

برنامج
الأغذية
العالمي



Programme
Alimentaire
Mondial

World
Food
Programme

Programa
Mundial
de Alimentos

**Executive Board
Third Regular Session**

Rome, 19 - 22 October 1998

**SUMMARY OF THE WORK OF THE
THIRD REGULAR SESSION OF THE
EXECUTIVE BOARD, 1998**

E

Distribution: GENERAL

WFP/EB.3/98/14

1 February 1999

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
POLICY ISSUES	
1998/EB.3/1 WFP and the environment—issues and priorities	4
FINANCIAL AND BUDGETARY MATTERS	
1998/EB.3/2 Audited Biennial Accounts (1996–97)—Financial Statements and Recommendations of the External Auditor	4
1998/EB.3/3 Report of the Office of the Inspector-General (August 1996 to December 1997)	6
1998/EB.3/4 Report on budgetary performance (1996–97)	6
1998/EB.3/5 Report of the Formal Working Group on the Review of WFP's Resource and Long-term Financing policies	7
EVALUATION REPORTS	
1998/EB.3/6 a) Niger 2072.03—Support for mother and child health (MCH) activities and nutritional rehabilitation and education	8
b) Tajikistan 5253.00—Emergency food aid for vulnerable groups	8
c) Summary report of the tripartite (UNICEF/UNHCR/WFP) study of the Great Lakes emergency operation	8
OPERATIONAL MATTERS	
1998/EB.3/7 Country Strategy Outline—Benin	9
1998/EB.3/8 Country Strategy Outline—Chad	9
1998/EB.3/9 Country Strategy Outline—Guinea	10
1998/EB.3/10 Country Strategy Outline—Uganda	10
1998/EB.3/11 Country Programme—Kenya (1999–2003)	11
1998/EB.3/12 Country Programme—Mali (1999–2002)	12
1998/EB.3/13 Country Programme—Niger (1999–2002)	12
1998/EB.3/14 Development project for Executive Board approval—Ecuador 3096.02	13
1998/EB.3/15 Protracted relief and recovery operation for Executive Board approval—Afghanistan 6064.00	13
1998/EB.3/16 Protracted relief and recovery operation for Executive Board approval—Cambodia 6038.00	13
1998/EB.3/17 Protracted relief and recovery operation for Executive Board approval—Nepal 5324.03	14
1998/EB.3/18 Development and quick action projects approved by the Executive Director, 1 January–30 June 1998	14
1998/EB.3/20 Basic activities within approved Country Programmes, approved by the Executive Director, 1 January–30 June 1998	14
1998/EB.3/23 Progress reports on approved projects	14
ORGANIZATIONAL AND PROCEDURAL MATTERS	
1998/EB.3/24 Programme of work for 1999	15
1998/EB.3/25 Report of the Working Group on Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board	15



1998/EB.3/26	Report of the Working Group on the Distribution of Seats	15
SUMMARIES OF THE WORK OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD		
1998/EB.3/27	Summary of the work of the Second Regular Session of 1998 of the Executive Board	16
1998/EB.3/28	Summary of the work of the Annual Session of 1998 of the Executive Board	16
OTHER BUSINESS		
	Proposal by the Bureau of the Executive Board on the provision of passive Russian interpretation	16
	Report of the Executive Board members' visit to Ethiopia	17
	Briefing by the Deputy Executive Director on his visit to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea	17
	Progress towards the Renegotiation of the Food Aid Convention	18
	Presidency of the Executive Board	18
	Matters raised by the Executive Director	18



POLICY ISSUES

WFP and the environment—issues and priorities (1998/EB.3/1)

1. The Board welcomed the document “WFP and the environment—issues and priorities”, noting the importance of the issues raised and the need for WFP to be proactive in addressing environmental concerns.
2. The Board emphasized coordination and working in partnership, especially through mechanisms such as the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and the Consolidated Appeal Process. It appreciated the fact that WFP’s approach was consistent with that of other organizations. The Board also expressed appreciation for WFP’s support for inter-agency coordination of environmental responses.
3. The following issues were stressed: the importance of capacity-building, the role and responsibilities of national governments, and follow-up training. It was noted that these issues should appear prominently in the operational guidelines for the planning and implementation of environmental activities. WFP was asked to prepare those by the end of 1998.
4. The Board urged WFP to be proactive throughout its activities; in particular, in carrying out environmental assessments and seeking to do more than minimize negative impacts. It emphasized the importance of socio-economic dimensions in environmental impact reviews and assessments, and the incorporation of participatory approaches in environmental and social impact assessment and planning.
5. The Programme was asked to minimize the use of hazardous substances and to phase out as rapidly as possible the use of all hazardous chemicals. It was also noted that donors should provide commodities of appropriate age and quality to WFP in order to assure the distribution of energy-efficient products to beneficiaries.
6. The Board emphasized that, while it was essential to integrate environmental concerns into the design of emergency operations, the needs of beneficiaries must remain the primary concern. The Board also stressed that the attention given to environmental questions should not become an obstacle to the effectiveness and efficiency of food aid. This requires that food aid provided to beneficiaries should be of appropriate age to minimize energy requirements for cooking, to be of adequate nutritional standard and to be free from contamination.

