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UNHCR/WFP JOINT EVALUATION OF EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE TO RETURNEES, REFUGEES, DISPLACED PERSONS AND OTHER WAR-AFFECTED POPULATIONS IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

ABSTRACT

The humanitarian assistance operation in the former Yugoslavia was one of the largest humanitarian initiatives ever undertaken by the international community. An average of 2.6 million people were reached each year; the majority of these were located in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The joint evaluation mission found that both UNHCR and WFP are to be commended for ensuring that, even under the extremely difficult and politically complex conditions of the war, food assistance did reach the most needy people, and that there was no widespread hunger or malnutrition. Overall, the cooperation and communications between the two United Nations agencies were remarkably good, although there were some difficulties during the transfer of responsibility from UNHCR to WFP—a process completed by January 1997. The mission was not convinced of the rationale for establishing a full-scale peace-time programme, and cautioned against food aid being perceived as an alternative to a social welfare system. The national authorities and the donor community are urgently called upon to take the necessary steps to create an effective welfare system.

The fielding of a joint (UNHCR-WFP) mission to evaluate the emergency operation and post-emergency activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina was found to have been an interesting and mutually useful exercise. For the evaluation of future similar operations, it is to be hoped that a similar approach may be adopted.

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THE OPERATION

1. From the point of view of the cooperative arrangements between the two agencies, the history of the operation may be divided into three phases:
 - a) Initial involvement of UNHCR (1991 to late 1992): During this period, UNHCR grew progressively more involved in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), becoming the "lead agency" for humanitarian relief, but WFP was not yet involved;
 - b) War-time operations (late 1992 to 1995): During this period WFP became responsible for the delivery to extended delivery points (EDPs) outside BiH of the bulk of the food which UNHCR distributed;
 - c) Transition (1995 to 1997): During this period, the Dayton Peace Agreement was negotiated and hostilities ended. The management of the food chain within BiH was handed over to WFP.
2. The humanitarian assistance operation in the former Yugoslavia (FMY) was implemented in a political environment of great complexity and under conditions which, particularly during the war, were always difficult and often dangerous. Given the unusually complex political and military environment in which the operation took place, and the international concern for such a crisis in Europe, UNHCR's usual objectives related to refugees and displaced persons gave way to a concern with alleviating suffering and saving as many lives as possible. The food which was procured and delivered by WFP and distributed by UNHCR took on an overriding importance in the pursuit of these goals.
3. Based on mutual understanding between the agencies, WFP's role in the food aid programme gradually expanded from mid-1993, when sub-offices were opened in Sarajevo and Zenica, to January 1997, when WFP assumed responsibility for the entire food aid chain, from resource mobilization and programming of food aid allocations to distribution, monitoring and reporting.
4. By September 1997 some 710 million dollars¹ for over 1.14 million tons of food had been provided to FMY; up until the end of 1996, on average of 2.6 million people a year were being reached; of these, the majority were located in BiH. At the height of the conflict in BiH, there were around 1.2 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) and 1.4 million "war-affected", i.e., people who had no means of support, although they were not refugees nor were they displaced. It is estimated that 80 percent of the population in BiH have at one time or another been beneficiaries of food aid supplied by WFP and UNHCR; by June 1997 there were still some 800,000 IDPs, although not all were receiving food aid.

NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

5. The joint evaluation mission had as its task the evaluation of the food aid programme from its inception in 1992 to June 1997. The evaluation was required to assess the relevance, timeliness, efficiency and effects of food assistance and related services provided under emergency operation (EMOP) No. 5142 to BiH; and to derive lessons learned for possible application in similar emergency and post-emergency situations.

¹ All monetary values are expressed in United States dollars.



6. The evaluation was requested to examine those factors that had contributed to the success of the operation in terms of reaching people in need within a context of strife, and preventing hunger and malnutrition in war-affected people; similarly, those factors that had influenced the operation negatively were to be identified. The joint evaluation was to assess the strategy, and progress in its implementation, for re-orientating food aid in the post-war situation.

Key issues

7. Some key issues were identified within the context of the overall scope of the evaluation. These included: a) the appropriateness and effectiveness of the division of labour between the major partners—WFP and UNHCR—and the efficacy of the coordination mechanisms; b) the effectiveness of the capability to respond to beneficiary needs—involving assessment of targeting, monitoring, management and staffing issues; c) the relevance of food aid in a period of reconstruction; and d) the future of food aid in BiH.
8. The impact of the joint emergency operation on the war itself has been, and continues to be, a source of controversial questions, in particular regarding the effects on the duration of the war, i.e., on the role of humanitarian assistance in prolonging the conflict.

