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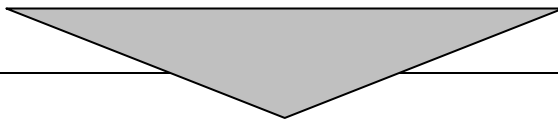
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SUMMARY REPORT OF THE MID-TERM EVALUATION OF COUNTRY PROGRAMME— MALI (1998–2002)

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Note to the Executive Board



This document is submitted for consideration to the Executive Board.

The Secretariat invites members of the Board who may have questions of a technical nature with regard to this document to contact the WFP staff focal points indicated below, preferably well in advance of the Board's meeting.

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Executive Summary



The aim of the evaluation was to assess whether WFP's Country Programme (CP) approach had been an effective tool for planning and delivering development assistance in Mali. The evaluation found that there was a strategic focus on the most vulnerable geographic areas and groups, and a certain degree of coherence and complementarity within the Mali CP. Nevertheless, the CP objectives are too general, making it difficult to evaluate if the activities are relevant or sufficient to achieve those objectives. The evaluation also found that the CP was compatible with Mali's national policy on food security, well integrated into the relevant government strategies and programmes, and consistent with WFP's Enabling Development policy. However, the institutional framework for managing the CP should be modified to better suit operational needs. In order to make food aid an effective tool for promoting long-term development, steps must be taken to ensure that the necessary complementary resources (funds, staff and other inputs) are provided. Finally, in light of the structural and cyclical food insecurity that characterizes the northern regions of Mali, food assistance to those areas should continue until cereal production is better protected from climatic hazards.

Draft Decision



The Board notes the recommendations contained in this evaluation report (WFP/EB.3/2001/6/6) and notes also the management action taken so far, as indicated in the associated information paper (WFP/EB.3/2001/INF/16). The Board encourages further action on these recommendations, taking into account considerations raised during the discussion.



RATIONALE FOR WFP FOOD AID

1. Mali is a vast, landlocked country located in sub-Saharan Africa, with a population of 9.8 million in 1998. It is one of the world's least developed countries (LDC), ranking 165th out of 174 countries on the UNDP Human Development Index (HDI) for 2000. It is very sparsely populated (7.5 persons/km²) and has a mainly rural population (71 percent). Its economy is based on the agriculture sector, which accounts for almost half of the gross domestic product (GDP). Sixty-nine percent of the population is estimated to live below the poverty line, with poverty concentrated mainly in rural areas (74 percent in 1998). However, while agriculture is the backbone of the national economy, the generosity of donor countries and agencies is one of the principal determinants of the level of gross national income.
2. Since 1994, the economy has experienced some recovery, with the gross national product (GNP) growing at about 5 percent per year. In 1998, the average annual per capita income was estimated to be US\$267. Agricultural production employs 80 percent of the country's population—a population that is relatively young (50 percent are under 15), growing rapidly (2.9 percent per year) and largely illiterate (62 percent). The gross school enrolment rate at the primary level has remained low, although there are signs of progress: the rate rose from 39 percent in 1994 to 55 percent in 2000. However, there remains a significant difference between the number of boys (60 percent) and girls (43 percent) enrolled.

SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

3. This report is based on the work of an evaluation mission that visited Mali between 6 January and 4 February 2001.¹ The aim of the evaluation was to assess whether the country programme approach had been an effective tool for planning and delivering WFP's development assistance in Mali, and to determine whether this strategy was likely to lead to better results than those from the project approach. Thus, the present analysis is not so much an evaluation of the individual basic and supplementary activities of the CP, but rather an assessment of the suitability and effectiveness of the country programme approach for promoting integration, concentration, coherence and flexibility—the main benefits expected from this new approach.

