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COUNTRY STRATEGY OUTLINES

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COUNTRY STRATEGY OUTLINE - MADAGASCAR 1999-2003

ABSTRACT

The present Country Strategy Outline (CSO), which sets out the policy framework for cooperation between the Republic of Madagascar and the World Food Programme over the next five years (1999-2003) is submitted to the Executive Board prior to the preparation of a country programme covering the same period.

Madagascar figures among both the world's least developed countries (LDCs) and low-income, food-deficit countries (LIFDCs). It ranks 152nd out of 175 countries, according to UNDP's human development indicator for 1997. With a gross domestic product (GDP) of 200 dollars per capita (1994) and an infant mortality rate of 166 per 1,000 in the 0 to five years age range, 72 percent of the population lives below the poverty threshold (UNDP, 1997), while the food insecurity rate is 63 percent (FAO). In addition, the country is regularly hit by hurricanes and droughts.

The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for the 1999-2003 period is under preparation for Madagascar. The fight against the causes of poverty is one of the top priorities addressed.

WFP's contribution to national and international efforts aimed at assisting the Government in implementing a national policy of poverty alleviation over the period 1999-2003 is estimated at 15 million dollars in the form of food and services, broken down as follows:

- a) of the total resources, 67 percent would be devoted to a joint community feeding programme co-financed by the World Bank. During the programme, this component would assist 411,000 malnourished children aged between six months and three years, 65,000 children suffering from serious malnutrition and 360,000 expectant mothers;
- b) another 20 percent would go on support to primary education in the deep south of the country where enrolment rates are lowest; some 33,000 beneficiaries a year would be involved;
- c) the remaining 13 percent would be allocated to a natural calamity mitigation programme covering 90,000 people a year over the programme's five-year duration.

Southern Madagascar, being the area most exposed to natural disasters and having the lowest school enrolment rate, will benefit from the greater part of the resources allocated under the country programme.

A food vulnerability analysis mechanism will be set up in 1998 to improve targeting of beneficiaries and closely monitor any critical changes in their socio-economic conditions. WFP will also take steps to strengthen the participatory approach as well as its policy of locally purchasing and/or producing the commodities needed for the food rations.

All monetary values are expressed in United States dollars, unless otherwise stated. One United States dollar equalled 5,320 Malagasy francs (FMG) in February 1998.

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NOTE TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

This document contains recommendations for review by the Executive Board.

Pursuant to the decisions taken on the methods of work by the Executive Board at its First Regular Session of 1996, 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.

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INTRODUCTION

1. According to the UNDP Human Development Report for 1997, 72 percent of Madagascar's population lives below the poverty line (11.3 million inhabitants out of 15.7 million) as against 43 percent in the sixties; of the poor, 85 percent live in rural areas. Over the past 20 years, the average standard of living in the country has dropped by more than 40 percent. The adult literacy rate is 58 percent while, in rural areas, 63 percent of women are illiterate. Over 70 percent of the population has no access to drinking-water.
2. Attempts at economic reform undertaken between 1980 and 1991 with the help of the World Bank met with some success. The gross domestic product (GDP) showed positive growth while inflation fell back sharply. In 1991, a dispute over economic policy measures unfortunately stopped that tentative recovery in its stride and since then the majority of Madagascar's inhabitants have seen no lasting growth in their incomes.
3. From 1991 to 1993, GDP dropped an average of four percent a year. Spending on subsidies increased the overall budget deficit to 11 percent of GDP and inflation soared to 61 percent at the end of 1994. Investments collapsed to 11.8 percent of GDP in 1992, compared with an average of 19 percent for the rest of Africa.
4. Social repercussions were severe. School enrolment dropped, health indicators plummeted and marginalized groups in urban centres increased; in the capital alone, the numbers of destitute rose to 200,000, of whom 32 percent were women household heads and homeless urchins.
5. In 1995, the Government embarked on an economic recovery programme aimed at revitalizing the economy and containing inflationary pressures. The economy improved by fits and starts. Stabilization measures resulted in a two percent increase in GDP while the budget deficit dropped to nine percent of GDP and inflation slipped back to 37 percent at the end of 1995.
6. The Government has also been trying, however, to soften the impact of the adjustment measures on the poorest segments of the population and on sensitive social sectors such as health and education.
7. Two other important events which occurred early in 1997 were also expected to affect the economic and political situation in Madagascar. One was the signature of a series of agreements with the Bretton Woods institutions which partially wrote off or rescheduled Madagascar's external debt and under which donors pledged to commit more funds to the country's development. The other was the election of a new President for a five-year term, thus inaugurating a new era of political stability with a new constitution giving the regions greater autonomy. If all goes according to plan, the scene should be set for economic growth, increased investments and a greater flow of development aid.

