

برنامج  
الغذية  
العالمي



Programme  
Alimentaire  
Mondial

World  
Food  
Programme

Programa  
Mundial  
de Alimentos

**Executive Board  
Annual Session**

**Rome, 27 - 30 May 1996**

# **SUMMARY OF THE WORK OF THE ANNUAL SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD**

**E**

Distribution: GENERAL  
**WFP/EB.A/96/12**  
10 October 1996  
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

**SUMMARY OF THE WORK OF THE  
MEETING**

---

---

## **SUMMARY**

1. The Annual Session of the Executive Board was chaired by H.E. Béatrice Damiba (Burkina Faso).
2. The Session's agenda was adopted as proposed in documents WFP/EB.A/96/1 and WFP/EB.A/96/1/Corr.1. The agenda items were discussed in the following sequence: 1, 2, 4, 7, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11.
3. The appointment of Ms. Ginette Saint-Cyr (Canada) as Rapporteur of the Annual Session was confirmed by the Board.

### **Annual Report of the Executive Director (1996/1)**

4. In adopting the Annual Report, the Board praised the clarity of the document and generally agreed that it addressed the right issues. While considering the report, the Board emphasized the importance of:
  - a) ensuring that adequate resources be available, particularly for development activities but also for relief operations, striving for an appropriate balance between these;
  - b) continuing to focus on the poorest people in the neediest countries, particularly in countries emerging from disasters;
  - c) developing WFP's partnerships further with other United Nations agencies, bilateral donors, NGOs and local institutions;
  - d) preserving the multilateral nature of WFP;
  - e) giving greater importance to health and nutrition issues in WFP's development activities; and
  - f) continuing its efforts in disaster prevention and preparedness.
5. The Board appreciated WFP's strategy for an orderly phasing-out of operations in non-LDC/non-LIFD countries and noted that that should be done in a prudent manner, which would ensure that WFP's obligations in projects in their final phase of implementation be properly met.
6. The Board underlined the need for opportunities to discuss and give guidance on policy issues, and felt that the report should more clearly identify areas that might need to be addressed at future sessions of the Board. The following issues were mentioned for future policy discussions: monetization, directed multilateral funding, nutrition, role of women, phasing-out strategy.
7. The Board welcomed the emphasis given to improvements in the financial systems.



## Reports to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

### 8. Parts I, II, and III

The three reports were discussed together and approved by the Board with the recommendation that they be submitted to the Council. In reviewing the reports, the Board made the following comments:

- a) Follow-up to the implementation of General Assembly resolutions 44/211, 47/199 and 50/120 - Triennial policy review (1996/2)

The Secretariat was commended for its efforts in improving inter-agency coordination, noting in particular WFP's support to the Resident Coordinator system; the importance to link, where possible, WFP's country programming with Country Strategy Notes (CSNs) was stressed; and appreciation for WFP's follow-up to its commitments resulting from the Beijing Summit was expressed.

- b) Follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/50 - Collaboration with the Bretton Woods institutions (1996/3)

The Board took note of the steps taken by the Secretariat to strengthen collaboration with the Bretton Woods institutions, and particularly with the World Bank. It appreciated the many examples of existing cooperation in development, rehabilitation and emergency projects.

- c) Follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/51 - Overall guidance on operational activities for development to the United Nations funds and programmes (1996/4)

The Board expressed satisfaction with WFP's initiatives in evaluation and monitoring, in particular the current orientation towards the impact on beneficiaries and the sustainability of projects. It noted that evaluation could further assist national governments in the management of projects and welcomed the training of national counterparts through WFP-sponsored workshops.

9. Part IV - Follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/56: Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (1996/5)

10. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Ms. Sadako Ogata, participated in part of the discussion under this agenda item. The Board also benefited from the participation of a representative of DHA.

11. The Board commended the Secretariat for a thought-provoking document outlining the role and operational responsibilities of WFP in providing humanitarian assistance, presenting options for future roles, and identifying gaps in the emergency response process. It acknowledged WFP's comparative advantages in many areas listed in the



document and stressed the importance of capitalizing on WFP's strengths, particularly in areas that were within its mandate as articulated in the Mission Statement.