FINANCIAL AND BUDGETARY MATTERS

Audited biennial accounts (1996–97)—Financial statements and recommendations of the External Auditor (1998/EB.3/2)

7. The Secretariat presented the financial report and statements (audited accounts) for the biennium 1996–97 to the Executive Board. The document included the report of the External Auditor and the Secretariat’s responses to the External Auditor’s recommendations on the 1994–95 and 1996–97 accounts. The Secretariat drew the



Board's attention to the three items recommended for approval in this document, detailed in paragraph 40 of the Executive Director's statement, i.e., that the Board:

- a) approve the 1996-97 biennial financial statements of WFP, together with the report of the External Auditor, pursuant to General Regulation XIV.6 (b);
 - b) formally approve the self-insurance scheme of WFP and endorse the Executive Director's approval of a special account for self-insurance; and
 - c) **allow new direct contributions to the Financial Management Improvement Programme (FMIP) to be applied to the implementation of the programme and that repayment of the US\$10 million advance be deferred until such time as FMIP has been fully funded.**
8. The Board noted with appreciation the comprehensive nature of the document and the inclusion, for the first time at this stage of the biennium, of a table detailing management's response and actions taken to date or planned in response to the External Auditor's recommendations on the 1996-97 biennial accounts.
 9. The Board reviewed and discussed the recommendations of the External Auditor, taking particular note of the observations regarding contributions receivable, employment of consultants, internal control over country office accounting, government counterpart cash contributions, procurement issues and cost categorization.
 10. The Board requested the Secretariat to provide explanations regarding WFP's increased levels of cash and reserves, and increased Programme Support and Administration (PSA) expenditure in a time of decreased income. The Secretariat provided details and referred the Board to the explanations on cash and reserves given in paragraphs 18 to 25 of the Executive Director's statement. The questions on levels of expenditure were deferred to the review of the budgetary performance report.
 11. The Board requested further details on WFP's investment policies, and the value of WFP's investments after the recent turmoil in the investment markets. The Secretariat explained WFP's investment policy, the fact that WFP's investments were in fixed-term deposits with major banks, and the forthcoming changes which had been agreed with FAO.
 12. The Secretariat provided detailed explanations of the recommendation regarding self-insurance accounting, including the External Auditor's observation on this item. The Board pointed out that the self-insurance scheme had already been approved by the CFA, and agreed to reconfirm this approval. The Board agreed to endorse the Executive Director's approval of a special account for self-insurance.
 13. The Board discussed the issue of FMIP funding and requested clarifications from the Secretariat as to why the Secretariat preferred not to fund FMIP fully at this stage. The Secretariat explained that it wished to allow for the possibility of further voluntary contributions to FMIP. The Board agreed with the recommendation of allowing new direct contributions to FMIP to be applied to the implementation of the programme, and that repayment of the 10 million dollars advance be deferred until such time as FMIP had been fully funded. However, the Board requested that the Secretariat propose a mechanism for the full funding of FMIP for consideration and approval in early 1999.



Report of the Office of the Inspector-General (August 1996 to December 1997) (1998/EB.3/3)

14. The Board noted with appreciation that the work of the Office of the Inspector-General (OEDI) had contributed to improving accountability and confidence-building among donors and beneficiaries in the work of WFP.
15. Representatives encouraged future cooperation with host governments, and continued collaboration between WFP and the NGO community. The Board acknowledged the value of multilateral coordination on the part of Member States assisting the Office of the Inspector-General. It commended the Office's coordination with other United Nations oversight bodies.
16. The Board called for continued awareness-building of the function within WFP, and of lessons learned by the Inspector-General, especially in the light of decentralization. Representatives requested that OEDI place emphasis on the loss of food in transit and staff security, and take steps to encourage staff, at all levels, to report wrongdoing.
17. The Board expressed appreciation for the work of the previous Inspector-General.