FOOD INSECURITY AND THE HUNGRY POOR

Food insecurity at the national level

8. Madagascar's agriculture accounts for 35 percent of GDP and employs over 70 percent of the active population. More than 75 percent of the country's inhabitants live in rural



areas. The past few years have been characterized by a stagnation in the production of food crops. Rice yields, which had been relatively stable since the early sixties at around two tons per hectare, were poor and lagged far behind the performance of Asian countries, where yields practically doubled over the same period.

9. In addition, Madagascar is regularly struck by two kinds of natural calamities—cyclones and droughts. The former usually strike the eastern coast but are generally unpredictable regarding strength, point of impact and damage caused. The last major cyclones occurred in 1994, 1995 and 1997. The worst droughts hit the country's southern and south-eastern regions, which are also the target of locust infestations. The last major drought occurred in the south in 1991/92 and required an emergency operation to which WFP contributed 550,000 tons of food at a cost of 19 million dollars.
10. Rice is Madagascar's staple food. It is consumed virtually everywhere in the country although less so in the south, where maize is preferred. Rice represents 40 percent of all food consumed and 85 percent of cereals. The lean season, which lasts three to four months (from December to March, depending on the region) is always accompanied in rural areas by a significant reduction in the amount of food eaten and even in the number of meals taken. Cassava and pulses represent a food complement everywhere. Depending on the region, tubers such as taros, yams, sweet potatoes, potatoes (generally grown in the highlands), and plantain may be served in addition to the basic combination of rice (or maize)-cassava-pulses.
11. Per capita food production has been dropping ever since the sixties, reaching the critical level of 63 percent in 1995 calculated on the basis of 100 in 1979-81 (FAO). Private consumption dropped by 44 percent, with a volume drop of 33 percent in food spending.
12. Imports represent a relatively small part of the country's food supply, with the main imports being rice and wheat. In the nineties, rice imports fell sharply as compared with the eighties, dropping from 355,000 tons in 1982 to 50,000 tons in 1995.
13. Stagnating food crops production, together with lower cereals imports, has resulted in a reduction of the quantity of food available per capita.
14. Quantities of rice available fell from 150 kilograms per year per inhabitant in 1975 to 115 kilograms in 1995. The price of rice increased (from 650 FMG per kilogram in 1994 to 2,250 FMG in 1995, later easing to 1,800-2,000 FMG), much more than any other food product. Considered a basic necessity, it had been subsidized more than any other staple.
15. **Health and nutrition.** Over the last few years, the standard of living of Madagascar's inhabitants has dropped more than 40 percent. Daily per capita caloric intake has fallen from 2,500 kilocalories to less than 2,000 over the same period. Three quarters of the population now consume less than the 2,100 kilocalories recommended by FAO.
16. Madagascar has one of the highest rates of both acute and chronic malnutrition: 50 percent of children aged below five (as against an average of 42 percent in sub-Saharan Africa) show signs of stunting due to chronic malnutrition while 7.4 percent of children are below weight due to acute malnutrition. The regions hardest-hit by chronic malnutrition are Antananarivo (58.4 percent), Fianarantsoa (55.8 percent), Tamatave (52.2 percent), Majunga (50.5 percent) and those with the highest acute malnutrition are Fianarantsoa (10.6 percent) and Antseranana (14.4 percent). The situation in Tuléar and Fianarantsoa regions is exacerbated by drought and cyclones.
17. A number of factors contribute to malnutrition. They include insufficient and unbalanced food consumption and production, poverty, ignorance of proper sanitary practices and