ASSESSMENT OF THE OPERATION: FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

War-time operation

Cooperation between UNHCR and WFP

9. Cooperation between the two agencies was good. During the war, no serious problems arose as a result of policy differences or failures of communication between the two agencies. However, frequent gaps in the pipeline resulting from difficulties in mobilizing and maintaining an adequate response from donors occasionally gave rise to some tension within and between the agencies.
10. **Initial involvement.** When Yugoslavia began to disintegrate in mid-1991, UNHCR's office in Belgrade monitored the evolving situation. By October 1991 the scale of events and the relevance of UNHCR's mandate regarding population movements had led the then Yugoslav authorities to request the organization's support to respond to the crisis. This was followed by a joint UNHCR/UNICEF special assessment mission, which visited key locations in Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Montenegro. The mission recommended setting up a modest assistance programme in response to the displaced persons' needs in conjunction with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), which was to operate in the war areas, in accordance with its mandate.
11. With the collapse of the Yugoslav Federal State and the establishment of new borders, internally displaced populations became actual or potential refugees, reinforcing the perception by key actors of the international community that UNHCR possessed the special competence required. Hence, in November 1991, UNHCR's traditional mandate was extended to cover displaced persons in the former Yugoslavia by application of the "Good Offices" concept.
12. Inter-agency cooperation was evident early on, when the first Joint Appeal for approximately 24,316,900 dollars was launched by UNHCR, UNICEF and WHO on



- 3 December 1991. This enabled the distribution of basic items of assistance to the displaced population in Croatia, Slovenia and Serbia. Following the outbreak of war in Bosnia in April 1992, UNHCR correctly assessed future funding requirements, and sharpened the international community's sense of the scale of the crisis by requesting an unprecedented 165 million dollars to cover initial humanitarian needs in 1992.
13. The airlift operation to Sarajevo—administered by UNHCR in coordination with the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) and involving some 20 participating nations—flew in a total of 160,677 tons of aid (including food and medicine, equipment and other supplies). In addition to aid delivery, the airlift helped with the evacuation of more than 1,000 persons. Operating initially from Zagreb, Split, Frankfurt and Ancona, and from Ancona only as from early 1995, this air-bridge lasted from 3 July 1992 to 9 January 1996.
 14. There were occasional friction and misunderstandings between UNHCR and UNPROFOR. These were due to various factors, such as: the rift between the civilian, humanitarian culture of the former and the latter's military culture; the lack of prior experience in working together; and the fact that the roles of both organizations changed over time. From supporting the humanitarian operation, the military took on a security advisory role, then a security command role; in some circumstances, on UNHCR's request, it actually carried out food deliveries on UNHCR's behalf.
 15. Following the launching of the appeal for humanitarian funding in April 1992 and the beginning of the Sarajevo airlift in June of the same year, the seriousness of the crisis and the scale of the operation became increasingly evident, and hence the need to mobilize WFP capacity as a manager of large-scale international food relief. WFP initiated its participation in July 1992 after consultations with UNHCR. WFP participated in a United Nations inter-agency and donor mission in August 1992 which assessed the humanitarian assistance needed for the six republics of the former Yugoslavia. The findings of this mission were the basis for a Joint Appeal in September 1992. In the Appeal it was stated that: "...WFP will mobilize resources from the international community and supervise the delivery of commodities to extended delivery points." During the September–December 1992 period, UNHCR and WFP worked together towards increased WFP involvement until the latter took on full responsibility for delivery to EDPs on 1 January 1993.
 16. In considering the initial period of UNHCR presence, the main issue relevant to the subsequent joint operation is whether WFP should have been involved before November 1992, when it became associated with the humanitarian programme. Crucial operational aspects of the subsequent joint food programme were affected by the fact that UNHCR had set up and staffed its operations on the ground before WFP's involvement. UNHCR's role in relief activities expanded during 1992. UNHCR received ample international support for its responses to the increasing numbers of refugees, displaced and war-affected people. Beneficiary numbers for all former Yugoslavia increased from 500,000 in December 1991, through 650,000, one million, 2.7 million, to reach 3,055,000 by December 1992.
 17. WFP's initial reticence seems to have been well grounded: when it was not clear what scale the operation would assume, there were strong reasons for not getting involved in what was a middle-income European country well outside WFP's usual focus on the poorest groups and food security crises in low-income countries. The decision regarding WFP's involvement was therefore delayed so that the initial WFP shipments were not made until November 1992, when the international trucking fleets and the airlift had already become operational, through UNHCR initiatives.