Report on budgetary performance 1996–97 (1998/EB.3/4)

18. The report was presented for information to the Board, in accordance with General Regulation XIV.4. Representatives welcomed the new format of the document, and cited its usefulness in giving a clear overview of the handling of WFP's resources and expenditure during the 1996-97 biennium. It was suggested that results-based reporting would be a useful addition to future reports of this nature.
19. Some representatives raised queries over the level of WFP's cash liquidity, and sought explanation on the distinction between cash balances and reserves. Clarifications were also requested regarding WFP's internal transport, storage and handling (ITSH), and landside transport, storage and handling (LTSH) rates and modalities, and related accounting practices, particularly with regard to the treatment of obligations. It was suggested that both issues might be placed on the agenda of a future session, so that representatives could gain more informative insight into WFP's business and budgetary practices.
20. The Board raised the questions of the lack of absorptive capacity and structures in developing countries, and what concrete measures WFP might be in a position to take to effect improvements in this regard, bearing in mind the commitment of recipient governments to shoulder at least some degree of costs. With a number of cluster offices in place for over a year and in recognition of the valuable role played by those offices in managing complex emergency operations directly from the field—coupled with the ability to mount quick interventions—it was considered timely to conduct a review aimed at determining the savings resulting from increased cost-efficiency. Representatives welcomed the proposal that such a review would be carried out by WFP.
21. Some representatives raised questions on the indirect support cost imbalance for 1996-97. The Secretariat assured the Board that all outstanding income to meet the foreseen level was being processed within the applicable WFP systems. Explanations were sought and received on a number of PSA issues, including the reason for which the amount of PSA expenditure in 1996–97 seemed higher in comparison to that of the previous biennium. The Board noted that the introduction of the new Resource and Long-



term Financing policies at the start of 1996 brought into the 1996-97 PSA extra-budgetary items previously covered outside the 1994-95 PSA.

22. Some representatives noted the need for an appropriate balance of resource sharing among regions, taking into account WFP's primary mission of focusing its food assistance programmes on the poorest of the poor.

Report of the Working Group on the Review of WFP'S Resource and Long-term Financing policies (1998/EB.3/5)

23. The Chairman of the Formal Working Group (FWG) on the Review of WFP's Resource and Long-term Financing (R<F) policies introduced the report. He emphasized that the report addressed the realities of WFP as a voluntarily funded organization, and recommended continuation of the principle of full-cost recovery by donors, and only marginal changes to the policies which had been in operation since 1996.
24. He reported that the FWG had reached consensus on many of the procedural and operational recommendations. However, the membership was not in a position to approve the recommendations at this session of the Board, as a major donor had not agreed to full-cost recovery. Some representatives had requested time to enable that donor to join the consensus.
25. Several representatives expressed support for the report and stressed the importance of its recommendations for WFP's efficiency and effectiveness. They drew attention to the large amount of time and effort which members of the FWG had invested over the last year in the review of R<F policies. They recognized the need for unanimity, but wanted this to be reached by a realistic deadline, no later than the Board's First Regular Session of 1999.
26. The President invited the aforementioned donor to inform the meeting of its position. The donor said that it hoped to reach agreement with the United Nations system on indirect support costs (ISC) within the first half of November, but there were a number of points to be resolved. Other United Nations Funds and Programmes had core budgets as the basis of operations, while WFP did not. The proposal of this donor to the United Nations system was that its contribution provide for ISC on a sliding scale, with some of the ISC being met by the Funds and Programmes through their core budgets.
27. In discussing the proposal with the United Nations system, the donor would concurrently seek the United Nations system's agreement to WFP being recognized as an exceptional and separate case. It would then consider the question of meeting the ISC, as proposed in the report of the Formal Working Group. The Board was assured that a firm and clear position would be established in time for the Board's First Regular Session in January 1999.
28. Many members—several speaking on behalf of regional groups—expressed their readiness to adopt the recommendations of the report at this session. However, approval would reluctantly be delayed until January 1999, in the expectation that adoption would then be *en bloc*, by consensus and with the full support of the aforementioned donor.
29. Several representatives indicated that they would expect the discussion of a future funding strategy for WFP to encompass incentives for multilateral contributions, which were not addressed in the report.



EVALUATION REPORTS (1998/EB.3/6)

Niger 2072.03—“Support for mother and child health (MCH) activities and nutritional rehabilitation and education”

30. A number of representatives expressed their appreciation for the quality of the evaluation and its objective account of the problems faced by the project. Representatives generally recognized the value of this project for the country and the need for its continuation. They emphasized the importance of improved targeting and closer coordination with activities of other organizations.
31. It was acknowledged that, in order to improve project performance, controls in the form of effective monitoring and evaluation systems had to be strengthened, although two representatives and the Secretariat cautioned that it was unrealistic to expect perfection from countries in the least developed category with very limited resources and weak administrative structures.
32. Two representatives expressed concern over the timing of the evaluation, which they felt came too late to allow for corrective measures to be taken in the Country Programme. The Secretariat clarified that, since fewer evaluations of projects and more thematic evaluations were being undertaken, corrective action also needed to be taken on the basis of monitoring as a regular project component. However, the monitoring system in this case was weak, hence the strong recommendation made by the evaluation mission for strengthening the system before the next phase began.