- inadequate health services. Some 65 percent of the population runs the risk of vitamin A deficiency. Parasite infections and micronutrients deficiency also contribute to stunting.
18. In Madagascar as a whole, some 72 percent of household income is spent on food, of which 53 percent goes to cereals and tubers. The diet in Madagascar households is very short on proteins and fats.
 19. Despite the decentralization of the health sector and relatively well distributed infrastructures, coverage provided by health services is still inadequate: 62 percent of the population has no access to health care and 71 percent is without drinking-water. The maternal mortality rate is 490 per 100,000 and life expectancy at birth is 57 years. Less than one percent of GDP is devoted to the health sector and spending on health represents barely 3.5 percent of household income.
 20. **Education.** Madagascar's educational system has deteriorated over the last 15 years. The gross school enrolment rate (the number of children effectively enrolled in schools as compared with the number of school-age children) has dropped in primary schools from just under 100 percent in 1980 to 83 percent in the mid-nineties. Today it stands at 77 percent in urban centres and 43 percent in rural areas (according to the National Commission on Education's 1997 report). More than a third of pupils are repeaters and only 38 percent completed their primary studies in 1990.
 21. The educational system's inefficiency is due to poor management, lack of school books, poorly trained teachers and the absence of any reorientation system. In addition, the school year partly coincides with the peak agricultural season, when boys in particular are called on to work. The overall economic crisis has accelerated the decline in enrolment. Over the past few years, total spending on education has represented some two percent of GDP. Again, many families view the cost of education as too high compared to its perceived advantages. Only two percent of household income is spent on education.
 22. **Target population.** A World Bank survey (Poverty Evaluation, 1996) notes that 63 percent of Madagascar's inhabitants cannot satisfy their food requirements and that 14 percent live in extreme poverty. Poverty affects rural areas more than urban centres, although some urban groups such as single women and urchins live in poverty deeper than any found in the countryside. They totally lack any source of income and have difficulty in acquiring food. Those are the reasons why women—especially expectant mothers and household heads—together with children aged from six months to three years, who represent the groups most exposed to malnutrition and parasite infections, will be the principal target groups in the WFP programme.

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES AND POLICIES

23. **Overall policies.** The Malagasy Government's basic strategy in combating constantly dropping living standards and promoting renewed growth is contained in its 1996-1999 Framework Document on Economic Policies (DCPE), prepared in consultation with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. "The Government," the document states, "is committed to improving the climate for investments, to waging a vigorous battle against inflation, to promoting a favourable macro-economic and regulatory environment and to improving the efficiency of administrative machinery. Public spending will be redirected to fighting poverty on a priority basis through sustained efforts on behalf of primary education, basic health and public security."



24. Wider powers for local communities and an increased role for women in development are among the basic policies of the new constitution, which lays special emphasis on the process of decentralization and on the exercise of democracy at the local level.
25. **Food security policies.** The policies outlined in the DCPE are set out in greater detail in two other fundamental documents: the National Food Security Strategy and the National Action Plan on Nutrition.
26. The National Food Security Strategy, which will serve as the basis for all projects against malnutrition, aims to improve food consumption through:
 - a) improving and stabilizing the food supply;
 - b) improving access to basic food products;
 - c) increasing, improving and diversifying the production system; and
 - d) promoting private enterprise in rural areas.
27. This strategy should be accompanied by institutional reforms and a better targeted food aid policy reflecting the above objectives. In order to improve existing methods of monitoring and evaluating of food security, an embryonic early warning system has been set up in the country's deep south. The system includes a network of nutritional surveillance stations and represents a first step towards the creation of a consolidated database system covering the country as a whole.
28. The National Action Plan on Nutrition was prepared at the Government's initiative with the support of international agencies. Its recommendations include the adoption of a multi-sector approach to tackle the root causes of malnutrition, its effects on maternal and infant mortality and on how it affects children's capacity to learn. The plan also addresses the problem of modifying harmful food consumption habits and recommends the formulation of a nutritional programme for schools together with training at the grass-roots level to improve nutritional habits.
29. Together with the above-mentioned policies, several initiatives supported by donors including the World Bank, WFP, UNESCO, Médecins sans Frontières (MSF) Switzerland and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) have been taken to tackle the problem of food insecurity at the household level. They fall under four headings, which are listed in the Public Investment Programme (PIP): poverty alleviation; institutional support to agriculture; health nutrition and education; and water and sanitation.
30. These initiatives placed emphasis on:
 - a) increasing food crops production: rehabilitating irrigation systems and other rural infrastructures; training, information and support to rural organizations; development of rural credit; access to agricultural inputs; research and liberalization of cereals production;
 - b) access to food through an increase in agricultural incomes based on the development of cash crops and on animal and fisheries production as well as on the creation of employment (labour-intensive programmes, apprenticeships, professional training, adult literacy courses);
 - c) improving distribution through the rehabilitation of rural tracks and the promotion of private and collective storage facilities (communal village warehouses); and
 - d) regularizing land ownership rights.