18. **War-time operations.** During the period of war-time operations, the division of labour between the two organizations was largely defined by two facts. First, WFP's responsibility was concentrated on the delivery of food to EDPs, which were in all cases located outside Bosnia (initially in Croatia and Yugoslavia, followed by EDPs in Italy and Germany to service air deliveries). Secondly, the management of the food supply chain within Bosnia remained the responsibility of UNHCR. Therefore, during the war period, the joint operation involved a clear division of labour with a geographical dimension, which meant that within Bosnia as such there was little "joint" activity. And, given the conditions on the ground within Bosnia, it made sense not to duplicate administrative structures.
19. There were pros and cons to this arrangement. In its favour was the definition of a clear division of labour which left responsibility to a single agency to handle the difficult logistics of delivering food along with other humanitarian supplies within Bosnia, thus permitting, at least in principle, greater efficacy. But, usually when agencies involve themselves in field operations, they expect to create their own command structures and administrative infrastructure in the field, with joint activities involving horizontal cooperation between the two agency field offices. Apart from the financial costs involved, under war conditions in which there is an obvious need to minimize the number of field staff, such proliferation is undesirable.
20. However, the mobilization of the expertise and capacity of specialized agencies could be achieved through more secondment of specialized staff to the lead agency for the duration of a field assignment. In this operation, in which UNHCR found it difficult to fill posts from its permanent staff, and found it necessary to recruit the large majority of field staff from outside the agency, secondment from other agencies would not even have had the disadvantage of blocking job opportunities for UNHCR's own staff.
21. Another issue related to the geographical division of labour became a source of difficulty between the agencies: the expenses incurred by UNHCR for internal transport, storage and handling (ITSH) costs, and subsequent reimbursement of these costs to UNHCR by WFP. Lack of fit between the accounting systems of the agencies has led to disagreements which, however, have not impinged on the effectiveness of field activities during the difficult war period or later. But they have constituted a source of continued discussion, fortunately now resolved, between the headquarters of both agencies.
22. **Transition of management within Bosnia.** A change in the division of labour between the two agencies was agreed upon and implemented during 1995-1997. This shift culminated in WFP taking over the management of the whole food chain within BiH in January 1997. Following the Dayton Peace Agreement, when there were no longer compelling reasons for UNHCR to continue management of the programming within BiH, WFP was keen to implement a swift transfer. However, the impression remains that cooperation between the two agencies met with some difficulties during this period. This derives partly from the inherent difficulties of transferring management of a large-scale operation in a particularly complex political and military context. It also possibly reflects the interests at stake of those who contributed to building the UNHCR-managed system.
23. One change that would have occurred regardless of the transfer is the significant reduction of food flow into Bosnia during 1996 and 1997. This reduction coincided with the transfer to WFP, which probably added to difficulties in establishing its presence and gaining acceptance by the local authorities. Nevertheless, the transfer was completed without major difficulties between the agencies.



24. The transfer was followed by significant savings, the main element being WFP's full shift to commercial transport. UNHCR had envisaged this shift before the signature of the Dayton Peace Agreement in December 1995, but it had not been implemented because of war constraints. Apart from the significant savings it entailed for the humanitarian operation, the shift represented an important boost to the local economy. The setting up of the WFP administrative structure within BiH involved a net cost to the international community only during the brief period in which WFP had opened its offices and staffed them, while UNHCR had not yet withdrawn.

Supply of assistance under war conditions

25. The humanitarian operation in the former Yugoslavia provides an extreme example of the difficulties confronted by humanitarian agencies in emergency situations in which, despite the absence of reliable data, the survival of the victims must be ensured and their basic needs covered. It is to the credit of UNHCR and WFP that the food distributed on the basis of initial calculations, using the available rudimentary data, did cover the population's most urgent needs, even in many isolated and especially needy areas. This occurred despite weaknesses in the pipeline, including irregular and unpredictable supplies which were evidenced in WFP's and UNHCR's urgent and repeated requests for donor response. Later in this emergency, as in others, targeting became increasingly possible so that localized levels of under-supply or over-supply were gradually corrected.
26. Therefore, it is to the credit of the joint operation that there was no widespread hunger or malnutrition. However, in the case of the isolated populations of the besieged cities, security-related difficulties of access made distribution problematic. When access by land was denied, distribution was by air transport, as in the difficult and sometimes successful airdrop operations: in Srebrenica, Gorazde, Zepa and Bihac. In fact, it seems that it was only in Bihac, during late 1994 and throughout 1995, that the operation was particularly successful in staving off hunger through airdrops. Difficulties of access also led to long-term air deliveries, as is illustrated by the Sarajevo airlift, the longest-running humanitarian air-bridge in history, which lasted from 3 July 1992 to 9 January 1996.
27. Given the amounts of food supplied, the main cause of hunger was from the constraints of supplying communities under conditions of siege. The evaluation mission concluded that more attention could be paid to maximizing the amounts of food delivered by providing a food basket constituted by food items procured in terms of their high nutritional value in relation to their volume.