Tajikistan 5253—“Emergency food aid for vulnerable groups”

33. Representatives generally recognized the value of this WFP operation for the country and the need for its continuation, given the very difficult existing conditions. Some representatives wondered how long WFP resources would be allocated to programmes that did not incorporate a realistic exit strategy. The Board was aware that the dilemma faced by WFP was due to prevailing conditions. WFP could continue to provide assistance to vulnerable groups until a feasible substitute assistance programme was implemented by the Government.
34. On the issue of refined targeting of beneficiaries, the Secretariat informed the Board of ongoing efforts by WFP’s regional Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (VAM) Unit to identify vulnerable areas and populations and to develop indicators of food insecurity. Special reference was made to increasing sustainability through support to the privatization process, and strengthened cooperation with other organizations and coordination of assistance programmes. The Board noted with appreciation the shift from emergency assistance to a protracted relief and recovery operation planned for 1999.

Summary report of the tripartite (UNICEF/UNHCR/WFP) study of the Great Lakes emergency operation (September 1996–September 1997)

35. In its presentation of the report, the Secretariat highlighted the progress made to date in the implementation of the report’s recommendations, which were endorsed by the Board. Several representatives urged the Secretariat to establish follow-up measures to monitor and encourage implementation of those recommendations, if they were not already in place.



36. The Board particularly noted and supported those recommendations which concerned staff security, and some which specifically endorsed the inclusion of the costs of staff security measures in both flash and consolidated appeals at the commencement of complex emergency operations.
37. The report's description of measures for local operational coordination and harmonization of the three agencies' emergency programmes in the Great Lakes was appreciated by several representatives, although one noted the need for improving cooperation at a higher level. Two representatives particularly endorsed the report's recommendations for adopting written inter-agency procedures and memoranda of understanding.
38. A few representatives noted the cost savings of monitoring when it is a regular programme component, so that findings could be applied to an ongoing operation.
39. The Secretariat responded to the queries about processes for implementing recommendations, noting that the Regional Director regularly sent evaluation reports to country offices in the field. The recommendations therein were taken into consideration in further project expansions and incorporated, as appropriate, into written guidelines for the field. The Secretariat was devising a system for storing, analysing and disseminating the lessons learned in evaluations.

OPERATIONAL MATTERS

Country Strategy Outline—Benin (1998/EB.3/7)

40. The Board endorsed the strategy indicated in the CSO for Benin and its targeting of food-deficit areas, and low-income and vulnerable groups, especially women and girls.
41. Some representatives noted that food production in Benin was considered to be globally sufficient, and cautioned against the possible side-effects of food aid. They requested WFP to ensure that the impact of food aid was appropriately monitored to avoid disincentives of local production and displacement of markets. It was suggested that WFP review the appropriateness of providing food assistance to cotton-growing areas of Benin, where people might have access to cash income.
42. The Board authorized the Secretariat to proceed with the preparation of a Country Programme, taking into account past experience, ensuring that adequate monitoring and evaluation systems were put in place, and that WFP activities were integrated within UNDAF and other development partners in Benin.

Country Strategy Outline—Chad (1998/EB.3/8)

43. The Board endorsed the strategy proposed for Chad, noting that food aid played an important role in addressing the basic needs of the most vulnerable populations.
44. Taking note of difficult and costly transport arrangements for food aid in Chad, some representatives expressed their hesitation regarding the suitability of food aid. Others stressed the importance of effectively targeting food aid interventions to the poorest people in ways which led to sustainable benefits for them.



45. The Secretariat informed the Board that a vulnerability map would be attached to the Country Programme document. It also indicated that WFP's strategy would include disaster mitigation activities.
46. The Board authorized the Secretariat to prepare a Country Programme. Such a programme should favour activities related to food security through food for work to promote local food production and marketing, protection of the environment, and improvement of roads. School feeding should be limited to food-deficit areas. Focus on women and girls was recommended. In envisaging activities in the health sector, due attention should be given to lessons learned. The Government's and local communities' commitment to, and ownership of, the Country Programme were emphasized as requirements for the successful implementation of any activity.

Country Strategy Outline—Guinea (1998/EB.3/9)

47. The Board welcomed the strategy proposed in the CSO for Guinea, and noted that it would serve as a focus for individual projects until the commencement of the Country Programme in 2002.
48. The Board commended priority targeting to girls and women, and the fact that project activities were directed to areas sheltering Liberian refugees. Project activities should also address aspects relating to environmental damage resulting from the presence of refugees. Several representatives noted that Guinea, with abundant natural resources, had the capacity to become self-sufficient in food production. They encouraged WFP to take measures to ensure that food aid did not displace local production. The Board requested that WFP purchase food locally or regionally, whenever possible.
49. Several representatives emphasized the need for enhanced monitoring techniques using more statistical data which demonstrably quantify project achievements. The Board encouraged cooperation with other multilateral and bilateral donors.
50. The Secretariat indicated that the Country Programme would be implemented with due attention given to regional, social and gender targeting. Joint planning and implementation with bilateral and multilateral donors, and with national and international NGOs, would be sought.
51. The Secretariat advised that local purchases of salt, sugar and oil would be pursued, but that local purchases of cereals would be difficult. The Board was informed that distributions in rural areas were not expected to affect local production because these took place during the lean season, when overall food availability was low. Control of the logistical chain and of final distribution had already been strengthened and post-c.i.f. losses had greatly decreased.
52. The Board authorized the Secretariat to prepare a Country Programme, as proposed in the CSO.

