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## **REPORT TO THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (ECOSOC)**

### **Agenda item 3**



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**Follow-up to ECOSOC resolution 1995/56:  
Strengthening of the coordination of  
emergency and humanitarian assistance of  
the United Nations. Capacity Issues**

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## NOTE TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

**This document is submitted for review and comments to the Executive Board.**

Pursuant to the decisions taken on the methods of work by the Executive Board at its First Regular Session, the documentation prepared by the Secretariat for the Board has been kept brief and decision-oriented. The meetings of the Executive Board are to be conducted in a business-like manner, with increased dialogue and exchanges between delegations and the Secretariat. Efforts to promote these guiding principles will continue to be pursued by the Secretariat.

The Secretariat therefore invites members of the Board who may have questions of a technical nature with regard to this document, to contact the WFP staff member(s) listed below, preferably well in advance of the Board's meeting. This procedure is designed to facilitate the Board's consideration of the document in the plenary.

The WFP focal points for this document are:

Chief, OPE:                                      D. Morton    tel.: 5228-2325

Emergency Officer, OPE:                      F. Bravo    tel.: 5228-2858

Should you have any questions regarding matters of dispatch of documentation for the Executive Board, please contact the Documents Clerk (tel.: 5228-2641).

## **Follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/56:**

### **Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations**

#### **Capacity Issues**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

1. Resolution 1995/56 of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) calls for a review of the capacity of the United Nations system to effectively provide emergency humanitarian assistance, and requests that agencies report to their governing boards on their respective roles and operational responsibilities, as well as operative and financial capacities, for fulfilling this role and for coordinating with other agencies. This is an opportunity for WFP to review the effectiveness and efficiency of its operations, in the context of a coordinated approach to relief requirements, and to identify additional support needed from donors and other partners to address constraints on WFP's capacity to fulfil its role.
2. An initial paper (document number WFP/EB.A/96/7/(Part IV)) was prepared for the Annual Session of the Executive Board in May 1996 on WFP's mandate, role and operational responsibilities in relief response, its contribution towards strengthening local capacity and coping mechanisms, and coordination. The paper identified constraints, overlaps and gaps in the current system and WFP's comparative advantages, and proposed areas where WFP could take on a possible expanded future role, capitalizing on WFP's strengths for a more effective response by the United Nations system at large. The Executive Board commented on this first paper.
3. The paper presented at this session of the Executive Board analyses:
  - a) WFP's capacity to meet its current mandate, role and operational responsibilities (operational and financial capacity; resource mobilization; human resources; administrative and other procedures for flexibility and rapid response; delegation of authority; and reporting, evaluation and accountability).
  - b) Capacity issues in areas proposed for an expanded WFP role in emergency response.A summary of key points and suggestions is set out in Annex II.
4. A definitive judgement on comparative advantages requires a comprehensive process of bench-marking or comparing costs and procedures between United Nations agencies and, where relevant, the commercial sector and non-governmental organizations (NGO). Such a review is outside the capacity of WFP, in terms of staff time, access to proprietary financial and operational information and technical expertise. Consideration could be given to an inter-agency review coordinated by the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA), with the participation of outside consultants.
5. A third paper will be presented to the Executive Board in March 1997 which will bring together in a single document the complete WFP response to ECOSOC resolution 1995/56.



## CAPACITY TO FULFIL ROLE AND MANDATE

### Operational and financial capacity

6. WFP currently operates in 93 countries, with both development and relief activities in 83 countries and relief only in another 10. WFP's workforce is made up of 1,460 staff in the field, 509 staff at its headquarters in Rome, and 2,059 temporary staff employed mainly in relief operations. In 1995, WFP delivered a total of 2.8 million tons of food to 50 million people worldwide, including 14 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) and seven million refugees, and undertook procurement activities totalling 709 million dollars,<sup>1</sup> which included buying 975,000 tons of food worth 250 million dollars, 20 million dollars in non-food items, and 439 million dollars in transport services. WFP has one of the lowest overhead costs of any United Nations organization.

### Capacity for emergency response, preparedness and prevention

7. In reaction to the dramatic rise in the number and complexity of relief situations characterized by conflict, massive population dislocation, and disruption of civil society and infrastructure, WFP has built up its own operational capacity and developed standby arrangements with donors and NGOs for a rapid and effective response.
8. The following elements contribute to WFP's capacity to be prepared for and respond quickly to emergency situations:
- a) WFP's extensive network of country offices and newly formed clusters in vulnerable regions provides readiness in the form of a knowledge base and expansion capability to deal with sudden emergencies.
  - b) The large tonnage of food aid in stock or in transit for its numerous relief and development activities constitutes pre-positioned resources for emergency deployment through either reallocation of food stocks or diversion of en-route shipments.
  - c) Proven specialized and cost-effective capability in transport and logistics and food procurement.
  - d) Inputs and planning for preparedness and response: internal and external standby arrangements for personnel and equipment that can be deployed at short notice, food and equipment stocks, and ongoing contingency planning and vulnerability assessment and mapping activities.
  - e) Long-standing experience as coordinator of food aid pledges, deliveries and related logistics from all sources, a key element in the cost-effectiveness of the emergency response.
  - f) Source of information on food aid requirements and vulnerability analysis for targeting and programming of interventions.
  - g) Development by the end of 1996 of a database to track assets for rapid response, including staff and equipment for WFP rapid response teams, standby arrangements with donors/NGOs, service packages, strategic logistics stocks, Pisa warehouse food stocks, etc.

<sup>1</sup> All monetary values are expressed in United States dollars.



### ***Capacity to promote the transition from relief to development***

9. WFP's dual mandate of providing both relief and development assistance places it in a unique position to both reduce vulnerability through mitigation activities and encourage transition from relief to development through rehabilitation programmes.
10. WFP's strategy for linking relief and development is to: a) integrate disaster mitigation elements into development projects; b) introduce development/rehabilitation concepts in relief operations at the earliest possible opportunity; and c) strengthen disaster preparedness through vulnerability analysis and mapping, and institutional development at the national and regional level.