Unintended consequences

28. Some commentators have suggested that the provision of humanitarian aid in Bosnia had contributed to a prolongation of the conflict.
29. Two lines of argument can be developed in support of the prolongation thesis. The first is the "fig leaf" argument - that by giving generous support to food aid, the donors were able to defend themselves against the charge of inaction in Bosnia, and by so doing they postponed the military intervention needed to end the conflict. This view was apparently held by some leaders in Sarajevo, who were opposed to the introduction of food aid at the early stages of the war. However, this is a criticism of the priorities and political will of the international community, rather than of food aid as such. And it should be noted that food aid is only part of the package of humanitarian and rehabilitation aid. There is no evidence that the provision of aid, including food aid, deflected public opinion from support to a military intervention. Moreover, as the implementation of humanitarian assistance brought



with its additional international media coverage—a precursor of the eventual decisive intervention—this hypothesis has little credibility.

30. The alternative line of argument is that humanitarian assistance prolonged the war by giving material assistance to the combatants. Of course, it was necessarily the case that humanitarian aid did support the military effort. Even if actual humanitarian supplies were not diverted to combatants, the provision of aid, including (but not exclusively) food aid, would have allowed the diversion to the war effort of resources which would otherwise have been needed to sustain the non-combatant population. Possibly, in the absence of food aid, the consequent suffering might have hastened the cessation of hostilities. But that would have been at the cost of greater suffering in the non-combatant population (including the possible horrors of actual famine) and the resolution of the conflict could have been through the victory of one side. The conflict might have been shorter, but the suffering could have been greater and the outcome unsatisfactory: a world without Bosnia, and divided among its neighbours. There is no convincing case that the risks of increased suffering that would have occurred in the absence of humanitarian support would have been justified by an increase in the prospect of a swifter and satisfactory outcome of the conflict.
31. However, the provision of aid, including food aid, did have some unavoidable negative political effects. Since access for the distribution of assistance was under the control of the authorities *in situ*, bargaining with them and agreeing to using the channels they controlled inevitably reinforced their authority to some extent. Also, in some cases food taxes were levied by the military authorities to allow convoys to pass. In Bosnia, attempts to levy food taxes were systematically resisted by UNHCR field staff, who were given repeated and specific instructions to that effect. However, field staff occasionally underwent pressures to relinquish aid, and on exceptional occasion, food was seized, sometimes at gun-point. This is part of the reality of a war-time operation and illustrates the tense context in which staff operated and the difficult duties they had to perform.
32. One conclusion is that under war conditions humanitarian agencies must select staff in terms of their capability to engage continually in stressful negotiations with difficult interlocutors, and to remain firm even under threat without jeopardizing the continuity of the operation. It is commendable that this much was achieved by the humanitarian agencies operating in Bosnia during the war.

Management

33. The decisions of the two agencies to set up special administrative units at their respective headquarters to handle the emergency operation was justified by the scale of the operation and the requirements to maintain a flow of information between the two agencies and with the donor community. Similarly, the appointment of a senior official to represent UNHCR as lead agency in the country of intervention, with ample authority to respond on the spot to the continually evolving political and military events, was a commendable response.

Targeting and monitoring

34. The mission concluded that, under the extremely difficult war conditions, the targeting was commendable; and the fact that there was no severe hunger or malnutrition is a testament to this. Monitoring was hampered not only by the dangerous conditions, but also by a lack of resources, despite continuous requests for support from the donors, who were in fact anxious to receive monitoring reports. Nevertheless, monitors did cover as many



distribution points as possible and obtained sufficient information to indicate that the prioritized categories of beneficiaries were receiving appropriate rations.

