother and child health (MCH) centres).
56. The educational project (No. 4695) was restructured and the beneficiaries better targeted, reducing the number of schools to be assisted and ensuring their location in the poorest areas, where 100 percent of the female students would receive food assistance. The plan of operations was amended accordingly and the project extended to 30 June 1998.
57. On 13 May 1996, WFP and the Ministry of Health also signed an amendment for project 2453 (Exp.3)—"Assistance to MCH centres" which will function as a pilot project for a duration of 16 months until 31 October 1997. Given the alarming rate of anaemia among adult women visiting the health centres, a micronutrient component will be added to this project and wheat flour will be fortified.
58. During 1995 and the beginning of 1996, project 4695 was used to test the effectiveness of the newly developed food management, delivery monitoring and accountability system. WFP officers, together with government officials, multiplied field trips and visited areas of the country which had not been monitored, although food had been sent regularly. The officers conducted Beneficiary Contact Monitoring and were satisfied that food aid was adequately reaching the intended beneficiaries. All shipments were cleared/transported to EDPs by WFP through private contractors, which resulted in considerable savings: the land transport, storage and handling (LTSH) cost has now been reduced from 124 dollars a ton to 77.82 dollars a ton. Most important, losses are now virtually nil. While in 1993-94 post-c.i.f. losses were 39 percent, during 1994-95 they represented only 0.17 percent of total commodities. The Government has recognized the usefulness of these arrangements and is collaborating fully.
59. The WFP office in Sana'a has also been strengthened and restructured and its sub-office in Aden closed. Premises and staffing are adequate. This - coupled with the improvement of logistics operations related to the internal transport and warehousing of food commodities and the amendments introduced in the ongoing projects - is all evidence that there is now a solid base in Yemen for WFP assistance to be expanded and for agricultural projects based on food for work to resume, although slowly and in phases.



WFP-Government relations

60. In developing its Country Strategy Note (CSN), which is expected to be finalized in December 1996, the Government of the ROY is willing to cooperate with the United Nations. The Ministry of Planning is now preparing a five-year development plan which will include: a) employment creation and poverty alleviation; b) environmental issues, including desertification; c) water; and d) decentralization. Given the commitment of WFP to the alleviation of hunger and poverty, its input is expected to be significant in this regard.
61. During the preparatory missions of the WFP CSO (January and March 1996), discussions with a number of government officials indicated not only great appreciation of WFP support, but also explicit commitment to proper implementation of WFP projects, consistent with the principles of social and gender equity. Noteworthy with regard to the latter is the Ministry of Agriculture's commitment to the mainstreaming of gender issues. In general, the eagerness and expression of commitment on the part of Yemeni officials, along with recognition and rectification of past irregularities, bode well for future cooperation with WFP.

WFP commitment to gender issues

62. The WFP country office in Yemen is committed to promoting gender equity within the framework of WFP projects. In this endeavour, WFP staff face a great challenge. Yemen is one of the more conservative countries of the OMM region; it is characterized by pronounced gender inequity.
63. Taking account of cultural and political factors is particularly important at this time. Religious conservatism is leaving its mark on the manner and extent of women's participation in public life. This has implications for WFP's priority sectors of health and education. It is estimated that 78 percent of WFP's current beneficiaries are women (female students and expectant and nursing mothers).
64. The country office has recently added a number of national female staff members. Among them are those who qualify for training as future programme officers. Two were assigned to accompany consultants on their field missions. Such opportunities will continue to be made available to female staff and an effort made to put to good use their technical background, where applicable.

