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**Executive Board
Third Regular Session**

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REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ON OPERATIONAL MATTERS

Agenda item 8

For information



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DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS APPROVED BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (1 JANUARY–30 JUNE 1999)— GAMBIA 5932.01

Community-based School Feeding Project

Number of beneficiaries **60,000 schoolchildren
per year**

Duration of project **Five years**

Cost (United States dollars)

Total cost to WFP **6,258,810**

Total food cost **2,935,630**

Total cost to Government **1,070,000**

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NOTE TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

This document is submitted for information 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 point(s) indicated below, preferably well in advance of the Board's meeting.

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1. The Gambia is both a least developed country and a low-income, food-deficit country ranking 165th on the Human Development Index of 1998. It has one of the highest population growth rates in the sub-region (4.2 percent a year).
 2. While the national literacy rate is over 90 percent, in areas such as the Upper River Division, the rate is only 52 percent for men and 22 percent for women. School enrolment rates in rural areas are only 49 percent, with striking disparities between girls and boys. Poor primary school achievement is also highlighted by low attendance and high drop-out rates, especially for girls. Household poverty, cultural practices and inadequate school facilities are important factors contributing to the poor education system.
 3. In accordance with decision 1999/EB.A/2 of the Executive Board, WFP limits its development activities to five objectives. This project addresses objective 2 (enable poor households to invest in human capital through education and training).
 4. Following a one-year temporary assistance, the project will target food-insecure rural areas with low elementary school attendance rates. WFP food aid will be used to enable poor families to send their children to school. Meanwhile, in coordination with the Government, Parent-Teacher Associations, the World Bank, UNICEF and NGOs, school infrastructure will be rehabilitated and/or expanded; the school environment for girls improved; more female teachers will be trained; the curriculum will be revised; and community-based organizations will be supported.
 5. Approximately 60,000 primary schoolchildren in 260 rural public schools will receive an early-morning beverage and mid-day lunch 160 days a year. Several NGOs will be tasked with sensitization campaigns and training sessions for Parent-Teacher Associations in ensuring that the community, and particularly women, are actively involved in the management of school canteens, and on general awareness of educational problems and their solution.