### ***Capacity to promote development***

11. WFP plans for development, but is forced to respond to emergencies as dictated by the scope of humanitarian needs and within the limits of resources provided by donors. In other words, emergencies choose us, and not vice versa.
12. Nevertheless, WFP places emphasis on its broad-based development work as the best form of disaster prevention and mitigation. WFP is committed to maintaining a capacity to promote development, as its development activities provide the basis of its emergency response. Development assistance is increasingly being used to support rehabilitation programmes in the context of the Country Programme Approach.

### ***Resource mobilization and financial capacity***

#### **Funding windows and mechanisms, programme categories and other financial options**

13. WFP purchases and/or delivers food and covers related monitoring and logistic costs through a combination of cash and food donations mobilized through appeals and other contributions from donors. The primary mechanisms which WFP can call upon for the resources necessary to provide emergency food assistance are:
  - a) Funding windows: The new WFP resourcing model consists of three funding windows (multilateral, directed multilateral and bilateral). The funding windows integrate the following existing funding mechanisms:
    - i) The International Emergency Food Reserve (IEFR): Cash and food contributions to the IEFR, and its subset, the Immediate Response Account (IRA).
    - ii) Immediate Response Account (IRA): This IEFR cash facility, with a pledging target of 35 million dollars, is WFP's main mechanism for early response to emergencies.
  - b) Donors make contributions to one of four programme categories to cover full cost:
    - i) Development/rehabilitation/disaster preparedness.
    - ii) Protracted relief and displaced person projects (PRO).
    - iii) Emergencies.
    - iv) Special operations: A separate cash funding category used for logistics and emergency infrastructure rehabilitation related to food aid delivery.
  - c) Other financial options:
    - i) DHA's Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF): In the absence of early and sufficient donor pledges, up to five million dollars may be borrowed from the CERF to fund the initial relief response to major complex emergencies.



### 1995 resource situation

14. Donors provided 85 percent of estimated requirements for WFP relief activities in 1995, which enabled WFP to provide sufficient food in most emergency situations. Compared to 1994, contributions through the IEFER were stable at 1.1 million tons of commodities, contributions to the PRO subset declined by about one quarter to 549,000 tons, and contributions to the IRA were 19 million dollars, well below the annual target. Based on past trends, it is likely that at least 1.9 million tons a year will be required for relief operations over the next few years, compared to 1.6 million tons contributed in 1995.

### Capacity constraints to rapid and effective action, and change initiatives to improve capacity

15. WFP's operational and financial capacity is continually being adjusted to better fulfil the role it is expected to play in response to humanitarian situations, as set forth in Annex I. Constraints on WFP's capacity fall into two groups: those that are external and need to be resolved by changes to WFP's policies vis-à-vis donors and its governing bodies, and those that are internal and need to be resolved through changes to WFP's organizational structure, procedures and management and information systems.
16. WFP has undertaken a variety of initiatives to improve the effectiveness, efficiency and accountability of its operations. As WFP's systems, procedures and staffing were designed with development projects in mind, these must continually be modified and adjusted to better suit the relief activities which have become such a large part of WFP's work.
17. Initiatives include progressive restructuring of the organization, including field operations, and of management processes to meet changing demands. A complete listing of WFP reform and revitalization measures is set out in document WFP/EB.A/96/6.
18. Reform of this kind is an ongoing process. In many cases, WFP is still in the process of institutionalizing policies, systems and procedures for carrying out the change initiatives, and of specifying the roles and responsibilities of various units. To facilitate this process, and in the context of the recent WFP reorganization, a variety of change teams have been convened for managing organizational change; delegating responsibility and authority to the field; staffing and training; streamlining procedures; communication; and advocacy and resource mobilization.

### Proposals for other operational and financial capacity enhancements

#### *Improved procedures for rehabilitation*

19. The operational international organizations active at the peak of emergency operations are usually WFP, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), NGOs and often the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). While the need to establish a smooth transition from relief to development is widely acknowledged, most development agencies are present only when some semblance of normalcy has been restored. Agencies such as WFP strive to move from the free distribution of food aid to some kind of relief food for work as soon as possible. Often this takes the form of important but rudimentary work such as the repair of houses and other basic infrastructure. The works are identified and designed with the involvement of the beneficiaries. This practice generates a sense of community participation, which can easily be frustrated as emergency agencies pull out when development agencies are not able to move in quickly enough.



20. Even a dual-mandate agency like WFP has not found it easy to move quickly from relief food for work to the traditional well-designed and rigorously analysed food-assisted development project. For international financial institutions and other development partners the task may be even more difficult. This is due not to institutional turf, but rather to institutional tradition, practice and procedure, and notions as basic as the concept of risk. For an agency with a humanitarian orientation, the risk of investing in development activities in a conflict or early post-conflict situation is justified as contributing to the building of peace. For a development or financing institution, risk is a much more commercial consideration.
21. For WFP, one possibility would be to introduce new procedures to fill the gap between relief operations and development projects. This gap is not covered by the present arrangements for quick-action projects. The idea would be to have a new project category under which development projects could be appraised and approved rapidly; and where the standards for project preparation were more appropriate to the circumstances. More specifically, they would be less rigorous than those applying to normal development projects.

### **Strengthening the IRA**

22. The IRA depends on voluntary contributions. Cash is crucial for WFP's rapid response, and ways must be found to bring the flexibility of WFP's funding up to par with its United Nations and NGO partners in the relief business. The new resourcing model does not generate surplus cash and does not address WFP's resourcing problem of upfront, untied cash for rapid response.
23. At its Fortieth Session, the Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes (CFA) endorsed the policy of applying insurance recoveries from the WFP Insurance Fund/Insurers for all activities and interest earned on contributions through the bilateral window to replenish the IRA, with the agreement of donors concerned. In the absence of full funding of the IRA, WFP is encouraging donors to fully exercise these options, along with pursuing with donors other creative ways to reprogramme appropriate unspent monies for this purpose, such as residual funds for relief operations.

### **Using the IEFR to cope with new economic emergencies**

24. Post GATT Uruguay: The conclusion of the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations is expected to lead to higher living standards and rates of employment, and growing real income. The Uruguay Round Final Act includes a section on *Decisions on measures concerning the possible negative effects of the reform programme on least-developed and net food-importing developing countries*. The Parties to the Agreement recognized the possibility that some developing countries may be negatively affected during implementation of the reform programme. They therefore agreed, among other things:

"to review the level of food aid established periodically by the Committee on Food Aid under the Food Aid Convention of 1986 and to initiate negotiations in the appropriate forum to establish a level of food aid commitments sufficient to meet the legitimate needs of developing countries during the reform programme."