Post-Dayton

Transfer of responsibility from UNHCR to WFP

35. Under post-Dayton conditions, responsibility for managing the food chain within BiH was progressively transferred from UNHCR to WFP, a process which was completed in January 1997. The transfer of management of logistics was justified by the parallel shift from the use of donor government-supplied convoys to commercial transport, an appropriate component of the return to normal peace-time conditions and a successful promotion of market economy arrangements.
36. The decision to set up a full-scale WFP programming and delivery field operation was more questionable. At that time, the operation should have been defined in terms of scaling down, with minimum negative impact on the beneficiaries. This is a different question from that which was addressed in practice, which was how to move from a war-time to a peace-time food aid programme. By asking the latter question, the programming shifted to assisting vulnerable categories rather than only the refugees, displaced persons and other war-affected populations.

Scaling down of the food supply

37. With the cessation of hostilities, a decision was made to scale down the food aid programme. This decision was justified, as it is expected that peace should bring economic recovery and stability. And as the economy recovers, the problem of household vulnerability increasingly results from a lack of household income, rather than from the dislocation of food supplies, and the lack of an adequate social welfare system to provide support for the vulnerable. In BiH, food aid should not be seen as an alternative to a social welfare system. As food aid is scaled down, the national authorities and donor agencies should take the steps required to create an effective social welfare system. This is now a matter of urgency.

Targeting and monitoring

38. Intensifying efforts to refine targeting became an issue almost immediately after the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement. The overriding factor was donor pressure, which was inspired by a strong desire to reduce donations. The simple logic was that peace should bring stability and economic recovery, that people would return to their places of origin and that the end of fighting made the resumption of commercial transport possible. Hence, large reductions in food aid would be both possible and necessary. Further justifications for reductions of humanitarian assistance were offered, including the usual arguments about avoiding the creation of food aid dependency and disincentives to agricultural production. In any case, what seemed clear was that a policy decision was made calling for a reduction in the quantities of food to be delivered, and hence the need for a reduction in the number of beneficiaries to be assisted.
39. Since it was becoming increasingly responsible for the food aid chain, WFP initiated some attempts during 1996 to refine targeting in directions consistent with established WFP practice for non-emergency operations. WFP stopped defining its beneficiaries in terms of UNHCR categories and proceeded to identify the most needy in the total population. The WFP component of the WFP/UNHCR/FAO food aid needs assessment mission to BiH in



April 1996 set the number of beneficiaries (or beneficiary list) at 1.9 million, while UNHCR maintained a planning figure of 2.7 million—out of a total population estimated at three million. The mission recommended reducing the number of 'direct beneficiaries' (i.e., those eligible for general distribution) to an overall target of 600,000 people, or around 20 percent of the population.

40. Although in theory the criteria may have been accepted by local authorities, progress in their application has been slow. Despite considerable competence and capacity within the local authorities, the concept of targeting is apparently not very well accepted. There appears to be little motivation to put in place a targeting system. In fact, given the present social tension and the fear, or risk, of creating further instability, local authorities continue to regard targeting as an alien concept, and are more inclined to give lip-service to targeting while carrying on with a more or less general distribution. It seems that to give a little to nearly everyone, without regard to needs, has been preferable to an exclusive targeted distribution based on needs.
41. The WFP sub-offices have reported that progress has been made in verifying and regularizing beneficiary lists, and issuing of beneficiary cards, which by mid-1997 had led to some reduction in the numbers of food aid beneficiaries.
42. There are difficulties in the process of scaling down the operation. The reduction exercise is now being undertaken quite rapidly, allowing authorities little time either to make a reliable census or establish structures to assist people who will no longer appear on the beneficiary lists. The 20 percent figure is arbitrary, in that there are no data to predict the distribution of the population in terms of income level or other chosen criteria. It is unlikely that the local authorities will have sufficient human or financial resources to complete the survey properly even if they were motivated to do so.
43. Post-war monitoring is less arduous in terms of physical conditions and security risks. However, with the required precision in targeting and the rapid reduction in beneficiary numbers, monitoring activities have had to become much more sophisticated, requiring more technically skilled staff and more resources. But again, and despite their demands for data, donors have not been forthcoming with the necessary funding.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Recommendation 1: Better use of scarce human resources

44. The arrangement whereby WFP delivered to EDPs outside BiH and UNHCR was responsible for management of the food chain within BiH made sense, given the need to maintain a clear and unified chain of command and minimize security risks under war conditions. Moreover, it was important to avoid the costs connected with setting up two parallel command and administrative infrastructures in a large-scale operation. But, in view of UNHCR's difficulties in recruiting staff in general and logistics staff in particular, WFP and UNHCR should strive to arrange for the secondment of WFP specialized staff to fill key logistics posts in future similar operations.