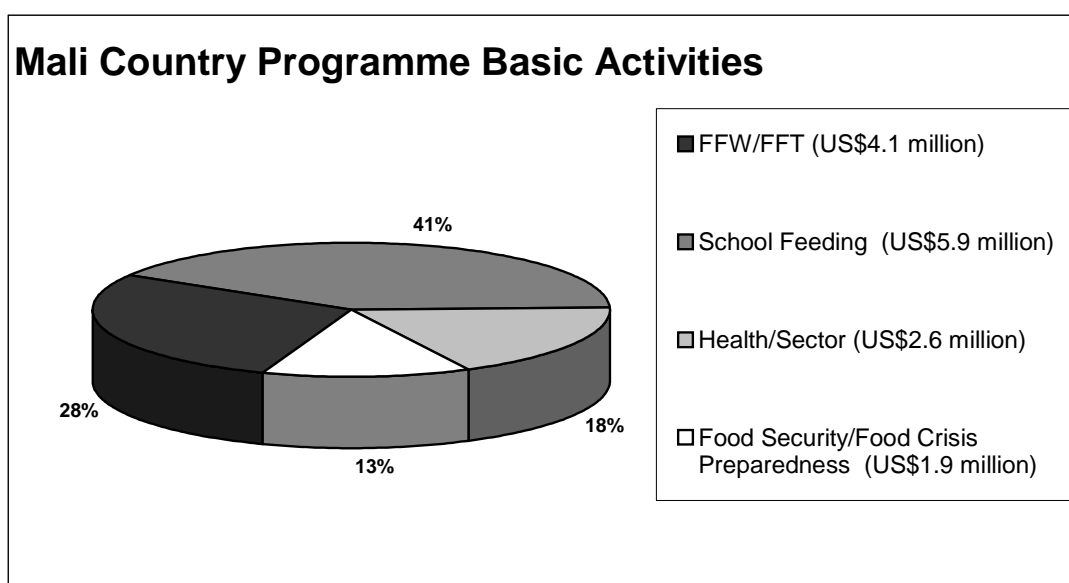
¹ The mission was composed of an economist as Team Leader (FAO), an agricultural economist as the national consultant, and a socio-anthropologist as the international consultant.



OVERVIEW OF THE COUNTRY PROGRAMME

Objectives of the Country Programme

4. It is difficult to assess the CP's medium- and long-term objectives, as they are not explicitly defined in the programme document. However, the Country Strategy Outline (CSO) proposed three strategic objectives, which were used as a point of reference during the evaluation. These are:
 - to cover local or general emergency food needs following natural disasters, to which the country is prone;
 - to strengthen the ability of populations to cope with climatic irregularities, mitigate the impact of disasters and survive in a difficult environment; and
 - to develop human resources by providing support to the education, health and nutrition sectors.
5. The CSO objectives are consistent with the Government's development priorities. However, they are too general to allow for an evaluation of the relevance and adequacy of the CP activities for achieving them. It is also difficult to assess if the activities were identified based on the comparative advantage of food aid.
6. The CP includes four basic activities:
 - Food for Work (FFW) and Food for Training (FFT);
 - School Feeding;
 - Support for the Health Sector; and
 - Food Security and Food Crisis Preparedness.
7. The graph below provides an overview of the budgetary allocation for each activity.



Integration, Concentration, Coherence and Flexibility

8. The main purposes of the country programme approach are fourfold:



- **Integration:** The CP's basic activities are consistent with and targeted to the stated strategic priorities of the Government and other United Nations agencies within the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF).
 - **Concentration:** Food aid is targeted to the poorest regions and the most food insecure households, and is used to support the most appropriate activities in a given socio-economic context.
 - **Coherence:** The main components of the CP are complementary and linked to one another, while ensuring external linkages to government and donor development activities.
 - **Flexibility:** Resources may be shifted among activities within a CP (at present 10 percent of the total CP budget).
9. It is thus necessary to examine the Mali CP in terms of its performance in these four areas.
10. The four CP activities are designed to facilitate the targeting of WFP food aid, and the main sphere of complementarity is geographic. Geographical targeting is based on a Famine Early Warning System (FEWS) analysis of the most vulnerable areas. However, in the absence of a more focused vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM) exercise in the northern regions, the targeting of beneficiaries responds more to the objectives and criteria established by WFP's implementing partners. The mission therefore notes that beneficiaries are better targeted at the regional level (the four northern regions) than at the community level, where the most vulnerable are not systematically identified or assisted.
11. Strategically, the CP activities are linked in the sense that they all complement the national development strategy. They also seem to be well integrated into the programmes of the relevant implementing ministries. However, no attempt appears to have been made to capitalize on the potential synergies among the different activities. The limited progress in this area seems to stem from the weak mechanisms for coordinating CP activities at the regional and central levels. The implementing ministries have not yet adopted a collaborative approach to operationalizing the CP. In the field, the result is the frequent compartmentalization of activities, as well as a lack of coordination (similar to the situation prior to adopting the CP approach).
12. The mission has noted that as the CP has been broadened to include school feeding and health-related activities (in addition to the previous rural development activities), priority is being given to targeting the most food insecure northern regions, disaster-prone areas and women. However, the fact that the CP objectives are not clear makes it difficult accurately to assess if the selected activities make optimal use of the comparative advantage of food aid, or if the distribution of resources among those activities is in line with CP priorities.
13. The mission concluded that the preparation of the first CP did not result in a clear development strategy or a completely coherent programme for WFP in Mali. Indeed, the CP appears to be a repackaging of existing projects, which continue to be designed, managed and monitored independently of one another. The mission feels that the next CSO and CP should be prepared more in the spirit intended by the country programme approach, with a more coherent, integrated and focused set of WFP activities. The objectives of the next CP should be clearly defined and quantified.