Assistance to the refugee population

65. WFP assistance to Somali refugees in Yemen started in January 1992 under Emergency operation (EMOP) No. 4954. EMOP No. 4954 (Exp.1) was approved in August 1992 for a period of six months and in December 1993 it was further extended, to March 1994. Following a WFP/UNHCR assessment mission in February 1994, EMOP No. 4954 was approved for nine months. As the situation did not improve in Somalia, and following another assessment mission in May 1995, two extensions in time (to the end of April 1996), with additional commodities, were approved by the Executive Director of WFP. The Government has requested WFP to continue its food assistance for a further 12 months to meet the requirements of 8,000 Somali refugees, 54 percent of whom are women and children.
66. In February 1996, a joint WFP/UNHCR mission assessed the needs of the refugees in Al Gaheen camp and defined the conditions upon which WFP would continue its food assistance. The health situation was judged to be under control, but a quarterly camp census to verify beneficiary figures was recommended, together with the upgrading of the functions



performed by the camp's Elders Committee, with greater participation of women in decision-making and benefits from income-generating activities.

67. The mission estimated that the situation in Somalia was not expected to change significantly enough to allow for large-scale repatriation and the Yemeni economy was expected to deteriorate further in 1996, leading to an increase in the movement of refugees from urban areas to the camp. Therefore, an estimated case-load of 8,000 was considered a realistic planning figure.

FUTURE ORIENTATION OF WFP ASSISTANCE

68. Future WFP assistance to Yemen will focus on the socio-economic development of the poorest population and on increasing food security, through a phased and area-targeted integrated rural development approach. A Country Programme Document is expected to be presented to the Executive Board at its Second Regular Session of 1997.
69. WFP support to the social sector (health and education) is expected initially to be the main focus of the Country Programme's assistance, helping the poorest families cope with reductions in the value of their disposable income, resulting, *inter alia*, from withdrawal of subsidies to basic food items.
70. WFP support will gradually extend to the agricultural sector, particularly environmental rehabilitation through food-for-work activities, to contribute to the promotion of food security. The many rural poor met during the field visits underscored their eagerness for food-for-work self-reliance schemes, with community participation in support of agricultural development and building of basic infrastructure such as health centres and schools.
71. WFP agricultural/environmental rehabilitation projects will be introduced initially on a pilot basis, in partnership with United Nations technical agencies and/or bilateral donors. As food subsidies phase out, food for work will become an increasingly attractive instrument to assist the target population. Its cost-effectiveness will be analysed and monitored carefully, to ensure affordable and sustainable interventions.
72. Regarding natural and man-made disasters and in particular the situation of Somali refugees in the country, it is envisaged to continue WFP assistance to the affected populations, and supplement it with additional commodities whenever the nutritional situation and a gender sensitive, participatory needs assessment makes this necessary.

Target groups and geographical targeting

73. Effective utilization of WFP resources for the purpose of poverty alleviation/development will be served better through a programme of related activities in a given demarcated area. This would involve the targeting of groups of governorates for support during specified periods of the lifetime of WFP support.
74. WFP assistance will be concentrated in the rural areas, where 83 percent of the extremely poor, food-insecure population resides, and include the poorest slum areas. The geographic distribution of poverty and food insecurity is indicated in Annex I. WFP assistance is targeted mainly to those areas where population concentration of the poor is 120,000 or more. There are other less populated but remote provinces where groups of equally vulnerable, food-insecure tribal people reside and could, potentially, be assisted by WFP.



75. With an average of 148,000 beneficiaries a year, WFP assistance will cover about 17 percent of the poorest, more vulnerable, food-insecure population. The hungry poor in the more remote, isolated areas, where there is no other donor support, will to the extent possible be assisted by WFP, as it will progressively withdraw from the more assisted provinces of Sana'a and Ibb.
76. Assistance in health and education to targeted groups in Aden will also continue. This governorate has suffered most from the latest military operations and the subsequent removal of diplomatic and economic representations, and is facing the highest unemployment rates.
77. Based on field visits, available reports and statistics, and consistent with the goals of contributing to the development of the social sector, promoting food security/alleviating poverty through support of productive activities and promoting gender equity, the following governorates will be given priority focus in the first phase of a WFP multi-phase, multi-sector programme:

Governorate	Priority area
Northern	
Hodeidah	Social sector; agriculture/water and soil conservation
Hajja	Social sector
Dhamar	Social sector; agriculture/water and soil conservation
Taiz	Social sector; agriculture/water and soil conservation
Southern	
Shabwa	Social sector
Lahej	Social sector; agriculture/water and soil conservation
Abyan	Social sector; agriculture/water and soil conservation
Hadramout	Social sector
Aden	Social sector; agriculture/water and soil conservation

78. For the impoverished rural communities of these governorates, WFP assistance will be tailored to accommodate the variations in agricultural potential, female education, and health development.