Country Strategy Outline—Uganda (1998/EB.3/10)

53. The Board reviewed the CSO for Uganda, taking due account of the country's relatively high food availability and its considerable agricultural potential. It requested that WFP endeavour to purchase locally as much food as possible. It was noted that despite Uganda's food surpluses, many parts of the country experienced serious food deficits, and people living therein had no purchasing power. The Board concluded that



WFP assistance was justified and that food aid interventions in Uganda would continue to be required. It cautioned that food aid must be well targeted and phased out at an appropriate time in order not to destabilize markets.

54. One representative considered the CSO an important input to the forthcoming UNDAF process and other United Nations programming exercises in Uganda, and recommended that the Country Programme take into account an analysis of the ongoing discussion on food for development. The Board requested the Secretariat to ensure that adequate monitoring and evaluation indicators were developed for evaluating the Country Programme's impact.
55. Problems of security and administrative capacity were raised in relation to the Country Programme's geographic focus. It was recommended that the Country Programme take into account security concerns in targeted areas. The Board supported the attention given to children, as well as the importance of the role of women in any food security strategy for Uganda.
56. The Board expressed support for the approach of channelling a large part of the Country Programme resources through projects implemented by NGOs.
57. A representative commended WFP's assistance on both sides of the Ugandan and Sudanese borders, and urged WFP to continue to strengthen human resources and local structures in these conflict-affected areas as part of its relief efforts.

Country Programme—Kenya (1999–2003) (1998/EB.3/11)

58. The Secretariat introduced the Country Programme for Kenya by requesting the Board's approval of its Direct Operational Costs requirement of 32.5 million dollars.
59. The Board expressed strong support for the Country Programme, noting in particular the targeting of food aid to the poor in arid and semi-arid land (ASAL) areas, and its particular concentration on the education sector and disaster preparedness.
60. Appreciation was expressed for the quality of the proposed indicators of the school feeding programme. It was suggested that indicators for the other activities be similarly developed with appropriate baseline data. One representative stressed the importance of including micronutrients in the food basket. The Board encouraged the practice of local and regional food purchases, where possible.
61. Representatives welcomed the fact that the Country Programme took into consideration lessons learned from previous experiences in Kenya. They emphasized the need to continue to collaborate with other donors, United Nations agencies, NGOs and the Government in the implementation and evaluation of the programme.
62. The Board proposed that a clearer strategy be developed to increase the enrolment of girls in school. Specifically, WFP should encourage and support public information efforts to urge parents to send their children to school and keep them enrolled, especially in ASALs. Some representatives expressed concern over the imbalanced composition of the Country Programme, which allocated 76 percent of resources to the education sector. The Board encouraged WFP to ensure the sustainability of school feeding activities.
63. The Board expressed appreciation for the Government's financial commitment to the Country Programme as well as its intention to ensure that imported food for distribution under the Country Programme would be exempt of import duties.



Country Programme—Mali (1999–2002) (1998/EB.3/12)

64. The Secretariat introduced the Mali Country Programme by requesting the Board's approval of its Direct Operational Costs requirement of 14.5 million dollars.
65. In approving the Country Programme, the Board expressed appreciation for its geographical concentration, the balanced mix of activities, and its strong emphasis on cooperation and coordination with other development partners, local communities and the Malian authorities within the frameworks of both UNDAF and the Cereal Market Restructuring Project. WFP's interventions in Mali reached beyond its projects to also weave the concept of food aid into the more global issues of food security.
66. Representatives advised that WFP food should only be provided to schools and health centres when these were fully functioning and had the other necessary components in place. Local purchases should be undertaken to the extent possible, particularly in good harvest years (as the current one). The Board also inquired whether, in reaching the poorest within targeted areas, WFP could not purchase locally produced vegetable oil. It also asked about the achievements and lessons of WFP's activities in Mali during the past years.
67. The Secretariat stated that the poorest were reached through food distributions by the Cereal Market Restructuring Project targeted to the most food-insecure, who, in a given year, were unable to participate in development projects. Children of nomads were normally taken care of by families in villages with a school and the WFP food reached them through the canteens. The Secretariat also pointed out that an increasing share of the nomads were becoming sedentary, which facilitated their participation in the development process. WFP was purchasing cereals locally and was open to purchasing both pulses and oil when these commodities were available at competitive prices. The achievements and lessons learned were indicated in the CSO for Mali, presented to the Board's Third Regular Session of 1997.