25. Work has been done within the World Trade Organization's (WTO) Committee on Agriculture, which was entrusted with the follow-up to the decision. WFP has observer status on this committee, and has already contributed to its work. The forthcoming WTO Ministerial Conference in Singapore will review the status of implementation of the decision.
26. Important practicalities remain to be addressed. There is no agreement, for example, on the criteria that would be used - individually or collectively - to define "legitimate need"; the threshold at which a request for food aid would be triggered; to whom and in what form the affected country would make the request for assistance; who would assess this request, on what basis and in what kind of time-frame; how any request for food aid assessed as "legitimate" would be resourced; or the operational arrangements under which the food aid would be provided.
27. The purpose of raising this matter in this paper is straightforward. Ministers recognized the possibility of negative effects during the transition period; they recognized that an international response could be needed; and, by implication, they wished to have mechanisms put in place to respond promptly if and when the need arose. Without wishing to overstate the case, it is possible to imagine circumstances in which a developing country might face a food problem of such a magnitude that it constitutes an emergency for the poorest and most vulnerable of its people. It would be better to consider now how the international community might deal with a situation of this kind than to try to do so while coping with the crisis itself.
28. A hypothetical example might serve to illustrate the problem and show some possible approaches. A least developed country dependent on imported food may be confronted with a sudden increase in the price of its food imports.
29. Private-sector traders will import only that quantity of food that they are able to sell. As a result, the country may face a physical shortfall in the quantity of food needed irrespective of the availability of foreign exchange. A significant number of people would be at serious risk unless a solution were found. The two broad options facing the government would then be to enter the food import business itself, or to find ways to help increase private imports to cover the emerging gap. Both would impose a significant additional burden on the domestic budget. Careful targeting would become a key operational imperative. This would be needed to ensure that the "additional" food reaches those who need it; that the price signals to domestic agriculture are not muted, thereby avoiding delay in increasing domestic production; and that the overall cost of the intervention is minimized.
30. The above scenario shows the problem to be complex and multifaceted, and that it could involve a number of actors, both national and international. These could include national governments, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and Regional Banks, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and WFP. Options might include direct balance of payments support and targeted food aid. In an affected country where a targeted response is essential, WFP could offer its experience and expertise in a number of areas. These would include:
  - a) assessment of food aid needs of populations at risk;
  - b) design of cost-effective food aid delivery systems;
  - c) setting up of food aid management and monitoring systems;
  - d) coordination of food aid;
  - e) transport and logistics capacity; and,





- f) the possibility of combining the provision of the assistance with the building of productive assets, whether through labour-intensive physical infrastructure works or through the development of human resources.
31. WFP would also be well placed to play a role through its management of the IEFR, which is a proven international mechanism for responding to emergencies where the provision of food is a major issue. Moreover, experience with the IEFR demonstrates that the necessary actors - national and international - can all play their critical roles in a concerted way; for example, the involvement of FAO in drought emergencies, of UNHCR in refugee emergencies, and of bilateral donors and NGOs in both.
32. In summary, WFP is uniquely placed to play an important role in planning for and, if necessary, responding to the kind of price-driven emergency that could arise during the implementation phase of the Uruguay Round Agreement. Approached from this vantage point, the international community would be building on what already exists and works well. No new international agency would need to be created; and no new funding mechanism would need to be established and financed.
33. In considering the possible role of WFP in a post-Uruguay Round context, the Executive Board may also wish to consider whether it might wish to become "the appropriate forum to establish a level of food aid commitments sufficient to meet the legitimate needs of developing countries during the reform programme." The Executive Board could thus contribute to the substantive work required to establish and review appropriate levels of food aid and to draw up guidelines for food allocation.

### ***Other enhancements***

34. To address the shortage of expertise at the onset of an emergency, WFP's internal and external standby personnel arrangements will be continually reviewed and further expanded as necessary.
35. Other needed enhancements include: a) systematically introducing contingency and operational planning to enhance preparedness in inter-agency fora; and b) increasing WFP involvement and leadership in policy analysis, advice and dialogue with governments on food aid dimensions of food security.

## **Human resources development**

### ***Capacity-building for the Country Programme Approach and new staff profile***

36. The change in WFP's approach to planning and implementation has implications for how WFP should be staffed, trained and managed. Moving to a programme approach implies a shift in work to be undertaken at the country level, a theme reflected in the philosophy of the new reorganization. The Country Programme Approach requires that country offices develop greater technical and management capacities for strategic thinking and elaboration, execution, and appraisal of Country Programmes.
37. To enhance the skills of Unified Service staff for more emergency-related work, there will be a need for training and human development of existing staff in finance, transport and emergency management, and recruitment for existing vacancies among project staff with demonstrated expertise in these areas. A new career development strategy, operationalized by the newly formed career



development branch, will provide the basis for more focused training to ensure that core staff meet management and technical competency requirements.

### **Emergency training**

38. As a result of the shift in the nature of the Programme's work, and to address staffing gaps in emergency operations, in 1994 WFP introduced an annual series of training workshops in emergency management and operations to equip managers and technical/operational staff with the skills and knowledge to plan and implement emergency relief operations effectively. Future training will emphasize vulnerability analysis and mapping and early warning; stress and security management; WFP preparedness and response strategies; assessment, monitoring and evaluation; and addressing gender concerns in all WFP operations.