Key areas for assistance

Health

79. Since 1993, a pronounced deterioration in the quality of health services has been noted, particularly in war-impacted areas. At present, the rural system of primary health care is virtually inoperative, many health units having been looted of their modest equipment or damaged during the war.
80. Under the present conditions of governmental budgetary constraints, it is improbable that rehabilitation of local-level health units would be undertaken by the Ministry of Health. Villagers generally express eagerness to rebuild such units themselves if the necessary equipment and materials were provided. Food for work would be appropriate for such an undertaking, within the framework of the World Bank's Civil Works Project which supports small-scale civil works at the community level.



81. Food assistance would also be linked with the participation of women in pre and postnatal preventive health activities including immunization, health examination, and education in child nutrition and family planning. The ongoing project Yemen 2453 (Exp.3) is a pilot for the continuation/expansion of WFP activities in this sector.
82. The positive effects of this assistance would be maximized by extending WFP support to education and, where feasible, to familial agricultural production. The latter would contribute to household food security through the cultivation of food crops, or through the increase of household incomes.

Proposed beneficiaries of WFP assistance to health

83. Between 14,750 and 25,000 expectant and nursing mothers and malnourished children will be assisted each year in impoverished rural communities, selected on the basis of a socio-economic profile of potential beneficiaries.
84. Only women who reside permanently in such communities (or bedouin women whose tribes have established connections with these communities) would be eligible for assistance through the WFP selected health centres. Ration cards would be distributed directly to the senior women of the households of the selected communities, with assistance from village elders, where feasible.

Education

85. In a society where the average age of marriage for females is in the teens, 12-year-old girls are considered "grown up" by local standards. They are often prevented from attending "mixed" schools, or travelling outside their home communities to attend an all-girl school elsewhere. Moreover, even for the most eager of female students, the lack of sanitary facilities in school is a real deterrent.
86. Although girls are particularly vulnerable to deprivation from education, boys are far from safe. Ministry of Education statistics show that among the students who began primary school in 1981/82, over 50 percent of the girls and boys had dropped out of school by grade 6 (about age 12), and only about 20 percent graduated from secondary school.
87. In addition to providing WFP rations to rural households of females students of preparatory grades (7 to 9) as an incentive to parents to keep their daughters in school, food for work could be provided for the expansion and rehabilitation of schools of rural communities.
88. WFP support to communities that undertake the construction/expansion of school facilities is particularly important in the support of girls' education. While WFP food rations are likely to serve well as an incentive for keeping girls in schools in their home communities, such support is less likely to serve when older girls have to travel beyond the immediate vicinity of their homes.

Proposed beneficiaries of WFP assistance to education

89. Food assistance will be targeted to an average of 113,000 students a year. For the governorates selected for the first phase of WFP assistance, the data derived from the 1996 school survey would be useful in the identification of specific communities in particular need of promoting girls' education.
90. Targeting for grades 1 to 6 would be limited to schools in the most impoverished rural communities in the selected governorates, with priority given to governorates such as Shabwa, where girls' education is particularly scarce. For these earlier grades, food rations



should be provided to girls and boys as an incentive to parents as they face the Government's measures of economic austerity.

91. Promotion of female education in the upper grades also requires simultaneous support from male counterparts, since it is most unlikely that families whose sons have to drop out of school to contribute to the generation of family income will keep their daughters in school.
92. In conformity with the Government's Plan to replace all foreign teachers with Yemenis by the year 2000, WFP will continue assisting male boarding-schools for poor students from the remote rural areas that are to become teachers.