31. Price-fixing and the subsidy of essential products so as to make them available to the greatest number of people were completely abandoned in 1994-95. Liberalization has now been extended to almost all sectors, including internal trade, imports and exports. The Government has, in particular, ceased incentivizing rice imports and will no longer intervene in the rice market.
32. **Food aid.** However, despite the favourable situation described above, the quantity of food aid reaching Madagascar remains marginal. From 1990 to 1995, food aid amounted to 33,000 tons a year (of which 4,500 tons a year was supplied by WFP), i.e., less than 0.6 percent of the volume of local production. Aid mainly consisted of cereals, including 23 percent rice and 35 percent wheat or wheat flour.
33. As in other countries, food aid in Madagascar falls under one of two broad headings, "direct" and "indirect" aid. Indirect, or programme aid, is sold on the internal market and used to generate counterpart funds which are used to finance development projects and/or emergency programmes. Direct aid comes in the form of donations and covers both development and emergency operations. In 1995 and 1996, direct aid represented 60 percent of all food aid delivered, i.e., 40,000 tons, including 6,108 tons supplied by WFP.
34. In the light of the policies set out in the National Strategy on Food Security and in the National Action Plan on Nutrition, the Government of Madagascar confirms its intention to resort increasingly to food aid (development and emergency) in support of its poverty alleviation programme.

ASSESSMENT OF WFP'S PERFORMANCE TO DATE

Current activities

35. Since WFP began intervening in Madagascar in 1964, it has delivered food aid worth 48.3 million dollars to a total of 16 development projects, and supplied 24.2 million dollars' worth of food to nine emergency operations for a total of 72.5 million dollars. WFP's activities centred on the alleviation of poverty and malnutrition, development of human resources, agricultural and rural development, and assistance to drought and cyclone victims. WFP's current programme comprises the two development projects described below.

Madagascar 4553- Support to "Enlarged food security and nutrition" (SECALINE) project

36. The WFP project in support of SECALINE began in January 1994 and will end on 31 December 1998. It is co-financed by WFP (12,208,508 dollars) and by the World Bank through a 23-million-dollar credit from the International Development Association (IDA). It is a fundamental component of the Government's poverty alleviation programme; its chief aim is to assist the population groups worst-affected by the economic crisis and to help fight malnutrition among children under five in the provinces of Antananarivo and Tuléar.
37. A labour-intensive component (Haute Intensité de Main d'Oeuvre - HIMO) aims at improving sanitary conditions in the slums of Antananarivo city, where the poorest population groups live. The component accounts for 45 percent of SECALINE's budget and is co-financed by the World Bank with the International Labour Organization (ILO) as



an executing partner. This serves to guarantee the quality of targeting and of works, real community participation (signature of protocols of agreement with representatives of the population, training and awareness-raising sessions), and proper monitoring and evaluation, including efficient management of food and non-food items. The latter are purchased locally with funds generated by the monetization of imported wheat.

38. According to surveys undertaken by ILO, 80 percent of participants have no other source of income than the rice distributed under the project (two kilograms per workday), more than half of the beneficiaries are household heads and some 66 percent are women, 30 percent of them single. Among the recommendations of an evaluation mission in July 1996 was the suggestion that part of the project should be re-directed into food-for-work activities to take place in the south of the country. The activities, financed with funds from the HIMO component, accordingly started up in July 1997 in southern Tuléar.
39. Three positive elements deserve mentioning:
- a) participation of local communities in the identification of microprojects, in the organization of works (with a special mention for women) and in their maintenance;
 - b) the fundamental and positive role played by WFP projects in raising the awareness of beneficiaries and keeping them well informed; and
 - c) the quality of the works and of the monitoring and evaluation reports supplied by the development partners with whom WFP signed a protocol of agreement.
40. The Community Nutrition Programme, representing 40 percent of WFP assistance, features four activities: supplementary feeding of malnourished children; nutritional education classes for mothers by female instructors paid in kind; screening of children affected by severe malnutrition and their admission into nutritional recovery centres managed by the health services; and a general programme of public education, information and communication. The programme is executed by two regional coordination groups supported by NGOs at the national level; the executing office's staff has been reinforced by two nutritionists and two communications specialists, plus a monitoring and evaluation unit.
41. Support to social centres, which is intended to mitigate the negative effects of structural adjustment on vulnerable groups in Antananarivo city, combines development and humanitarian aid. Targeted beneficiaries belong to the poorest population groups. WFP assistance represents 15 percent of total aid and is provided through the inter-denominational groups running the social centres.