Country Programme—Niger (1999–2002) (1998/EB.3/13)

68. The Secretariat introduced the Niger Country Programme by requesting the Board's approval of its Direct Operational Costs requirement of 23 million dollars.
69. The Board noted that the advice it had given with respect to the CSO for Niger had been taken into account in the Country Programme. It supported the Country Programme's geographical and thematic focus as well as the framework for cooperation. A number of representatives underlined the importance of having monitoring and evaluation systems that incorporate clear indicators. The Board encouraged WFP to ensure that the rural development activity was implemented where well defined and monitored projects were financed by other partners. The Board also recommended that lessons from the evaluation of the health project be taken into account. The Secretariat was encouraged to put in place systems to enable popular participation, particularly of women, in project planning and management.
70. The Secretariat confirmed that cereals and pulses for the Country Programme would likely be purchased locally. It also pointed out that assistance to village cereal banks would be continued and diversified.
71. The Board was assured that the Government fully supported the Country Programme and that counterpart staff were being appointed for the health activity. The Board was



advised that local participation in project activities was a key objective of the Government, and that local communities were in charge of health centres and schools.

Development project for Executive Board approval—Ecuador 3096.02 (1998/EB.3/14)

72. The Board welcomed the inclusion in the project of a micronutrient and deworming component, and stressed the importance of targeting to the poorest children. It supported the fact that approximately half of the beneficiaries would be girls or young women, and that gender-disaggregated data would be collected. Some representatives were doubtful as to whether food aid was really the appropriate instrument to facilitate children's literacy.
73. The Board commended the increased commitment of the Government to take over the project's activities once WFP phased out its assistance.

Protracted relief and recovery operation for Executive Board approval—Afghanistan 6064.00 (1998/EB.3/15)

74. The Board welcomed the two-scenario approach of the protracted relief and recovery operation (PRRO), in view of the evolving situation within Afghanistan. The Secretariat noted that discussions with the Taliban were in course, and that an agreement on security matters might be reached; this, coupled with the prerequisites on the Taliban—such as respecting women's rights—would allow for implementation of the second scenario.
75. A number of representatives encouraged WFP to pursue the second scenario, if possible. However, one recommended that the first scenario be implemented initially, and that the second scenario commence no sooner than the year 2000.
76. The Board encouraged WFP to pursue increased coordination with other international assistance programmes, and commended project linkages with the United Nations Strategic Framework and the Common Programming Approach. The Board was advised that a Consolidated Appeal would be launched at the next Afghan Support Group meeting and that the PRRO would form an integral part of the 1999 Appeal.
77. A representative raised the issue whether WFP assistance to institutional feeding relieved the Taliban of their responsibility to maintain institutions and provide food to them. The Secretariat responded that this was unlikely, since the resources allocated to institutional feeding under the PRRO were too few to have any impact on the Taliban's activities.
78. One representative encouraged WFP to link the PRRO's activities with efforts to combat drug production deployed by the United Nations International Drug Control Programme.

Protracted relief and recovery operation for Executive Board approval—Cambodia 6038.00 (1998/EB.3/16)

79. The Board, in reviewing the PRRO for Cambodia, welcomed WFP's focus on impact monitoring and performance indicators, the application of a beneficiary targeting approach based on vulnerability analysis and mapping, and the extension of assistance into the former Khmer Rouge-controlled areas. One representative expressed particularly strong support for WFP's assistance to tuberculosis patients.



80. Regarding reported increases in malnutrition rates, the Secretariat informed the Board that WFP and UNICEF were finalizing a joint baseline survey on the nutritional status in the operation's target areas, and that WFP and UNICEF would work with the Cambodian Government to address the problem.
81. In relation to the operation's Direct Support Costs, the Secretariat explained that activities required significant inputs in terms of non-food items. In addition, as the PRRO would assist populations in 21 of Cambodia's 23 provinces, a relatively large staff was required for implementation and monitoring. The Board was advised that, because WFP expected to purchase significant quantities of rice locally or in the region, the external transport budget would likely be adjusted significantly downwards, and that individual contributions would be revised to reflect the actual procurement arrangements.

**Protracted relief and recovery operation for Executive Board approval—
Nepal 5324.03 (1998/EB.3/17)**

82. In considering the operation, the Board expressed satisfaction on the measures taken to address issues related to the environment, gender and self-reliance. WFP's strong partnership with UNHCR and NGOs was also commended. Several representatives voiced concern about the duration of the assistance and, more specifically, the future of the new generations of refugees. The Board encouraged the Secretariat to pursue repatriation or integration whenever feasible.