ASSESSMENT OF COUNTRY PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Funding and Resource Allocation Issues

14. The mission observed that there was some confusion within the country office over budget and financial matters, and that this hindered the CP's management and implementation. The country office feels that the current financial procedures have considerably reduced the flexibility that the CP approach is supposed to give the Country Director in terms of shifting resources between activities. In this respect, a serious constraint on WFP's ability to carry out development activities in Mali efficiently and effectively is linked to the amount of direct support costs (DSC) provided.
15. In the past, programme support and administrative funding provided the country office with the resources required for financing essential complementary inputs. However, DSC is now capped at a percentage of the value of the food programmed and actually delivered, so that the less food that is "called forward" and delivered, the less DSC funding is made available. As has been identified in earlier CP evaluation reports, there is no direct correlation between the technical support that may be required and the amount of food moved. Countries that were able to absorb only small quantities of food last year may need additional technical resources this year to increase their absorptive capacity.
16. There is another issue of fundamental importance. If food aid is to be useful in enabling long-term development, as distinct from satisfying short-term hunger, then the complementary resources required (both in quantity and quality) must be made available in a timely manner. For this to happen, it is worth emphasizing that donor countries need to ensure that they include in their commitments to WFP the necessary resources to cover the complementary inputs that the Executive Board has approved in the CP.

Recommendation

- ✍ WFP should ensure that CPs are allocated appropriate funding to prepare for and implement development activities in Mali.

Human Resources

17. Adequate human resources are also necessary to fulfil the core functions of planning and implementing development programmes (e.g. logistics, monitoring, gender and VAM). To meet the expectations laid out in the Enabling Development policy and ensure that country offices are equipped to carry out development activities properly, it is again recommended (as has been a common theme in previous CP evaluations) that WFP review and adjust the typical country office staffing profile for offices that manage CPs. The mission has found that, in the case of Mali, shortcomings in these areas have constrained CP preparation and implementation.
18. Because of the distinctive features of the current method for calculating DSC, the mission has noted that the staff responsible for planning and managing the programme, and those located in the field offices 1,500 km from Bamako, are financed through a protracted relief and recovery operation (PRRO). If the PRRO had not been extended recently, the contracts of those staff members would have been terminated. In addition, the frequent rotation of international staff seems to have considerable negative effects on the operational efficiency and effectiveness of the country office. Given the important but "unprogrammed" link between the CP and the PRRO, the mission believes that this



situation must be remedied if WFP intends to continue providing development assistance to Mali.

Recommendation

- ✎ The Operations Department should determine a suitable formula for assessing the number and profile of staff required (both national and international) to manage the Mali CP effectively, which is not linked to the amount of food moved.