Madagascar 3936 - Support to basic education

42. WFP assistance to the education sector began in 1968. The current project, worth 4,132,699 dollars, has been running since October 1991 under a national policy framework aimed at improving the quality of education and at increasing the number of children attending school. Designed to last six years, the project ended in December 1997 but will be followed by a new, three-year phase approved by the Executive Director in February 1998.
43. The project currently involves some 30,000 pupils, teachers and cooks in 143 public primary schools in the provinces of Tuléar and Majunga, where enrolment rates are particularly low. Girls account for 52 percent of beneficiaries. At the end of the 1996/97 school year, WFP withdrew its assistance from Majunga province as the education and nutrition situation there had improved considerably.



44. A WFP evaluation mission, which included a UNESCO expert, recommended in March 1997 that WFP assistance to the sector be continued provided that corrective measures were taken concerning targeting and supervision. A logistics expert from the Maputo office also helped in improving management tools and food storage methods.

Results and sustainability

Support to SECALINE

45. Under the HIMO component in support of SECALINE, 27,500 workers, including some 18,000 women, had benefited from WFP assistance by mid-1997, and works had been completed in 110 of the 170 *fokontany* (districts) designated. The average duration of works on the sites was between 20 and 40 days. Rehabilitation and maintenance of ditches, land clearing and the repair of revetments and foot bridges all contributed to improving the environment and public health in general.
46. The number of nutritional centres assisted by the project increased from 299 on 31 July 1997 to 492 on 31 December 1997. They covered 39 districts and 624,000 children aged under five. Over 1992-96,¹ the rate of moderate malnutrition fell from 45 to 38 percent in Antananarivo province and from 28 to 18 percent in Tuléar. The project currently covers 69 percent of the target group in Antananarivo province and 74 percent of the province of Tuléar. Mothers' participation in weigh-ins and nutritional education sessions has grown from 15 percent at project start-up to a current 54 percent. However, the limited purchasing power of the families involved makes it impossible for them to apply everything they learn during training.
47. Given the high number of destitute individuals in the capital, the plan of operations was revised so that this component now covers more than 42,000 people (of whom 32 percent are women) as opposed to the 18,000 initially planned for. There are 80 centres, of which 28 exclusively look after homeless urchins aged between five and 16, who are given an education. However, the weakness of the executing structures involved (social centres and NGOs) compromises the component's impact and durability.
48. The design and structure of the SECALINE support project are based on a community approach. Results obtained have been satisfactory so that the Government, WFP and the World Bank have decided to enlarge its supplementary feeding component.
49. Since the start of the Support to basic education project, attendance rates in beneficiary schools have varied between 90 and 95 percent as opposed to 75 to 85 percent in non-assisted schools, where a further drop of 20-30 percent occurs during the lean season. Free meals provided in the school canteens encourage parents to send their children to school.
50. In order to further improve these results and to raise awareness among the communities concerned, targeting and start-up procedures for activities will be revised under the expansion recently approved by the Executive Director.

Strengths and weaknesses of the WFP project

51. The fact that the World Bank is co-financing the Community nutrition programme and HIMO components, and that HIMO is supervised by a highly experienced organization

¹ World Bank evaluation of the project (January 1998).



such as ILO, is fundamental to the success of project 4553. The protocols of agreement signed under the project and the information and awareness-raising campaigns it features should serve as an example for other activities undertaken by WFP. The Government has also made a praiseworthy effort in making counterpart staff available at the national and regional levels.