Recommendation 2: Matching accounting and recording systems

45. Discrepancies between WFP's calculations of tonnage delivered and UNHCR's calculations of tonnage distributed in relation to reimbursement of ITSH costs to UNHCR demanded



labour-intensive calculations and caused tension between the two agencies. Clearer procedures should have been established. Given the frequency with which the two agencies cooperate in joint operations, they should strive to make their systems of accounting and recording mutually compatible and easy to operate.

Recommendation 3: Equality of media coverage

46. In this joint United Nations operation, as the lead agency, UNHCR should have ensured media coverage for all participating agencies, both within and outside the United Nations system. With respect to United Nations agencies, perhaps a greater equality of exposure could be achieved by more aggressive joint labelling of material (e.g., vehicles, commodity packaging) than was the case and, perhaps more importantly, through a conscious effort by the agencies, be they in the lead role or not, to emphasize the joint nature of the humanitarian operation in their public relations and information activities. Relations with the media are also a subject of inter-agency coordination.

Recommendation 4: Decentralization with minimum control and maximum communication

47. During an operation taking place in war conditions, the rapid field-level response capacity to cope with a rapidly evolving situation requires the establishment of a decentralized system in the country of operation. However, control of field activities must be permitted by effective communication between the field offices and the main country office. In addition, field offices should be regularly monitored, possibly by rotating country office monitoring staff. In a war operation, decentralization must be allowed to go as far as is compatible with the agencies' minimal levels of control, while a maximum level of communication must be set up.

Recommendation 5: Finding the right skills for working in a war-time context

48. There are several unintended aspects of the distribution of aid, including food, during a humanitarian operation: freeing of resources for whatever purposes the authorities prefer, including the military; a reinforcement of the authority of those who approve or carry out distribution; and forceful appropriation of aid. These aspects of a humanitarian operation occurring in war conditions must be taken into account in the recruitment of staff. Skills in negotiating with intransigent interlocutors in situations of danger are a critical requirement for humanitarian workers in the context of war.

Recommendation 6: Local authorities must be aware of scaling down activities

49. WFP's scaling-down exercise is being carried out more rapidly than the pace at which the Government can set up viable and sustainable social safety nets. Significant differences in this respect exist between the entities, as also within them. WFP should be closely involved in assessing these differences as the beneficiary lists are reduced, so that the authorities are aware of the destitute members of the population.

Recommendation 7: The real costs of monitoring must be recognized

50. Monitoring in the post-Dayton period has in common with pre-war monitoring the small ratio of staff to distribution points, and the even smaller ratio of monitors to beneficiaries. If the donors genuinely require that UNHCR and WFP carry out serious monitoring of aid distribution, including food, they should be fully aware of all the cost implications with respect to staff, materials and vehicles. The same standards should of course be applied to



all implementing agencies. At the same time, changed management approaches could maximize the use of staff dedicated to this activity.

Recommendation 8: Efforts should be made to fill key posts with the best staff

51. The response capability of agencies such as WFP and UNHCR in emergency situations ultimately depends on field-level response capability. Therefore, recruitment of a sufficient number of field-office-level managers with previous experience in emergency operations and knowledge of both the agencies' principles and objectives is an important priority. Even in very large operations, it should be possible to deploy such staff for the relatively few key management field office and central office posts. In UNHCR this could be ensured by the Division of Human Resources and Management in coordination with the Emergency Preparedness and Response Unit. In WFP the Human Resources Division and Operations Department would be responsible for achieving the same.

Recommendation 9: WFP and UNHCR need to be sensitive to potential risks of instability during periods of withdrawal

52. The post-war period coincides with the transition from emergency to rehabilitation and with the passage from a planned to a market economy. In this context WFP, along with other aid agencies, should be particularly vigilant with respect to the potential political manipulation of aid, including food. As part of the United Nations operation which is currently committed to the Dayton Peace Agreement, WFP should pay particular attention to avoiding too rapid a withdrawal which could lead to the kind of discontent and instability that can be manipulated by politicians, including those holding extreme ideologies.

Recommendation 10: The limitations of food aid in the post-war period need to be recognized and accepted

53. It is outside WFP's mandate to address the specialized issues involved in the reconstruction of the social welfare system. During the next phase of EMOP 5142 in BiH, the WFP country office could contribute to the planning of developments in this area, in particular because of the experience its staff have gained in helping the authorities to identify the socially vulnerable elsewhere.