Monitoring

19. The CP monitoring system allows for the collection of disaggregated data for all direct beneficiaries. Nevertheless, there is some confusion over the feasibility of monitoring longer-term performance indicators and the overall impact of food aid, which can be successful only if carried out over a long period of time (in some cases, many years). An additional observation is that monitoring remains limited and not very effective (especially the monitoring done by implementing partners), owing to inadequate resources, poor programme coordination and institutional problems.
20. Generally speaking, the evaluation mission noted that the current design of activities did not facilitate monitoring. This is explained by the fact that neither the monitoring systems nor indicators were clearly defined when the projects were designed. It is necessary that key stakeholders participate in the development of a plan to monitor performance. The identification of assumptions and the analysis of risk are other important areas that have been inadequately defined and monitored. In this respect, the mission feels that recent efforts to introduce a monitoring system should be continued and expanded.

Recommendation

- ✎ Training for the programme staff responsible for monitoring is an urgent necessity. The country office should arrange for such training to be given to all implementing partners as part of the preparation for the future CSO and CP.

Commitments to Women

21. Generally, those activities that directly benefit women have been taken into account when selecting interventions. While 23 percent of direct beneficiaries under the FFW-FFT component are women (the target is 25 percent), women are also benefiting indirectly in that the activities help to reduce their workload (building wells, boreholes, etc.) or increase the amount of food available in the home.
22. WFP requests that its development partners collect gender-disaggregated data for food distribution and on women beneficiaries in general. Some partners do not understand the rationale for this additional task. In view of this, awareness-raising and closer cooperation with certain implementing partners are necessary.
23. It is important to acknowledge that gender roles within the main ethnic groups in Mali are not well understood by WFP, particularly in terms of food security and survival methods. Therefore, in the absence of reliable information on this subject, it is advisable not to apply the gender equity guidelines for the distribution of food commodities too superficially or routinely. For example, well-digging in Mali is carried out by men, who



are then the direct beneficiaries of the food assistance. As this work is considered too heavy for women, they would benefit only indirectly in this case.

Recommendation

- ✍ Collect and analyse gender-disaggregated data on roles, resources and responsibilities within the main groups that benefit from WFP food aid.

Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (VAM) and Cereals Market Restructuring Programme (PRMC)

24. VAM presents another issue to be resolved. An important indicator of the relevance of the CSO/CP is an accurate analysis of national and sub-national food insecurity and vulnerability—a hunger analysis. At present, responsibility for VAM is assigned to the PRMC. Aside from its effectiveness as a food security system, the PRMC has succeeded in the difficult task of integrating a network of multi-disciplinary activities, ranging from the continuous collection and analysis of vulnerability data to emergency operations in the field. The pooling of donor resources, without identifying individual contributions, is another exceptional feature of the PRMC. Although some of the original donor countries no longer provide commodities to the PRMC, they continue to participate as active members in this forum for discussion and reflection, which in turn facilitates the planning of development interventions.
25. Vulnerability monitoring in the areas where WFP is operating is carried out periodically and is based on analyses done within the framework of FEWS. In view of this, the mission feels that a VAM analysis should focus on identifying the causes of and the populations affected by structural vulnerability, thereby allowing WFP to refine its geographic, sectoral and beneficiary targeting. The results of the VAM exercise currently being conducted should be made available prior to the preparation of the CP to allow WFP to achieve "ideal targeting" and make "optimal choices" of beneficiaries in the context of partner availability and actual field conditions.

Recommendations

- ✍ WFP's contribution to the PRMC undeniably constitutes its most important development contribution towards ensuring food security in Mali. The Programme should therefore continue to contribute to and actively participate in this forum.
- ✍ In future, VAM should collect and analyse specific complementary data to assist in more accurately defining the characteristics of WFP's target populations.

Government Involvement and Support

26. Government involvement in and sense of responsibility for the CP are quite remarkable. Nevertheless, the efficiency and effectiveness of programme management and activity implementation by line ministries are limited by the current institutional framework and unsuitable intervention modalities. The institutional framework corresponds to the previous situation in which the only government implementing partner for WFP activities was the Ministry for Rural Development. Although other line ministries are now involved, this ministry continues to coordinate CP activities. The situation is not ideal, as the ministry is in the position of both deciding upon and benefiting from the allocation of CP resources.