Agriculture

93. Properly targeted support to increase agricultural production, including livestock (a predominantly female responsibility) would contribute to household and national food security. WFP food-for-work projects will aim to develop and improve existing wells and water-distribution systems, rehabilitate present irrigation networks, establish flood and erosion control systems, and strengthen agricultural and livestock extension services. It is expected that this support will improve farming potential, increase productivity, create new job opportunities and increase farmers' income, thus enhancing household food security.
94. WFP assistance will serve as an incentive to encourage small-scale farm families to invest in agricultural production and thereby increase their incomes in the long run. WFP support to agriculture will also provide women with opportunities for enrolling in training programmes and engaging in effective value-added activities such as the raising of livestock or the preparation of seedlings for forestry projects within the framework of cooperative ventures.
95. Within the general framework of the proposed WFP assistance to agriculture and the development of human resources, due attention will be given to issues specific to women. The use of pesticides by women, for example, generally proceeds without adequate knowledge of the adverse health effects of these substances. Precautions are to be taken to protect women, including those among them who are pregnant, or their breast-fed infants.

Proposed beneficiaries of WFP assistance to agriculture

96. The intended beneficiaries - about 10,000 families for the first year gradually increased to reach 20,000 by the third year - are to be selected among those who are less capable of meeting their basic needs and who are facing acute water and fuelwood scarcity that further reduces their farming capacity.
97. Priority is to be given to women who are heads of households. Support should extend to female extension workers designated as instructors.

Assistance to refugees

98. Under the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between WFP and UNHCR, whenever the refugee case-load exceeds 5,000, WFP is responsible for mobilizing all basic food requirements and related LTSH costs for the refugee programme. The MOU is being revised to define clearly responsibilities and arrangements for cooperation between UNHCR and WFP. It reaffirms the commitment to ensuring that food aid is targeted to the household level and reaches the most vulnerable. It stresses that both agencies will work together to implement strategies to involve the community and particularly women at all levels of food-aid delivery, distribution and monitoring.

Proposed beneficiaries



99. Given the difficult situation in both Somalia and Yemen, it is expected that more Somali refugees will be compelled to register in the camp and that the actual case-load of about 7,000 will increase to 8,000 or more in the coming months. Somalis come from various parts of their country and belong to eight clans, of which Hawie and Darod account for more than 50 percent of the refugee population. Although adult females represent only 32.7 percent of the camp population, children and women are the majority and deserve special attention.
100. In order to assess better the exact number of refugees in the camp, WFP/UNHCR are revising registration procedures and will undertake a census, with the participation of a camp task force that comprises women, on a quarterly basis. Requirements will then be adjusted periodically.

Potential for joint programming with other agencies and NGOs

101. In addition to the Country Strategy Note, which will provide the grounds for effective collaboration among United Nations agencies, an effort is being made to harmonize programme cycles: UNDP and UNFPA will start a new cycle in 1997 and UNICEF is examining the possibility of extending its present programme for another two years until 1997. This CSO also presents a proposal for the period 1997-2001.
102. Greater coordination of activities among donors would contribute to maximizing the benefits of assistance, in addition to facilitating the task of regular monitoring.
103. For the health and education sectors, increased coordination with UNICEF and GTZ will be encouraged. With regard to agricultural and forestry schemes, coordination with FAO will be established for projects involving land and water conservation. Consistent with WFP's orientation, FAO is committed to the principle of community participation. Its projects also include gender and development components in relation to forestry development and water and soil conservation. Training of female agricultural extensionists is also part of the FAO Yemen programme.
104. Regarding collaboration and partnership with UNHCR, WFP is to be closely associated with the selection of implementing partners. Considering that the national implementing NGO Partner in Development (PAD) is a fairly new organization, WFP will organize two workshops on participatory, gender needs assessment and related planning and monitoring activities, and on the logistics aspects of handling food aid.
105. Investigation of potential for cooperation with IFAD is also important in relation to gender and development support. Moreover, food for work for social infrastructure could be linked to the World Bank component for supporting small-scale civil works at the community level.
106. Whether on its own or in collaboration with donors, WFP support has a greater chance of positive impact on assisted communities within the framework of a decentralized system of implementation. While coordination with the Government of the ROY and line ministries is essential, there are also good reasons to coordinate with local-level organizations. Not least is the adaptation of WFP support to the specificity of local conditions and needs, and the maximization of project sustainability beyond the duration of WFP assistance.