**Development and quick action projects approved by the Executive Director,
1 January–30 June 1998 (1998/EB.3/18)**

83. In taking note of the nine projects approved by the Executive Director between 1 January and 30 June 1998, one representative requested that the Secretariat arrange for a comprehensive evaluation of Colombia 5738.00 as soon as possible. During the discussion of Guyana 4889.01, one representative requested the Secretariat to provide to the next session a summary presentation of its policy governing salary supplements to government employees. The Secretariat advised that generally, WFP did not pay salary supplements to government staff. The Secretariat also confirmed that WFP would be phasing out of Guyana following completion of project 4889.01.

**Basic activities within approved Country Programmes, approved by the
Executive Director, 1 January–30 June 1998 (1998/EB.3/20)**

84. In taking note of basic activities within approved Country Programmes approved by the Executive Director between 1 January and 30 June 1998, one representative pointed out some inconsistency between figures indicated in the Yemen Country Programme document and Basic Activity 2 with respect to the number of mothers involved.

Progress reports on approved projects (1998/EB.3/23)

85. The Board took note of progress reports on approved projects. One representative expressed hope that WFP would phase out of project Cape Verde 2394.05 in the year 2000. The Secretariat, taking note of managerial improvements to the project, clarified that WFP was phasing down operations, and that a decision on a full phasing out had yet to be made.



86. Regarding Viet Nam 3844.00, a number of representatives requested clarification on the issue of WFP's phasing out of Viet Nam; the Secretariat responded that a phasing out was foreseen for the year 2000.

ORGANIZATIONAL AND PROCEDURAL MATTERS

Programme of work for 1999 (1999/EB.3/24)

87. In endorsing the provisional programme of work for 1999 submitted by the Secretariat, the Board noted that a certain amount of flexibility was required and that while some documents, such as PRROs, might be added, others might be postponed as a result of local conditions and considerations.
88. One representative informed the Board that Ramadan would possibly end on 20 or 21 January 1999, and that this might prevent full participation in the First Regular Session. The Secretariat was therefore encouraged to examine whether or not it would be feasible to modify the dates of the session.

Report of the Working Group on Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board (1998/EB.3/25)

89. The Chairperson of the Working Group informed the Board that few proposals for changes to the draft Rules of Procedure had been received by 15 September 1998, the designated deadline for comments. The Working Group, with the assistance of the Legal Counsel, had incorporated most of the proposals. The document was being finalized by the Secretariat. A final review would be made by the Working Group and the document would be dispatched to the members of the Board by mid-December, in time for the Board's First Regular Session in January 1999.
90. The Board thanked the Chairperson of the Working Group for the excellent work accomplished and extended its appreciation to all its members, to the Secretariat and to the Legal Counsel.

Report of the Working Group on the distribution of seats (1998/EB.3/26)

91. The Chairperson of the Working Group informed the Board on progress made since the Annual Session. During that period, two additional meetings had been held in Rome and three in New York. In addition, the President of the Board and the Chairperson of the Working Group had met with the Chairman of the ECOSOC Working Group in New York.
92. Options had been narrowed considerably, and several regional groups had settled on one option. One regional group was undertaking consultations with capitals to determine whether this particular option was acceptable. If there was agreement among all regional groups, the Working Group would then submit a report to ECOSOC, possibly by the end of the first week of November, before ECOSOC's adjournment, and then to the Hundred and Fifteenth Session of the FAO Council, meeting from 23 to 28 November 1998.



SUMMARIES OF THE WORK OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Summary of the work of the Second Regular Session of 1998 of the Executive Board (1998/EB.3/27)

93. In the absence of the Rapporteur, the Vice-President introduced this item. One delegation had sent written comments on the Summary of the Work of the Second Regular Session of 1998, requesting amendments to paragraphs 5, 28 and 57. The Bureau had examined the request and proposed to accept it.
94. While endorsing the Summary as orally amended, some representatives expressed the wish to review the working methods in relation to the preparation of the reports of the Executive Board sessions. Several representatives preferred, as a matter of good governance, to follow the already established methods, reminding the Board that these were well spelled out in document WFP/EB.2/96/11/Rev.1, as approved by the Board at its Second Regular Session of 1996, and that, in line with these, adequate time was allotted for the provision of written comments to the Secretariat and to the Rapporteur.
95. The representative of India wished to state, for the record, her delegation's disagreement with the penultimate sentence in paragraph 4 on page 2 of the Summary of the Work of the Second Regular Session of 1998.

Summary of the work of the Annual Session of 1998 of the Executive Board (1998/EB.3/28)

96. The Board commended the Rapporteur, Mr. Kiala Kia Mateva (Angola) for his excellent work and endorsed the Summary of its Annual Session of 1998, as orally amended.
97. The representative of the Netherlands stated, for the record: "The Netherlands delegation is not in a position to associate itself with paragraph 22 of the Summary of the Work of the Annual Session held in May 1998, which contains a statement on food aid for development which might be acceptable for a number of Board Members, but would not be acceptable for others." The representative of Sweden indicated: "Sweden would like to associate itself with what was just said by the Netherlands."