27. It should be noted that a limited understanding of the country programme concept on the part of some key partners, and the general coordination difficulties discussed above, have made it difficult to set up the new CP effectively. WFP should be proactive in informing its partners of the nature and impact of the new arrangements, including the legal implications of the institutional framework and the new modalities for cooperation. Training of key partners should be considered. The new programme approach also warrants more intensive and participatory communication between WFP staff and relevant government officials, thereby improving the exchange of information.

Recommendations

- ✍ The institutional framework for the CP should be re-examined in order to ensure the integrated formulation, planning and management of activities, sufficient involvement of the concerned ministries, and efficient and effective coordination at all levels.
- ✍ It is also advisable for the Ministry for Rural Development to convene the first meeting of the coordination committee and to organize a workshop to inform government partners of WFP's new approach.

Integration into CCA/UNDAF and the Programmes of Bilateral Donors

28. The mission noted that the preparation of the CSO and CP was carried out as part of the reform of the United Nations system, which included introducing the country programme approach as a tool for all United Nation agencies. In Mali, the CSO and CP are based on the analysis presented in the Country Strategy Note. The mission also noted that the development of the CP considerably enhanced WFP's participation in the UNDAF process.

Partnerships and Their Effectiveness

29. The large number and variety of implementing partners operating in Mali are a significant asset that has allowed WFP to operate in a number of locations over the vast area of the four northern regions. However, this situation has created some problems. Many of these partners are local NGOs with limited funds and human resources. This has made it difficult to ensure the coordination and collaboration needed for sustainable projects, or to ensure adequate monitoring and reporting according to WFP's requirements
30. Moreover, these implementing partners are often inadequately informed of WFP's policies and objectives, which limits their ability to target food aid effectively. The mission also noted that the large number of implementing partners (more than 40), which have widely varying financial and human capacity, and which in some cases have programmes that are not very compatible with WFP's objectives, has led to scattered interventions that seem to exist more by accident than by design.

Recommendations

- ✍ The partnerships established between WFP and its various non-governmental stakeholders are indispensable and should be maintained. However, the number of partners should be reduced for the sake of efficiency. Criteria for selecting suitable partners to implement the CP activities should be established, taking into account: (i) their financial and technical capabilities; and (ii) the compatibility of their objectives and approaches with those of WFP.



- ✎ Implementing partner staff must be thoroughly informed about WFP policies and guidelines, as well as financial and administrative practices.

Compatibility with the Enabling Development Policy

31. The mission noted that the objectives of the CP and its component activities were compatible with WFP's Enabling Development policy. It should also be noted that, although almost all of the CP activities were designed before the development of the new policy, the country office has gone to great efforts to adapt the activities where necessary.
32. The mission observed that insufficient attention was given during the design of the activities to ensuring that the assets created were sustainable or to defining appropriate exit strategies for WFP assistance. Moreover, there is still work to be done to ensure true compliance by the CP with all aspects of the Enabling Development policy. This will be possible only by establishing solid and ongoing contacts with the Government, principal stakeholders (beneficiaries, community organizations, traditional leaders and local administrations) and potential partners (NGOs, other United Nations agencies and bilateral donors).

Recommendations

- ✎ Future formulation of the goals and objectives of the CSO and CP must be based on a more thorough participatory approach.
- ✎ Country office staff and their main partners in Mali should be trained in the preparation of a logical framework before developing the next CSO, CP and component activities.
- ✎ WFP's development role in Mali should be more clearly articulated, and an exit strategy for each CP activity should be formulated. It is also necessary to clearly establish long-term goals, and immediate objectives, and to identify activities that will allow for the attainment of those objectives.

ASSESSMENT OF ACTIVITIES AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO CP OBJECTIVES

33. As stated earlier, the objectives proposed in the CSO are too general to enable an evaluation of the activities' contribution towards achieving them. This is recognized as a limitation of the following analysis.