Modalities of WFP assistance

107. WFP food rations would serve as an incentive to encourage expectant and nursing mothers to partake of the services of health centres. Support would cover prenatal care and extend to postnatal care for mother and child. WFP-assisted health centres are to provide health education on the premises.



108. WFP food for work will act as an incentive to small farmers, men and women, to carry out the activities that will be recommended on their own land. Traditionally, terrace agriculture, which requires a great amount of labour, uses family and hired labour. At present, because of the shortage of funds caused by unemployment and reduction of remittances from abroad, rural populations no longer have adequate means to invest. Food aid would be a way to carry on these activities; it will also act as a nutritional supplement to the peasants and their families. Farmers are expected to contribute by providing local materials and towards the maintenance of infrastructure to ensure long-term sustainability.
109. Greater attention is to be paid to the nutritional value of the commodities supplied. Given the problem of micro-nutrient deficiencies, efforts are to be made to fortify items in the food basket, particularly with iron and Vitamin A. Widespread deficiency of this latter nutrient is now under consideration by UNICEF Yemen.
110. For the formulation of specific projects within the proposed guidelines of this CSO, and prior to project implementation, it is envisaged that Rural Rapid Appraisals, with gender disaggregation as a basic element of data collection, be undertaken in the communities selected for assistance.

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E)

111. To undertake regular monitoring of schools and health centres, as well as the proposed agricultural/environmental rehabilitation pilot projects, WFP would benefit from the service of Arabic-speaking United Nations Volunteers (UNVs) or other junior staff who would be stationed in areas of close proximity to project sites. Project monitoring would also be greatly facilitated by reliance on local and international partners in the execution of projects.
112. For technically sound and appropriate M&E, the WFP country office is to make use of the ample research talent, both national and international, available in Yemen and have a budget allocation for consultants who would be involved from the early stages of project implementation when baseline gender-disaggregated data are gathered at the local level.
113. A measure of self-monitoring can also be encouraged by explaining to the communities WFP's programme, and its mandate. Wherever WFP rations are distributed, men and women have the right to know the rationale behind the selection or exclusion of communities.
114. To allow for efficient management and close monitoring of operations related to assistance to the refugee population, WFP will base one field monitor in Aden. UNHCR has offered space in their sub-office for this purpose.
115. Special emphasis is to be placed on the verification of beneficiary figures and ensuring that there is effective improvement in the condition of the women refugees, and that this improvement is properly accounted for in the progress reports.

Resource requirements

116. It is estimated that around 13 million dollars will be required in 1997 and that this assistance will gradually increase to reach 20 million dollars in the year 2001, for a total WFP contribution of 84 million dollars in the five-year period.



KEY ISSUES AND RISKS

117. Political instability related to unemployment and inflation remains a risk. With official statistics marking unemployment at 25 percent and no foreseen increase in social-sector budgets, and in view of the difficulties that Yemen's poor are expected to face, it is important that the delivery of WFP food rations remain regular.
118. For WFP Yemen to contribute to the extension of the principle of gender equity to the joint management/implementation of its projects, in partnership with line ministries, it is important to ensure the appointment of female Project Coordinators.
119. With the expected economic difficulties facing the rural poor, it is essential that support to girls' education remain, but not to the exclusion of boys in the primary-school phase. Without supporting Education for All, there is a risk that the increase in female enrolment diminishes after the termination of WFP assistance.
120. As local food prices rise, commercial qat production remains antithetical to programmes of reduction of food imports.



