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## UPDATE ON WFP'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE UNITED NATIONS REFORM PROCESS

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1. This information paper has been prepared to provide the Board with a brief update on WFP's involvement in the United Nations reform process.
2. On 16 July 1997, the Secretary-General presented to the General Assembly his Report titled "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform". In the Section on Development Cooperation, the Secretary-General announced the establishment of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG), which would supersede the sectoral group on development operations, and would be led by the Administrator of UNDP. There would be an Executive Committee of the UNDG which would consist of the heads of UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA. WFP was invited to be associated with the UNDG and participate in its Executive Committee in areas relevant to its operations and interests. WFP has participated in the deliberations of both the UNDG and its Executive Committee.
3. The terms of reference for the UNDG and its Executive Committee are largely set out in paragraph 153 of the Secretary-General's Report. The current agenda of the UNDG includes, among other things, providing guidance on implementing the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) which will be launched in an initial set of 11 countries beginning in October 1997; a series of proposals for strengthening the Resident Coordinator system; and matters addressed in the Report, such as relations with the World Bank and predictable financing of development and technical cooperation through multi-year arrangements. WFP submitted its Strategic and Financial Plan 1998-2001 to the UNDG, and it is participating in various working groups set up to support different aspects of the Secretary-General's reform programme such as the sub-group accelerating the move to common premises. WFP has also agreed, subject to the Executive Board's approval of the budget, to second a staff member to work in New York as a member of the inter-agency group to support the UNDG, in the Office of the UNDG. In countries where it supports only or mainly development programmes, WFP will be an active participant in the operational activities and coordination of the UNDG. The importance of this constructive and concrete support for the UNDG was emphasized in a letter from the Executive Director to WFP country offices in July 1997.
4. In the Section on Humanitarian Affairs, the Secretary-General introduced a range of reform measures, including the focusing of the Emergency Relief Coordinator's functions on three core areas, which would be significantly strengthened: policy development and coordination in support of the Secretary-General; advocacy of humanitarian issues with political organs, notably the Security Council; and coordination of humanitarian emergency response, by ensuring that an appropriate response mechanism is established on the ground, through Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) consultations. To allow the Emergency Relief Coordinator to concentrate on these three core functions, operational aspects of responsibilities currently covered by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) would be redistributed to other parts of the United Nations system. WFP participated as a member of a working group set up to provide detailed recommendations to the Secretary-General on the redistribution of those matters not covered in his Report; and on matters such as the relationship between the IASC and the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs (ECHA).
5. WFP remains a member of ECHA, participating in all of its deliberations. As requested in the Report, WFP is prepared to nominate qualified senior staff for positions in the Office



of the Emergency Relief Coordinator when vacancies arise. In addition, WFP has indicated its willingness to accept operational responsibility for the Pisa warehouse, a function previously carried out by DHA.

6. WFP's commitment to participate actively in implementing the reform measures is reflected in the amount of senior staff time and effort that it invests in helping to make the reforms a reality. But WFP's greatest contribution will be made in the field. The staff of its country offices will work actively and enthusiastically with their United Nations colleagues to achieve the ultimate objective of the reforms—purposeful and coherent responses to those who need assistance from the United Nations.