OTHER BUSINESS

Proposal by the Bureau of the Executive Board on the provision of passive Russian interpretation

98. This item was introduced by the President of the Board. The representative of the Russian Federation explained that the cost of interpretation was high, and that it could be better spent in assisting hungry people. Therefore, his delegation would prefer that a decision regarding passive interpretation of the Russian language be postponed.



Report of Executive Board members' visit to Ethiopia

99. On behalf of the nine Executive Board members who had visited Ethiopia, a representative was pleased to report that the visit had truly fulfilled its primary objective. She informed the Board that, overall, the members were very impressed with the quality of projects visited and the extent to which food aid could make a contribution towards meeting emergency, protracted recovery and development needs. The visit was extremely useful and the mission participants would encourage other Board members to take part in future missions.
100. The mission visited urban food assistance projects, refugee feeding sites, relief activities and school feeding projects. The members found that at the local level participatory planning was well advanced in project design, and it was delivering benefits to both women and men. Although they found food aid to be well targeted to the poorest beneficiaries, they stressed the need for continuous improvement of targeting, and the use of vulnerability analysis and mapping. Extensive areas of productive agricultural land had been rehabilitated through food-for-work activities, thanks to WFP projects. The representative commended, on behalf of the members, the commitment and professionalism of government authorities, at all levels, towards successful project implementation. As for the school feeding programme, the members felt that it was achieving significant results in reducing malnutrition and improving enrolment and retention rates.
101. In her concluding remarks, the representative indicated that in relation to development projects, the members wished to encourage WFP to pursue the dialogue with government authorities and local communities, to find ways of improving the participation of women in the decision-making process which affects projects. WFP was also encouraged to continue its efforts to coordinate interventions with the United Nations and with NGOs.
102. The support provided by the WFP country office and at headquarters, including briefing material and presentations, was excellent and very efficient. The members appreciated the dedication and enthusiasm of the WFP country office team and the very real challenges they faced in implementing WFP's policies and programmes.
103. The Board took note with appreciation of this report.
104. One representative deplored that his country was not able to participate in such a visit and requested the Secretariat to provide him with technical information on the implementation and effects of the water conservation project.

Briefing by the Deputy Executive Director on his visit to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

105. The Board took note with appreciation of the Deputy Executive Director's brief on his recent monitoring visit to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK).
106. He informed the Board that from his observations while travelling around the country, it was evident that the shortage of food was still very serious, especially among children seven years and above. Food had been distributed to a very broad part of the population; this had probably helped to reduce the number of deaths in the country. Children up to six years old appeared to be in reasonable shape because they were being fed at school, but it was evident that many children seven and over were having problems.



107. WFP's operational capacity in the country had increased tremendously since October 1997. WFP staff were able to work more freely; WFP had 37 international staff and was expecting nine more in the country, as soon as clearances were given.
108. There were still a few problems. WFP had not been able to have access to all 210 counties. However, great progress had been made, with WFP having access to 171 counties, accounting for 90 percent of the target population. Unfortunately, while the Deputy Executive Director was there, he was informed of a temporary withdrawal of access to 26 counties; WFP hoped that access would be restored as soon as possible.
109. In relation to the language factor, the Deputy Executive Director reported that, through his observation of monitors, he concluded that even a basic knowledge of the language of a country would be very helpful for such work, to establish a rapport with the people to whom questions were being asked through interpreters. WFP inquired whether the Government could offer language courses for the staff who had already been cleared, and were already in the country. The Foreign Minister said the Government would consider the matter.
110. Still on language, the Deputy Executive Director mentioned that he had taken a videotape on WFP operations in DPRK to Japan, to present it on television. It was checked for interpretation. He was pleased to inform the Board that both the questions asked by the monitors and the answers given by the recipients were interpreted correctly. This gave a high level of credibility to the interpreters provided to WFP in DPRK.

Progress towards the Renegotiation of the Food Aid Convention

111. The matter of progress made towards renegotiation of the Food Aid Convention was raised. It was noted that WFP had played a constructive role in providing guidance to the Food Aid Committee working group which was renegotiating the Convention. Representatives stressed the need for all members of the Convention to make a significant effort to achieve a timely and successful new agreement by the end of the year.

Presidency of the Executive Board

112. One regional group commended the President for having conducted the complex work of the Executive Board during 1998 in an exemplary way. The professionalism, sense of equilibrium, dynamism and patience deployed by the President of the Board during all Board Sessions had been highly appreciated.

Matters raised by the Executive Director

113. The Board took note with appreciation of the information provided by the Executive Director regarding preparation for the Food Aid and Development Consultation (23-24 October 1998). The Board welcomed the newly recruited senior staff introduced by the Executive Director.