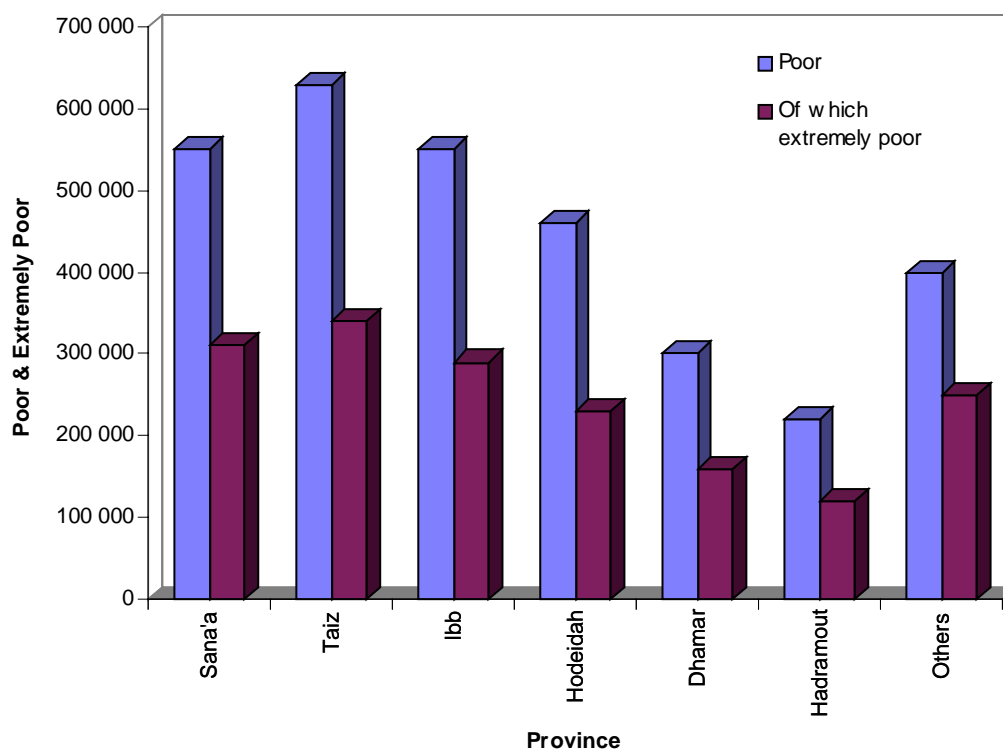
ANNEX I



ANNEX II

POOR AND FOOD INSECURE POPULATION BY PROVINCE		
Governorate	Poor	Of which extremely poor
Sana'a	550 000	310 000
Taiz	630 000	340 000
Ibb	550 000	290 000
Hodeidah	460 000	230 000
Dhamar	300 000	160 000
Hadramout	220 000	120 000
Others	400 000	250 000
Total	3 100 000	1 700 000

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ANNEX III

GENERAL SUMMARY AREA (ha) AND PRODUCTION (tons) CROPS IN YEMEN, 1992-94
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Crop/Year		1992	1993	1994
Cereals	Area	730 000	751 000	734 000
	Production	810 000	833 000	602 000
Vegetable	Area	51 000	54 000	51 000
	Production	680 000	730 000	645 000
Fruits	Area	61 000	65 000	70 000
	Production	335 000	362 000	360 000
Pulses	Area	54 000	53 000	52 000
	Production	76 000	76 000	68 000
Cash crop	Area	60 000	64 000	61 000
	Production	40 000	42 000	38 000
Feeders	Area	82 000	82 000	82 000
	Production	815 000	856 000	861 000
Total	Area	1 038 000	1 069 000	1 050 000
	Production	2 756 000	2 899 000	2 774 000

Wheat consumption in tons - 1995

Local production	171 000
WFP assistance	8 400
Other donor contribution	26 200
Commercial imports, subsidized	1 600 000
Total	1 805 600



_____ International borders
----- Governorate borders
Total population: 15,000,000
Extremely poor, food-insecure: 1,700,000
Poor, food-insecure: 3,100,000

Proposed priority areas for WFP assistance
○ Social sector
ψ Agriculture/water and soil
≡ Provinces with >120,000 food-insecure

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The denominations used and the boundaries shown on this map do not imply, on the part of the WFP, any judgment on the legal status of any territory or any endorsement or acceptance of such boundaries.