Food for Work and Food for Training (6146.00)

34. This activity is in line with the Government's strategy (supported by UNDP) for sustainable human development in Mali's northern regions and fits in with current programmes aimed at improving living conditions by alleviating food insecurity and poverty. The objectives of this activity are to reduce poverty by increasing agricultural production and to increase work opportunities and household incomes, mainly by targeting rural women.
35. The mission feels that the logic linking the immediate and longer-term objectives of this component is unclear, translating the component into a series of scattered interventions that are producing limited results. While the actual interventions seem to meet the rural



development requirements of the target populations, the synergy between them needs to be strengthened. In order for food aid to have a significant effect, substantial changes are needed regarding the formulation of objectives, the identification of projects, the choice of partners and project monitoring. Substantial improvements should likewise be considered in terms of consistency between the FFW and FFT activities and the other CP components. Nevertheless, WFP's support to these activities appears to be justified in the short and medium term.

Recommendations

- ✍ The country office should organize meetings with other United Nations partners to create a better understanding of WFP's development objectives and activities.
- ✍ The potential complementarities between the CP components should be identified during the development of the next CSO and CP.
- ✍ Complementary inputs for the creation of assets under FFW should be systematically planned in order to ensure their success and sustainability.
- ✍ The number of implementing partners should be reduced.

School Feeding (06267.0—former WIS no. 6267.00)

36. In the area of education, the CP is in line with the objectives of the Ten-year Education Programme, as well as with the approach of other development partners and donors. The long-term objective of this component is to support government efforts to increase the enrolment rate from 44 percent in 1997 to 75 percent by 2008, with emphasis on girls' education. The immediate objectives are to contribute to children's nutrition in food-insecure areas; increase school attendance and reduce the drop-out rate, especially for girls; increase enrolment levels in underprivileged rural areas by at least 5 percent for boys and 5.5 percent for girls; and sustain the increase in girls' enrolment, particularly at the primary-school level.
37. Overall, school attendance rates have increased as a result of WFP's food assistance. However, this achievement will not be sustainable if more attention is not paid to addressing the following problems: low participation of the parents and students associations (PSAs) in the project management committees (especially when the school headmaster is the chairman); poor participation by women in project management committees; and occasional pipeline breaks at the school level.
38. For this component, WFP has a large number of partners that are well informed about social conditions and have considerable experience in mobilizing communities. This situation has made it easier for WFP to manage the component than, for example, the FFW and FFT component. However, there are considerable differences among the implementing partners in terms of their staffing, financial and material capacities. While a certain degree of potential synergy with other CP components exists, the results achieved so far are limited owing to the fact that a number of implementing partners do not have the necessary skills or resources.



Recommendations

- ✎ Emphasis should be placed on training PSAs and management committees in order to increase their involvement in the management of school feeding.
- ✎ Food should be delivered to the schools before the start of each term.
- ✎ It is advisable to set up a more effective system for monitoring logistics down to the school level.
- ✎ In the context of an exit strategy and where reliable partners are present, WFP should encourage PSAs to undertake income-generating activities.

Support for the Health Sector (05942.0—former WIS no. 5942.00)

39. This activity was designed as a pilot project. Its long-term objective is to contribute to improving the health and nutrition of the target populations while improving environmental health and access to health care services. The immediate objectives are: to encourage women of childbearing age to use Community Health Centres (CHCs) and District Health Centres (DHCs), and to take better care of their and their children's nutritional and health status; to improve health service coverage by mobilizing communities to build CHCs and repair DHCs; and to support sanitation services for the cities of Djenné, Gao, Mopti and Timbuktu by setting up a waste collection system, and building wells and latrines for health centres and the Gao hospital. These objectives are in support of the Government's long-term goal in this sector.
40. Owing to a series of difficulties—which include inadequate consultations between the country office and the Ministry of Health regarding the component's objectives, activities and implementation strategies—this activity did not get under way until 2000. A technical mission reviewed the component in May 2000 and proposed that it be re-oriented to correspond better with the principles of the Enabling Development policy. The mission also proposed that a food technology specialist be recruited to develop a supplementary food product that could be produced locally.
41. With regard to the CHC component, monitoring data indicate that WFP's support has contributed to an increase in the use of health centres. However, part of that increase is linked to the arrival in the area of foreigners who are more attracted by the food assistance than by the health care services. Another issue is that, as a result of a mobile and sparse population, some implementing partners have expressed doubts about the viability of the CHCs in certain areas of northern Mali. They are recommending that a more suitable approach be developed, in consultation with district leaders and tribal chiefs.
42. It is necessary to point out that while the 100 percent targeting of women is in line with WFP policy requirements, this does not necessarily mean that the project objectives are being obtained or that a significant portion of the overall target population is being reached. A high attendance rate at CHCs does not necessarily result in better use of health care services. While there is a clear link between attendance at CHCs and food distribution, the link is much weaker between attendance and the provision of health care services.
43. The sustainability of the CHC component is based primarily on local participation in maintaining and managing the assets created. Ownership of those assets also depends on the organizational ability of the beneficiaries, which is linked to adopting a truly participative approach that includes the PSAs, the CHCs and the community as a whole.