### **Joint training**

39. Effective implementation of emergency feeding programmes is determined by staff management capability and technical competency, including understanding of coordination arrangements. Staff performance is therefore enhanced through joint agency training programmes aimed at: a) improving knowledge of relevant technical areas by sharing experience, techniques and tools; b) clarifying the respective roles and responsibilities of each agency as defined in written agreements; c) creating awareness of the other partners' constraints; and d) sharing information on needed improvement of operational policies.
40. **Joint training with UNHCR:** The MOU between WFP and UNHCR contemplates joint training courses on cooperation in implementing joint working arrangements. In addition, WFP and UNHCR offer each other places on their respective emergency training programmes, and share training materials and resource people. Over the past two years, WFP and UNHCR have developed a basic methodology for conducting joint contingency planning exercises, both as a training activity and as a preparedness measure addressing possible future requirements.
41. **Inter-agency training:** WFP has participated in regional/country and Training of Trainers workshops of the UNDP/DHA Disaster Management Training Programme. Since 1991, 55 WFP staff members have participated in the senior field coordination and the monitoring and evaluation workshops sponsored by the International Labour Organization's Turin training centre. WFP has been involved in DHA-sponsored efforts to develop the Complex Emergency Training Initiative (CETI) focused on joint inter-agency activities and on imparting knowledge and skills of specific relevance to complex emergencies.
42. **Possible joint training initiatives:** One approach to ensuring that coordination arrangements are clear is for each agency to design a module on its responsibilities and mandates for use by other agencies in their internal training sessions. The present CETI training initiative is an appropriate vehicle for putting together the information required for a coordination module applicable to all United Nations agencies working in emergencies. Another possible avenue of cooperation could be a joint WFP/UNHCR rapid response training on coordination and collaboration on the initial planning phases of an emergency.



### ***Administrative and other procedures for flexibility and rapid response***

43. WFP has guidelines and procedures in place for the timely preparation and authorization of emergency and protracted relief operations for a rapid response while at the same time ensuring the quality of planned activities and accountability.
44. The new WFP reorganization is expected to make in-house procedures for approving relief operations even more efficient. The enlarged and strengthened regional bureaux will have primary responsibility for the quality of all documents, with a programme review committee reviewing project concepts and advancing recommendations for improvements.

### ***Delegation of authority to the field level***

45. In keeping with the increased complexity and urgency of WFP operations, management discretion is being increasingly delegated to staff at the country level to improve administrative efficiency, accountability and flexibility for maximum responsiveness to evolving local needs.
46. Current delegations of authority to the field are:
  - a) ***Resources/purchasing***: local food purchases up to 100,000 dollars, including transport and other related expenses, and local resource mobilization.
  - b) ***Finance/administration***: disposal of assets up to 100,000 dollars, imprest account for non-staff payments, moving funds between budget lines, approving payments within the country office budget, including travel expenses, and annual cash allocation for technical services (monitoring and evaluation, training, local consultancies).
  - c) ***Personnel***: full supervision and administration of local staff, including promotion, reclassification, and hiring and selection of international project staff.
  - d) ***Project management***: selecting consultants for local and international missions; small-scale emergency responses through NGOs or United Nations agencies up to 200,000 dollars; reformulating projects for geographic coverage, targeting, ration size and food basket; signing agreements with governments; developing/implementing a system for immediate local action on emergencies; and approving extensions in time of projects and operations.
  - e) ***Common premises***: in the context of efforts to establish United Nations Common Premises in the field, deciding on common premise proposals involving WFP country offices within the framework of criteria established by the Joint Consultative Group on Policy.
47. Together with delegation, WFP has introduced a new performance management system, whereby agreed performance goals are established, against which managers are held responsible and accountable.
48. The Country Programme Approach is expected to allow greater delegation of authority to the field. In order to achieve maximum flexibility in carrying out the Country Programme, WFP has adopted a management principle of granting maximum delegation on all operational decisions to the country office.
49. The management of financial and human resources, logistics, procurement, administration, and the mobilization of media and resources will be progressively transferred to clusters/sub-regions to be established in the framework of the reorganization, from 1 October 1996.



50. Contingency planning activities are designed to be field-based, under the leadership of country offices, with headquarters staff serving as facilitators in a support role.
51. Various change initiatives under way will further reinforce the process of delegating authority, i.e., progressive improvements to WFP information systems for finance which will provide up-to-date information on the availability of funds needed to plan expenditures at the field level.

## Reporting, evaluation and accountability

### Reporting

52. Operational and financial reporting is undergoing a process of streamlining and standardization as a result of changes associated with the Country Programme Approach, the new resourcing model and the Financial Management Improvement Programme (FMIP).
53. In connection with the new resourcing model, WFP is convening donor meetings on a more frequent and regular basis, and reporting more frequently on WFP relief operations.
54. The consolidation of functions related to corporate data management, reporting, statistics, data sharing and external data gathering is an important outcome of the reorganization; it will improve the consistency and accuracy of WFP reporting on relief activities and global relief requirements, including planned or implemented actions by other food aid actors. Increased access to WFP corporate information will improve coordination with and delegation of authority to WFP country offices, and will enhance data exchange and cooperation with WFP partners. Having information on relief food aid requirements against availability (both WFP and global) will enable other food aid actors, such as NGOs, donors and recipient countries, to improve their overall management information, and thus the efficiency of relief food aid operations in general.
55. The WFP International Food Aid Information System (INTERFAIS) produces information on food aid flows and requirements, which is disseminated to a wide range of partners and contributes significantly to the coordination of food aid allocations.
56. WFP undertakes joint reporting on complex relief operations with DHA under the Consolidated Appeals Process, through which donors are kept informed of resource shortfalls and overall relief requirements. It also co-writes mission reports and special alerts for needs assessments conducted jointly, such as with FAO for drought and UNHCR for refugee emergencies.

### Evaluation

57. As a result of the changes in activities undertaken, WFP has started to evaluate its emergency operations more systematically. These evaluations aim to increase feedback on the socio-economic impact of WFP activities and provide policy-oriented information. Key issues examined are dependency, the relief to development continuum, hunger and access to food, effectiveness of the WFP contribution in terms of adequacy, timeliness and appropriateness of food aid as an input, and lessons learned for improving WFP's response.
58. In order to study the effectiveness of the WFP intervention, it is necessary to look into the gender element, in particular the participation of women both as beneficiaries and local managers of food aid. This is another important theme of WFP's evaluation work.



59. Donors and other United Nations agencies are regularly involved in assessment and monitoring of WFP activities, and are increasingly being included in WFP evaluations.
60. In order to improve its capacity to assess the relevance and effectiveness of food assistance in relief operations and facilitate management decisions on a programme's orientation, WFP is developing a system of performance indicators to measure the effect of emergency operations on the target beneficiaries' well-being and response to an emergency. In the future, WFP will ensure that project proposals for emergency and protracted relief operations include performance indicators to provide a basis for tracking progress and meeting monitoring and evaluation needs.