52. Under the HIMO component, commodities supplied by WFP are generally purchased locally in order to encourage local production. According to ILO's surveys, only 10 percent of the weekly rations are sold off, by a limited number of beneficiaries.
53. Despite its satisfactory results, this component cannot continue under the new country programme supported by WFP, as it no longer benefits from the support of the World Bank and ILO.
54. Moreover, the low capacity for technical execution exhibited by the institutions in charge of the social centres and the lack of any possibility of joint programming with other partners make it impossible to prolong this activity.
55. The school feeding programme still shows some weaknesses. The counterpart partner was unable to undertake the field visits it had planned due to a lack of material and financial means. Monitoring and evaluation reports were often inaccurate. In future WFP assistance to this sector, programme contracts and the improvement of monitoring and evaluation should help reinforce national execution capacity.

Cost-effectiveness

56. Despite the increase in the price of basic necessities, including rice, it is still cheaper for WFP to purchase commodities locally due to the floating of the Malagasy franc, the liberalization of prices and the suspension of subsidies. The alpha values of commodities delivered (i.e., the ratio between the value of a daily ration at current local market prices and the cost of shipment by WFP) are well above one. Local purchasing should be maintained under the future country programme.

Monitoring and evaluation

57. Under the HIMO/FFW component, ILO has designed and set up a number of useful instruments for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and for preparing reports based on the data and indicators listed in the plan of operations. As regards the Community nutrition programme, however, field staff would have had problems with the number of performance indicators originally specified. A simplified computer and data organization system for the preparation of routine reports was therefore made available to project SECALINE in December 1996.
58. In addition to the evaluation system, whose results are satisfactory, additional information is supplied by participating NGOs and by community nutrition agents, who collect data on the number of children tracked and assisted, on their nutritional status and on attendance at nutritional education sessions. The data are then transmitted to SECALINE's regional coordination units, which prepare consolidated reports for transmission to the central M&E unit. This well tested machinery will be strengthened in the Community nutrition programme's next phase, currently under preparation.
59. Broadly speaking, co-financing from the World Bank, which has proven its worth, will need to be enlarged in the Community nutrition programme's next phase to include the recommendations of a joint WFP/World Bank assessment mission which took place in July



1996. Specifically, direct feeding in nutrition centres will need to be reviewed, the Therapeutic Recovery Centres (CRTs) will need to be taken over by the health services and the Nutritional education component will have to be strengthened. As regards school feeding, some form of cooperation with other donors should be envisaged to remedy present weaknesses.

FUTURE ORIENTATION OF WFP ASSISTANCE

60. WFP assistance to date was intended to support national efforts to fight poverty and, specifically, to reduce malnutrition in children under five, to improve the education sector's performance in rural areas, to increase the food security of income-less households in urban areas and to mitigate the effects of natural disasters in endangered zones.
61. Notwithstanding a number of evident weaknesses, the results achieved so far confirm that WFP assistance was fully justified and that it corresponds to the Organization's mandate and guiding principles. However, the scale of the problems involved and the nature and amount of the resources which WFP could have to commit over the programming period in question, i.e., some 15 million dollars, mean that activities will have to be downscaled and rationalized. WFP will explore the possibility of co-financing and of collaboration with other partners intervening in the target areas.

Intended beneficiaries and priority sectors for assistance

62. WFP assistance will be targeted on a priority basis on the poorest rural areas according to one or more of the following criteria: highest rates of malnutrition, lowest school enrolment levels, greatest number of natural disasters and marked food insecurity. The objective is to heighten human resources, to increase food security in the short, medium and long term, and to help improve the country's crisis-management capabilities.
63. As noted above, 85 percent of the poor live in rural areas. Within this category, women and children are most vulnerable and will therefore represent the main beneficiaries of WFP assistance. Bearing in mind the lessons of previous interventions as well as of initiatives by other donors, WFP assistance will principally be targeted to the areas specified below:

Alleviation of malnutrition

64. An enlarged community nutrition programme, co-financed by the World Bank, will be implemented progressively over the whole country. It will draw on the SECALINE project executed in Tuléar and Antananarivo provinces, although that project's geographical spread and its manner of execution do not correspond to what is required of a national-level programme. A joint WFP/World Bank appraisal mission held in July 1996 concluded that the project should be extended gradually across the whole country, and recommended a change in its operational approach.
65. The enlarged programme aims to increase village communities' ability to fight the root causes of malnutrition. It has three main components: community nutrition, co-financed by WFP and the World Bank; school feeding (provision of micronutrients to primary schoolchildren, parasite screening for all children, whether or not attending school, promotion of sound nutrition and hygiene practices through appropriate training of teachers; and multi-sector activities in the fields of health (training in screening for child



diseases) and agriculture, in collaboration with FAO (diversification of agricultural and food production and improved storage systems).