44. The sanitation component is not completely in line with the objectives of the Enabling Development policy. It is difficult to identify the productive assets being created and the institutional procedures for managing and maintaining them. This poses a real problem in terms of sustainability. It seems that the sanitation problem in secondary cities was not well assessed by WFP when the component was designed. Since then, experience has shown that food aid is yielding limited results in the absence of an integrated urban sanitation plan, adequate sanitation facilities and investment. Awareness-raising campaigns should have been conducted before the project began, and the commitment of city officials and other partners confirmed. For this component, WFP has not succeeded in securing adequate inputs of implementing partners.
45. It seems that the Ministry of Health has not been sufficiently involved in the design and development of the health/nutrition component. The mission is of the opinion that this component was inadequately designed and negotiated and that the ensuing difficulties are a result of this. In view of the Government's objectives in this area, a number of corrective actions are possible, which are not necessarily those that are being pursued. It is also necessary to point out that the promotion and distribution of a supplementary flour on the local market poses a series of logistical and organizational problems (e.g involving adequate supervision, appropriate nutritional content and quality assurance). It also raises a question of principle—whether or not the flour should be free—that needs to be addressed.

Recommendations

- ✍ The health component (CHC) should be halted and an alternative project in this sector be considered that is more grounded in current reality (for example, an intervention in the area of HIV/AIDS).
- ✍ The PSAs and the management committees should be supported through training and awareness-raising activities, and income-generating activities should be promoted to sustain the school feeding activities.
- ✍ The sanitation activity should be initiated in an area where conditions are more suitable (for example, in Djenné, where the population is sufficiently motivated and UNICEF is active).
- ✍ In the context of the recommendations of the technical review mission, the country office should assess the feasibility of producing and distributing a supplementary food product in northern Mali.

Food Security (PRMC) and Food Crisis Preparedness (6145)

46. This activity is reviewed in paragraphs 23–24.

CONCLUSION

47. It is clear that in the medium term, the structural and cyclical food insecurity afflicting the northern regions of Mali will continue to limit severely the ability of the population to



promote its own economic development. This situation of chronic and acute food insecurity and the resulting extreme vulnerability of the population are undermining traditional coping mechanisms. For this reason, the mission is of the opinion that the geographic concentration of WFP activities and the emphasis placed on activities in the areas of education and training and those aimed at controlling water flows, protecting agricultural and pastoral lands, diversifying crops and preparing for food deficits, are justified. In conclusion, food assistance in northern Mali should be continued until cereal production is adequately protected against climatic hazards.

48. The mission concludes that there are three areas in which food aid to Mali has a definite comparative advantage: (i) support to the education sector in order to improve access to education and increase enrolment and attendance rates, with particular emphasis on girls; (ii) support to programmes for setting up hydro-agricultural projects, soil and water preservation, and the regeneration and protection of arable land; and (iii) food crisis prevention and preparedness (i.e. assistance to the PRMC). At the same time, special attention must continue to be given to correcting the gender inequities and the uneven regional economic development in the areas where WFP is operating.



ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

CCA	Common country assessment
CHC	Community Health Centre
CP	Country programme
CSO	Country strategy outline
DHC	District Health Centre
DSC	Direct support costs
FEWS	Famine Early Warning System
FFT	Food for Training
FFW	Food for Work
GDP	Gross domestic product
GNP	Gross national product
HDI	Human development index
LDC	Least developed country
PRMC	Cereals Market and Construction Programme
PRRO	Protracted relief and recovery operation
PSA	Parents and Students Association
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
VAM	Vulnerability analysis and mapping