### **Accountability**

61. The greater emphasis on accountability of WFP relief activities is being achieved through the above-mentioned improvements to financial management, information systems, reporting, delegation of authority, etc. These change initiatives were accompanied by the creation, in July 1995, of the Office of Inspection and Investigation, whose role is to conduct ad hoc inspections to ensure that resources are used effectively and for their intended purpose.
62. WFP's internal audit service has developed a new audit strategy to achieve an audit cycle for country offices based on assessed risks and to ensure coverage of relevant headquarters units.

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### **FILLING THE GAPS**

63. Food aid has a major role to play along the entire continuum in meeting the needs of those suffering acute food shortages caused by emergencies: displaced persons and host communities alike, both in the countries of origin and those of asylum.
64. In the pre-emergency phase, WFP focuses on preventing and preparing for emergencies in countries of origin through its development projects and disaster mitigation activities aimed at reducing vulnerability. In the immediate emergency phase, food is used to save lives by meeting basic nutritional needs. In the rehabilitation and reintegration phase, food aid is used to encourage the transition to development and to help people return to their places of origin as an adjunct to seeds and tools programmes. It is used in rebuilding social infrastructure and services and addressing environmental damage caused by concentrations of displaced persons through food-for-work programmes; and in rebuilding transport and logistic infrastructure which allows movement of goods and people to get the economy going again.
65. To be fully cost-effective, food aid requires complementary non-food inputs and technical expertise. WFP has generally received a good donor response for food aid, but there is a limited response when agencies appeal for other aspects of emergency and rehabilitation activities. Where joint activities are planned, food is generally available, but the complementary non-food items are not.
66. WFP interest in filling gaps in the areas of transport and logistics rehabilitation, seeds and tools, non-food items related to food distribution, and food distribution to IDPs stems from its dual mandate for post-emergency rehabilitation in the countries of origin. Its interest arises also from a broader conceptualization of the food chain beyond delivery of



whole commodities, to include other inputs required to get food to beneficiaries (distribution services), maximize nutritional transfer (non-food items for food preparation) and achieve self-sufficiency in food to allow the phase-out of food aid (seeds and tools).

### **Transport and logistics**

67. WFP possesses proven and well-documented comparative advantages in transport and logistics which are unique among United Nations organizations, and welcomes the opportunity to share them to the benefit of the United Nations family of relief agencies. United Nations organizations should take advantage of WFP's logistic capabilities when it is appropriate and cost-effective to do so. Such inter-agency endeavours would evolve naturally from existing working arrangements in a gradual, pragmatic manner.
68. There are two major areas where WFP can most contribute to inter-agency efforts and enhanced systemic efficiency within the realm of transport and logistics:
- a) Provision of transport and logistic services for both food and non-food items to other United Nations agencies, NGOs and bilateral donors in operations and situations where it is appropriate and cost-effective to do so.
  - b) Ensuring that the existing transport infrastructure is capable of supporting cost-effective and timely operations for food delivery and other types of relief; and managing improvement projects required to achieve this end.
69. WFP is able to provide assistance in these areas for a number of reasons. First, the scale of operations conducted by WFP in all corners of the globe, i.e., over 470 million dollars a year in transport activities, gives it an international presence and economies of scale. Second, because of this level of activity, WFP is able to provide shipping services comparable to those of the largest private firms. Having the ability to charter its own vessels, WFP saves tens of millions of dollars a year over the rates that would be charged by outside providers. Third, WFP has extensive experience in all aspects of overland transport, including both rail and road activities, allowing it to form complete transport chains that cover handling, storage, forwarding and subsequent delivery. Finally, in order to support its high level of overland food deliveries, WFP has undertaken numerous infrastructure improvement projects which enhance throughput capacities while reducing costs.
70. Although at present WFP is able to make immediate contributions in the area of transport and logistics, there are a number of issues that remain to be addressed in order to gain maximum benefit from the capabilities which WFP has to offer. Namely, there is a need for WFP to provide accurate costing information to other agencies in order for them to make the most appropriate, cost-effective transport choices. There is also need for a methodology to ensure that infrastructure improvement projects are adequately supported and maintained throughout the transition from relief to development.
71. A detailed discussion of WFP's comparative advantages in transport and logistics, and documented cost savings is given in an Information Supplement (document WFP/EB.3/96/3/Add.1).





## Non-food items

### *WFP procurement capacity*

72. WFP's recognized comparative advantage in terms of expertise and capacity lies in food procurement. Primarily, WFP experience with the procurement of non-food items relates to its development activities, although it does procure substantial quantities of non-food items for emergency operations, i.e., vehicles, communication equipment, etc.
73. This is an area where there is potential for other agencies with more expertise and capacity in non-food procurement either to provide directly non-food items complementary to cost-effective food aid programmes, or provide a procurement service for WFP-resourced non-food items. WFP is exploring with other agencies possibilities for pursuing collaborative arrangements.

### *Seeds and tools*

74. Seeds and tools may be seen as the last link in the food chain which bridges over to self-sufficiency in food production to allow the phase-out of food aid. The latter is an important complementary input for successful seeds and tools programmes, to prevent beneficiaries from eating the seeds and provide energy for labour, and it is essential that these inputs are provided together. Delays in providing seeds and tools are quite costly to WFP and the donor community alike, as they extend the need for food aid for each agricultural season that beneficiaries are unable to produce their own food.
75. WFP has operational experience with and better capacity for providing targeted food aid and transport and logistic services, whereas FAO has the technical expertise in food and agriculture. Seed programmes in the recovery stage of an emergency should therefore be implemented as joint WFP/FAO programmes, and there is scope for regularizing collaboration in this regard, building on the comparative advantages of each agency.
76. As regards refugees, UNHCR typically provides seeds and tools as part of its programmes. WFP, in collaboration with FAO, could provide seeds and tools along with the food aid it already provides for refugees at the request of UNHCR.