66. The World Bank concluded a loan agreement with the Malagasy Government in January 1998 which covers its share of the financing.
67. WFP plans to allocate 67 percent of the resources earmarked for the programming period to the community nutrition component. This will feature three activities:
 - a) supplementary feeding of 411,000 malnourished children aged between six months and three years; the food will be supplied to their mothers in the form of take-home rations;
 - b) supplementary feeding of some 360,000 expectant mothers (take-home rations) during the last three months of pregnancy, with supplementary iron provided by health centres; and
 - c) nutritional rehabilitation of some 65,000 severely malnourished children in district health centres, and their mothers (65,000), over the entire duration of the project.
68. The project aims to cover 50 percent of the groups targeted at national level by the end of the programme in 2003. It will be executed progressively in each of the country's six regions, starting in those districts where malnutrition is highest, where the project will cover 100 percent of target groups. Activities in new intervention areas are due to begin from the project's second year.
69. The project will be coordinated by a coordination bureau and by six regional coordination units reporting to the Prime Minister's office. The regional units will be assisted by NGOs at village level. UNICEF will participate in monitoring the Community nutrition programme.
70. Rations will consist of cornflour mixed with beans. The mixture may be made up locally depending on availability of commodities and the possibility of local processing of selected weaning foods. A study will be undertaken by an experienced NGO, supported by a regional and headquarters bureau (ODT) with a view to evaluating the technical, institutional and financial feasibility of processing the food at local level. It will also analyze the feasibility of local production of an enriched maize-beans or maize-soya mixture.
71. The technical committee on nutrition, which coordinated the project's preparation and includes representatives of the government, donors and NGOs involved in the nutrition sector, will become a planning committee. The monitoring and evaluation system will rely on performance indicators set out in the operations manual being prepared by the World Bank and WFP. Regular reports supplementing the data collected by community nutrition personnel (ACN), social workers and regional coordination units will be prepared and transmitted to WFP by the central coordination bureau.

Support to basic education

72. A review and evaluation of the previous project's activities recommended in March 1997 that future intervention in this sector be concentrated in the province of Tuléar, where enrolment rates are lowest. The new project, due to absorb 20 percent of the programme's resources, will cover 210 schools and 33,000 pupils in the province. The project's strategy has been revised on the basis of new targeting criteria giving priority to schools in remote rural areas with a minimum of 80 and a maximum of 200 pupils, as well as to schools



accessible in all seasons; the presence of a water supply point or the community's undertaking to provide the canteen with drinking water are also regarded as prerequisites, as is the effective presence of teaching staff; interventions will take place in areas characterized by food insecurity.

73. In order to consolidate the project's results, use will be made of programme contracts. The practice, which is part of Malagasy tradition known as *dina*, encourages the full participation of the communities involved by clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of the contracting partners. The contracts will stipulate, among other things, that girls should be sent to school from the age of six (instead of eight or nine as at present) and that they be kept there at least until the end of primary school; another provision is that ancillary infrastructures such as refectories, storerooms and kitchens should be built with local materials. The project will be implemented progressively according to the number of schools agreeing to honour the conditions set by the programme contracts.
74. The project will fall under the auspices of the Ministry for Secondary and Basic Education. A planning committee grouping ministry official and partners involved in the education sector, including WFP, will oversee programme coordination and monitoring. The project management unit has been transferred to Tuléar, where WFP will also shortly open a sub-office.
75. UNDP and UNICEF have agreed to furnish extra teaching aids on a priority basis to schools equipped with canteens.
76. The support to basic education project will last for the entire length of the country programme and probably beyond, as long as enrolment rates in rural areas of Tuléar remain low and the Government's budgetary constraints persist.