12. The Board provided preliminary comments on the proposed expansion of WFP's roles in areas such as transport and logistics, resourcing and delivery of essential non-food inputs, and requested that information be provided on the capacity and cost implications for WFP assuming wider responsibilities. It requested that further analysis of the policy, operational and financial implications of those proposals be carried out prior to its October session. It cautioned against the introduction of new or expanded activities that could possibly not be sustained due to lack of funding, or which could divert resources and attention away from WFP's primary roles.
13. The Board commented as follows on specific topics and proposals contained in the document:
14. The Board recognized WFP's dual mandate of providing both relief and development assistance as its major strength. It noted that the Programme was in the unique position of not only being able to respond quickly to emergency situations, but also to encourage the transition from relief to rehabilitation and development.
15. The Board noted that cooperation and coordination with other agencies could be reinforced through discussions leading to the development of Memoranda of Understanding, such as the one between WFP and UNHCR. It considered the Consolidated Appeal Process as a valuable contribution to promote coordination.
16. The Board recognized the need for clear institutional responsibility to ensure the protection and material requirements of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and for the appointment of an operational lead agency responsible for coordination at the field level at the onset of a complex emergency. It deferred a definitive recommendation on those issues at this stage of the debate.
17. The Board acknowledged the issue of responsibility and accountability for end distribution of food to refugees as one that was particularly sensitive, given the respective mandates of WFP and UNHCR. It encouraged the two agencies to continue consultations on that matter as well as on the issues of census and accurate registration of refugee populations in the context of ongoing revisions of the WFP/UNHCR Memorandum of Understanding.
18. The Board felt that the possible extension of WFP's role in transport and logistics to cover the delivery of humanitarian assistance on behalf of other organizations required further consideration. It requested an analysis of WFP's transport and logistic costs, including the potential for cost-savings resulting from infrastructure development activities, to enable the Board to fully appreciate the Programme's comparative advantage in that area.
19. The Board also addressed the questions of WFP's competence in the field of procurement and transport of non-food items, including seeds, in support of the work of other organizations. The Board considered that consultations with partner agencies on those issues should continue.



20. The Board encouraged WFP to continue its efforts in strengthening indigenous capacities to better enable populations to deal with emergencies and to support rehabilitation and recovery efforts.
21. Concern was raised with regard to the recognition of the sovereignty of states in connection with assistance provided to IDPs without the specific request of a government, or in areas where there was no clear government authority. The Secretariat clarified that, in accordance with WFP's General Regulations, the Programme could provide humanitarian relief assistance at the request of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and stressed that WFP assistance in such exceptional cases would be fully coordinated with the United Nations system and NGO efforts.

### **Report of the Executive Board to ECOSOC and the FAO Council on the activities of the Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes (CFA) in 1995 (1996/6)**

22. The Board considered that the report correctly reflected the decisions taken by the CFA in 1995 and agreed that it be transmitted to the two Councils.

### **Reform and revitalization measures in the World Food Programme (1996/7)**

23. The Board expressed its satisfaction with the wide-ranging reform initiatives undertaken in WFP over the last several years and noted the leadership it had shown in that regard. It suggested that additional reform measures, which were to be considered in the years ahead, be included in Strategic and Financial Plans. The Executive Director agreed that changes in the wording of the document, as suggested by the Board, be incorporated before its transmission to ECOSOC and the FAO Council.

### **Resource and financial matters: Budgetary performance report 1994-95 (1996/8)**

24. The Board took note of the steps taken by the Secretariat to improve WFP's financial management and commended it for the cost savings achieved during the biennium. The Board was satisfied with the clarifications provided by the Secretariat on a number of specific points it had raised. While appreciating the low overall programme support and administrative expenditures and encouraging the Secretariat to pursue further its efforts in that area, it noted that that should be done in a way that would not affect the quality of the delivery of programmes.

### **Composition of WFP international professional staff (1996/9)**

25. The Board expressed its appreciation for the transparency of the information provided in the document. It asked the Secretariat to report annually on progress made towards attaining the United Nations target of a professional staff gender balance by the year 2000, and towards geographical balance. Suggestions on ways to improve future reports were noted by the Secretariat.



**Status report: Provisional WFP headquarters building (1996/10)**

26. The Board acknowledged the unacceptable condition of the WFP headquarters building, as described in the Secretariat's documents and corroborated by tours of the building by delegates. It requested that consultations with the Italian authorities be continued along the lines recommended by the Board with a view to presenting concrete proposals, entailing a definitive solution, at the Third Regular Session in October 1996. It offered to assist the Secretariat further, as required, in the pursuit of that matter.

**Enhancing the internal oversight mechanisms in operational funds and programmes (1996/11).**

27. The Board took note of the draft report of the Secretary-General and expressed its appreciation for WFP having already established its own Office of Inspection and Investigation. It also acknowledged that the Programme was already implementing five of the report's eight recommendations and acting on the others. It requested the Executive Director to inform the Secretary-General accordingly.

**Revision of WFP's Financial Regulations and General Regulations (1996/12)**

28. The Board agreed that the open-ended working group established for the revision of the Financial and General Regulations should assume its work on the basis of the proposed work plan and timetable.