### *Non-food items for food preparation*

77. The humanitarian assistance community must do a better job of sending, together with relief food, the complementary non-food items necessary to transform whole commodities into edible form, such as fuel, fuel-efficient stoves, cooking pots and utensils, mills (or milling services), and jerrycans to haul water for cooking. When these items are delayed or unavailable, the following consequences result:
- a) The cost-efficiency of food aid operations is compromised in terms of meeting the nutritional needs of beneficiaries. Relief foods require extensive processing and cooking to make the nutrients in them biologically available. Many beneficiaries are forced to sell part of their rations to obtain fuel, cooking supplies, etc., and do so at a much lower value than the cost of providing the food aid.
  - b) ***Impact on women's workload and nutrition:*** In emergencies, the labour burden of women for fetching food, fuel and water increases drastically, at an increased caloric expense.





- c) ***Impact on household nutrition:*** As fuel and water become scarce and more time is required to collect them, the household's time is shifted away from earning an income and cooking meals.
  - d) ***Environmental damage and impact on long-term food security:*** Massive concentrations of displaced persons in camps cause land degradation, water contamination and deforestation, undermining the long-term food security of displaced people and host communities alike.
78. UNHCR is the agency responsible for supplying basic non-food items to refugees. Responsibility for providing non-food items for food preparation to IDPs is a gap in the emergency humanitarian assistance system. WFP has proposed that this issue be taken up in the DHA Inter-Agency Task Force on IDPs.
79. A good amount of research has been conducted into the environmental aspects of fuel consumption in emergency situations and remedial measures; these include the development and field testing of various kinds of fuel-efficient stoves and alternative fuels, and projects linking energy saving measures, afforestation and income-generating activities. WFP has also proposed that an inter-agency effort be considered, such as a review of existing studies to draw conclusions on implications for field practice, with the ultimate aim of producing practical guidelines and specifications for fuel-efficient stoves and alternative fuels.
80. Another area related to the emergency response that has been neglected to date is assessing the environmental impact of concentrated camp populations, along with technical assistance to design ameliorative projects as a part of emergency operations.

### **Broader food distribution responsibility**

81. In refugee situations, as per the MOU between WFP and UNHCR, food reaches the beneficiary first by WFP delivering the food to agreed hand-over points located as close as possible to the distribution sites, then UNHCR arranging for the distribution of commodities through its implementing partners. A more direct relationship between WFP and implementing partners currently engaged by UNHCR would enhance accountability and improve the information flow (from WFP to the implementing partner on the food pipeline, and vice versa on beneficiary composition, stock levels and rates of distribution), which would lead to better WFP assessment of food needs, a check on beneficiary numbers, better monitoring and reporting on distribution of food aid, and a more efficient planning and management of the operation in general.
82. In the context of the MOU on joint working arrangements, WFP and UNHCR are discussing ways of increasing both WFP's involvement in the distribution process and the accountability of the implementing partner in order to satisfy WFP's need to account to its donors.

### **Operational lead agency for IDPs**

83. In the first paper, WFP identified as a gap the lack of clear institutional responsibility for ensuring the material needs of IDPs, and proposed that an operational lead agency be designated on an ad hoc basis for each situation to a) organize assessment of needs; b) coordinate all technical support and services to IDPs; and c) negotiate with the government and local authorities.



84. Further to the Board's deliberation on the first paper, WFP has proposed that the criteria and procedures for implementing the operational lead agency concept be addressed in the context of the IASC and the DHA Inter-Agency Task Force on IDPs.

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## **FOLLOW-UP ACTION**

85. The Executive Director will take the following action in response to this paper:
- a) Pursue using other appropriate unspent monies, such as residual funds for relief operations, to replenish the IRA, and report back to the Board on efforts to explore with donors a broader application of the use of unspent monies in this regard.
  - b) Develop specific proposals for modifying the criteria for use of the IRA to include response to sudden crises in protracted relief operations.
  - c) Elaborate further on its proposal for a more active role in responding to the food aid aspects of economic emergencies, including needed changes in criteria for IEFR.
  - d) Request the Emergency Relief Coordinator, through the IASC, to revisit the proposal to introduce a waiver for high-risk loans with low repayment prospects made from the CERF, and ask that DHA ensure that this matter is duly highlighted as a gap in the Secretary-General's report to ECOSOC on resolution 1995/56.
86. The following action is requested from the Board:
- a) Take note of WFP's expertise, comparative advantages and economies of scale in transport and logistics, endorse WFP's practice of making these services available to other agencies, and encourage humanitarian organizations to take advantage of these services when appropriate and cost-effective.
  - b) Consider whether it wishes to seek to become the appropriate forum to establish a level of food aid commitments sufficient to meet the legitimate needs of developing countries during the trade reform programme.



## ANNEX I

<b>WFP CAPACITY CONSTRAINTS AND CHANGE INITIATIVES</b>
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Constraints	Change initiatives
<p>Political and security issues hinder and complicate relief and rehabilitation work, i.e., insufficient resources and/or attention to preventive diplomacy by the international community; land-mines; the need to negotiate access; and safety of staff.</p>	<p>Continued advocacy on preventive diplomacy in conjunction with other Administrative Committee on Coordination and Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) partners.</p> <p>Reinforcing preventive development activities.</p> <p>Advocacy in international fora on land-mines.</p> <p>WFP has raised staff security issues in an inter-agency context with the United Nations Security Coordinator.</p>
<p>Emergency management systems and procedures need regular review and strengthening.</p>	<p>Efforts ongoing to standardize reporting; consolidate the food pipeline system for tracking food availability and prioritizing resource allocation; streamline purchasing procedures; and update guidelines for emergency management.</p> <p>Ongoing activities to build emergency preparedness and response capacity for shorter reaction times:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vulnerability analysis and mapping, collaboration with early warning systems, assessment of logistic capacity and intervention options, and contingency planning for advance knowledge of and planning for potential emergencies.</li> <li>• Ready inputs for immediate response through strategic stocks of food and equipment, blanket purchase agreements to reduce procurement lead-time for essential emergency response items, stand-by arrangements for human resources and equipment, and procedures for use of military and civilian defence assets and service packages.</li> <li>• Coordination with United Nations, NGO and government partners for a division of labour and complementary non-food inputs for maximum effectiveness of food aid.</li> <li>• Building of communications systems and transport and logistic infrastructure through communications improvement projects and special operations.</li> </ul>
<p>Structure and staffing of organization need adjustment to be more suited to the demands of an emergency-oriented programme.</p>	<p>WFP reorganization: WFP has introduced a reorganization effective 1 October 1996 to improve its work and integrate change initiatives underway. Key element is a change in the relationship between the field and headquarters and of the field structure itself, with the grouping of country offices into "clusters" or sub-regions, complemented by the delegation of management authority, responsibility and accountability for resources and results, analysis, strategic planning and decision-making and a shift of support services to the field.</p>
<p>Overstretched human and operational resources</p>	<p>Restructuring field operations: Ongoing phase-out of relatively more developed countries with no active</p>



for the volume and nature of WFP operations.

emergencies will release limited staff and operational resources, thereby enabling WFP to concentrate its efforts where most needed.