Prevention and mitigation of the effects of natural disasters

77. Given recurrent cyclones, droughts and current locust infestations, and in the light of the results of micro-projects executed in the framework of a food-for-work project carried out in the south in 1997, WFP will continue to support this programme. Its aim is to mitigate the effects of natural disasters in Madagascar's most exposed provinces, Tuléar and Fianarantsoa. The programme will benefit from 13 percent of WFP resources over the period 1999-2003. In the event of any major catastrophe occurring during this period, an additional emergency operation may be launched by mobilizing extra resources not available under the country programme.
78. WFP assistance, representing a continuum of emergency and development aid, will help make up any temporary or chronic food deficit while contributing to household food security. Activities will, *inter alia*, include the following: secondary road and track rehabilitation, soil and water conservation and protection, promotion of human resources and improvement of road infrastructures.
79. Selection criteria for target areas will be the following: i) evidence of food insecurity (on the basis of early warning system indicators and, in the near future, on the basis of WFP's vulnerability analysis and mapping; ii) presence of another development partner whose collaboration and financial contribution would serve to guarantee the quality of works and help ensure that food aid achieves the best results; iii) motivated request by the local community; and iv) average period of execution no longer than two months.
80. Works may begin only after the community has set up a coordination and management committee in which women are fully associated in all activities, including food distribution. Project coordination will be provided by the General Commissariat for



Integrated Development of the South and benefit from technical assistance from WFP's bureau in Fort-Dauphin, where personnel have already acquired relevant experience. Participation of the association of agencies operating in southern Madagascar, which includes NGOs, FAO, United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) and IFAD will be crucial in project execution.

Accompanying measures and procedures

81. The country programme, which will consist of three basic activities, requires that a number of preliminary measures be taken to ensure that it is managed as well and efficiently as possible. They include:
- a) continuous vulnerability analysis and mapping:
a system for collecting and analysing data on vulnerability and food insecurity has been set up with the WFP office. It will link up with other early warning and data analysis systems to create and maintain a network providing reliable background information;
 - b) crisis management:
WFP has begun consultations with other donors (European Union, USAID, UNICEF, UNDP, FAO, CARE International and MSF Switzerland) to draw up a national defence plan against natural calamities. A final proposal will be submitted to the National Emergency Council by the Restricted Crisis Management Group. An estimate of the logistics capacity in place in the area most exposed to natural hazards (storage capacity, state of road and port infrastructures, main suppliers of staple commodities, private trucking companies) is already being prepared under WFP coordination.

Collaboration and partnerships

82. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for Madagascar (1999–2003), currently under preparation, will serve as a basis for the formulation of a country programme. As noted, in most of the activities planned, WFP has opted for co-financing, particularly with the World Bank, and for collaboration with projects and NGOs already present in the targeted areas. A framework for periodic consultations has already been established between WFP, the European Union, USAID and other partners involved in food security and natural calamity mitigation. WFP will also explore the possibility of cooperation during the period concerned with other development partners active in Madagascar, such as France and Germany.

Form of WFP aid

83. WFP intends, as far as possible, to maintain its policy of purchasing products on the local market as required by ongoing activities and whenever the situation demands it.
84. It will also encourage local production of processed foods and of enriched flour needed for the rations so as to keep the number and quantity of imported products to a minimum.
85. WFP will stop monetizing imported commodities as recommended under WFP's new policy guidelines. Internal transport costs will be financed 100 percent.

Programme approach

86. The present Country Strategy Outline maps out the overall strategy of the country programme for Madagascar, which will follow the broad lines set out in paragraphs 64 to



80 above. Total resources (cost of commodities and external and internal transport costs) required to implement the programme under preparation is estimated at some 15 million dollars.

RISKS

87. Despite the agreements signed with the Bretton Woods institutions and its moderate economic recovery, Madagascar will continue to suffer from budgetary constraints which will influence its ability to contribute to the programme's execution. Co-financing could offer a solution to this problem.
88. Natural calamities in Madagascar are such that a major catastrophe is liable to require a large-scale emergency operation mobilizing financial and other resources beyond those budgeted for the country programme.
89. The country programme includes several notably strong points. It focuses on a group of beneficiaries which represent a priority target for WFP, i.e., women and children, assistance to whom amounts to an investment in the future of the community as a whole. In addition, the World Bank, as principal donor, represents a guarantee of sound technical execution and efficient monitoring and evaluation. The same goes for UNICEF and FAO as well as a number of international NGOs such as BASIS and CARE International.