A new staff profile: WFP's workforce now composed of a small permanent core for managing and planning and a large temporary force for daily operations. Other reforms include: 1) redefining the skills mix for staff; 2) updating the recruitment profile; 3) converting international professional posts to national officer posts to build up local capacity; 4) introducing a new performance appraisal system; and 5) issuing directives and setting targets to achieve a better gender and geographic balance of human resources.

Further improvements needed in effectively targeting and monitoring.

Continuing efforts to train staff and update guidelines.

Lead-time to prepare quality rehabilitation activities in the transition from relief to development for Executive Board approval, exacerbated by lead-time and procedures of other implementing partners.

Issue raised in the 1994 Annual Report, at ECOSOC in 1996, and in informal consultations with other agencies.

Ongoing review to streamline procedures through change management team associated with the new reorganization.

Also see proposal to develop improved procedures for rehabilitation in paragraph 21.

Procedural gaps in identifying and designing project activities which promote the transition from relief to development.

Country Programme Approach: WFP is progressively introducing a Country Programme Approach, an integrated and strategic method of planning. Activities are programmed across the entire continuum for better linkages between relief and development. In countries prone to disasters and resulting food access problems, the country programme focuses on disaster prevention, preparedness and mitigation and post-disaster rehabilitation, and contingency planning for response to emergency situations.

The creation of a programme category under the new resourcing model which combines development, rehabilitation and preparedness better integrates planning along the continuum.

More technical support for the regional bureaux and country offices in identifying and designing activities which promote transition from relief to development, i.e., through programme design officers, technical support specialists, training, etc.

Issue raised with the Governing Body and its Member States, both formally and informally.

Ongoing review to streamline procedures for IRA through change management team associated with the new reorganization.

See proposal to strengthen the IRA in paragraphs 22 and 23.

Shortage of "untied, upfront" contributions, constraining flexibility, timeliness and cost-effectiveness of WFP relief response. Cash is particularly critical for rapid mobilization through local and regional purchases and specialized logistics interventions:

- IEFR not operating as a true multilateral response mechanism; resources provided ad hoc in response to specific appeals, with limited untied resources available for immediate response.
- No access to IRA for protracted relief operations which change character, i.e., a sudden crisis resulting in a dramatic increase in food aid needs and related transport and



logistic needs.

- Chronically underfunded IRA - The IRA is WFP's single most important mechanism for flexible and rapid response to new emergencies as it reduces lead time to get food aid to needy people through local and regional purchases, and funds initial related transport and logistic costs.

Reduction of resources for development, with serious implications for WFP's rapid response in emergency situations. Development projects help prevent emergency situations by reducing vulnerability of food-insecure populations, and are the basis for WFP's pre-positioned capacity.

Means of funding programme support and administrative costs under the previous WFP resourcing model resulted in a serious imbalance between the work to be done and the administrative and operational resources with which to do that work.

Unpredictability with respect to overall resource levels and the timing of receipt of contributions.

Resource gap for sustained response: limited cash for immediate response is available through the IRA, but lead time for converting a pledge into a contribution can be weeks or months. After the immediate response, there may be a shortfall in resources available while the pipeline builds up.

Greater earmarking of contributions, reducing WFP's flexibility to allocate food to where it is most urgently needed.

Insufficient resources for unpopular operations.

Reimbursement to the CERF: The current repayment requirement makes the CERF less helpful than it might be.

Outdated financial and information systems, inadequate controls on assets, cash flow and expenditure, overhead costs not being fully defined or recovered, and insufficiently decentralized budgeting and financial accountability (from the report of the Formal Working Group of the CFA on Options for WFP's Resource Policies and Long-Term Financing, 24 April 1995).

WFP's change to the Country Programme Approach will allow a better allocation of resources and integrate WFP development projects into an overall strategy, which is expected to improve credibility for continued support in this area.

New resourcing model: To provide more predictable, flexible resources and ensure full cost recovery and greater accountability; a new model for financing WFP activities has been in effect on a trial basis since 1 January 1996. Accounting, resource consultations, appeals, and reporting and budgeting services to donors are being standardized, with additional services provided on an ad hoc, full cost recovery basis.

More regular and frequent donor consultations in the context of the new resourcing model are expected to be viewed by donors as pledging opportunities, thus providing WFP with a more continuous funding mechanism and reducing delivery time of commodities by decreasing delays in confirming contributions of relief food aid.

WFP improvements in monitoring, evaluation, accountability, reporting, and strategic planning show how WFP is following the guidance provided by its Executive Board, producing sound project proposals, and thus building confidence for greater flexibility.

Strong advocacy and regular contact with donors.

CERF would be more useful if it served as a fund of last resort for unpopular emergencies, in which case the possibility of non-repayment should be entertained. WFP unsuccessfully raised this issue with the IASC in May 1995. WFP proposes that this issue be revisited - see Annex II.

Improved strategic and financial planning processes.

Increased staff in audit, inspection and investigations and improved cash investment management.

A study to determine overhead costs; strengthening of the resource tracking system.

Financial Management and Improvement Programme (FMIP) to redesign WFP business processes and create the technical environment through

enhancements to information systems to support the redesigned processes. Information system improvements include: 1) consolidation of a corporate database and data model to capture, share and report data consistently; 2) standardization and networking of computer facilities for data sharing between



headquarters and country offices; and 3) integration and redesign of WFP's information systems along with their related reporting forms.

WFP Data Warehouse: Database of up-to-date, accurate corporate information drawn from WFP's operational systems to facilitate the retrieval, analysis and formatting of information for the generation of management reports needed for decision-making. First applications available in 1996.

Connectivity '96: Ongoing process of connecting country offices to headquarters by installing Internet-based e-mail, greatly reducing telecommunications costs and improving information sharing. WFP's site on the Internet's World Wide Web, public since May 1996, also facilitates sharing of operational information, both within WFP and between WFP, donors and implementing partners for better coordination of assessment, planning, response and resource mobilization.

Progressive decentralization of accounting and budgetary functions and systems to the regional bureaux and country offices as sources of transactions; development of a new field accounting system; recruitment of specialized finance and administration officers for headquarters and the field.

Improved procedures related to responsibility budgeting, delegation of authority and performance management systems.

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**ANNEX II**

<p><b>ECOSOC RESOLUTION 1995/56</b></p> <p><b>SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS AND SUGGESTIONS</b></p>
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**Capacity to fulfil role and mandate**

Emergency response and preparedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Readiness through extensive network of country offices/clusters and pre-positioned food aid in stock and transit in vulnerable regions.</li> <li>• Proven capacity in transport and logistics, and food procurement.</li> <li>• Inputs and planning: internal and external standby arrangements for personnel and equipment, food and equipment stocks, contingency planning, and vulnerability assessment and mapping.</li> <li>• Coordinator of food aid pledges.</li> <li>• Source of information on food aid requirements and vulnerability analysis for targeting and programming.</li> </ul>
Continuum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dual mandate to provide relief and development assistance (includes disaster mitigation and rehabilitation).</li> </ul>

**Constraints**

Operational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political and security issues.</li> <li>• Emergency management and financial/information systems and procedures need regular review and strengthening.</li> <li>• Overstretched human and operational resources for volume and nature of WFP operations.</li> <li>• Difficulties in effectively targeting and monitoring.</li> <li>• Lead time to prepare quality rehabilitation activities in the transition from relief to development for Executive Board approval, exacerbated by lead time and procedures of other implementing partners.</li> <li>• Procedural gap in identifying and designing activities which promote transition from relief to development.</li> </ul>
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shortage of upfront, untied resources, especially cash.</li> <li>• Decreasing resource flow for development in disaster-prone regions.</li> <li>• Resource gap for sustained response due to long lead time for converting pledges to contributions.</li> <li>• Insufficient resources for unpopular operations.</li> <li>• Earmarking of contributions, and unpredictability of resource levels and timing of contribution receipt.</li> <li>• Reimbursement to CERF of loans for which there is little donor response.</li> </ul>





## Change initiatives

- Continuing adjustment of WFP structure, systems, procedures and staffing for relief activities.
- Initiatives include restructuring field operations and a major reorganization to transfer management authority and support services to the field; new approaches to planning and implementation, resource mobilization and the management of human resources; a re-engineering of business processes and consolidation of information systems; and strategic and financial planning.

## Other capacity enhancements needed

Operational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• System and procedures for implementing the Country Programme Approach incorporating the emergency relief and rehabilitation dimensions.</li> <li>• Further expanding internal and external standby arrangements for expertise in telecommunications, civil engineering, socio-economics/gender, nutrition, etc., for a rapid response and improved quality.</li> <li>• More technical support to country offices/regional bureaux in identifying and designing activities that foster a transition from relief to development.</li> <li>• Systematically introducing contingency and operational planning to enhance preparedness in inter-agency fora.</li> <li>• Assessment tools to identify appropriate phase-over to development/rehabilitation concepts.</li> <li>• Inter-agency dialogue on how to get development/financial organizations involved in rehabilitation of infrastructure earlier.</li> <li>• Proposal for WFP's role in meeting food aid aspects of economic emergencies due to shocks related to trade liberalization.</li> <li>• Increasing WFP's role in policy analysis, advice and dialogue with governments on food aid dimensions of food security.</li> <li>• Procedure to provide accurate costing information to other agencies to enable them to make the most appropriate, cost-effective transport choices.</li> <li>• Methodology for ensuring that infrastructure improvement projects are adequately supported and maintained throughout the transition from relief to development.</li> </ul>
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exploring with donors creative ways to reprogramme unspent monies to replenish the IRA, along with other options to increase access to untied, upfront cash for emergency response.</li> <li>• Reviewing IEFR as an effective instrument for multilateral relief assistance and its ability to cope with new situations, e.g., economic emergencies.</li> <li>• Requesting the Emergency Relief Coordinator, through the IASC, to revisit proposals for a waiver of obligations to repay unreimbursable loans to CERF.</li> <li>• Further improving financial information systems to provide information on the availability of funds for planning expenditures at the field level.</li> </ul>



Human resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The development of human resources, including training, to enhance technical and management capacities for strategic thinking, and planning and execution of Country Programmes.</li> <li>• Orienting training in order to develop management capacity and strategic thinking.</li> <li>• Each agency to design modules on responsibilities and mandates for inter-agency training on coordination.</li> <li>• Expanded inter-agency training on technical and management aspects of emergency response.</li> </ul>
Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accelerated approval procedures for rehabilitation projects.</li> <li>• Further streamlining internal procedures.</li> <li>• Additional delegations of authority.</li> <li>• Further defining parameters of delegation, and providing clear instructions and training on delegation.</li> </ul>

### Capacity issues

Transport and logistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of cost-effective transport services when requested.</li> <li>• Management of infrastructure improvement projects when required for more cost-effective food delivery.</li> </ul>
Non-food items: seeds and tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exploring with FAO closer collaboration on seeds and tools.</li> </ul>
Non-food items: food preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further consultations on division of labour and implementing modalities for providing to IDPs non-food items for food preparation in the context of the DHA Inter-Agency Task Force on IDPs.</li> <li>• Inter-agency effort to review research into energy-saving technologies in the emergency context to produce practical guidelines and specifications for fuel-efficient stoves and alternatives fuels.</li> <li>• Inter-agency consultations on environmental impact assessment of camp populations and technical assistance to design ameliorative projects as part of emergency operations.</li> </ul>
Food distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing consultations with UNHCR to satisfy WFP's accountability to donors.</li> </ul>
Operational lead agency for IDPs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Criteria and procedures to implement this concept to be addressed in the context of the IASC and the DHA Inter-Agency Task Force on IDPs.</li> </ul>



