

Bénin CP 200721

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Discours d'ouverture du Représentant Pays

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INTRODUCTION

Monsieur Le Président, chers membres du Conseil, je suis honoré de me retrouver ici afin de vous présenter le nouveau Programme Pays du PAM Bénin 2015-2018. Celui-ci a été préparé tout en tenant compte des priorités du gouvernement, des résultats et enseignements tirés des opérations précédentes ainsi que l'intérêt des partenaires et donateurs dans le pays.

BACKGROUND

Despite its political stability for the past 20 years and a sustained growth since 2012, 35 percent of Benin's population still live below the poverty line. Benin ranks 165 out of 187 countries on the Human Development Index. Although primary education is free, there is still much to do to increase the enrollment rate and the quality of education in some districts.

With regards to food security, the Comprehensive Food Security & Vulnerability Analysis (CFSVA) highlighted that the rate of households having inadequate food consumption increased from 12% in 2008 to 23% in 2013. This underlies a negative trend in terms of food security. Stunting, unlike other countries continued to rise from 32 percent in 2011 to 34 percent in 2014 (**1 out of 3 children are stunted**). Finally, pockets of acute malnutrition persist in the northern part of the country, with rates above the critical threshold set by WHO. Benin is also vulnerable to natural disasters such as flooding and drought, particularly in the northern part.

I myself recently visited the extreme north of the country, more specifically the districts of Karimama and Malanville which are among the most vulnerable according to several socio-economic indicators and which therefore constitute the "convergence zones" of UNDAF 2014-2018. I saw children in a nutritional status comparable to those I have seen in Central Africa in the eve of the turmoil.

PROCESS

The Country Programme that I am presenting today is the culmination of a long process of preparation and consultation and is based on the outcomes of the Country Strategy Paper elaborated together with the national counterparts and will contribute to the Government priorities in reducing poverty. It also responds to 4 of the 6 effects underlined in the UNDAF 2014-2018 which are: increasing income and food security; improve health including nutrition; basic education and finally, adaptation to climate change.

COUNTRY PROGRAMME

Capacity building will be at the heart of WFP interventions. Consequently, the overall goal of this country programme is to support the government's efforts to meet the Zero Hunger Challenge. The country programme is aligned to WFP's corporate Strategic Objectives 3 and 4. The total budget of this Country Programme is 16.1 million US\$ for a three year period. It will target 148,000 beneficiaries and will include the three following components:

1. Support a national integrated school feeding approach;
2. Provide nutritional support to the most vulnerable groups;
3. Enhance resilience of communities in vulnerable and disaster-prone areas.

More than 50% of food needs will be purchased locally. A multi-sectorial approach to school feeding including meals, health initiatives such as hygiene, de-worming, school gardens and nutrition education will be implemented. A comprehensive school meals menu has just been completed for distribution to the target schools (**MENU EXHIBIT**).

The nutrition and resilience components will be implemented only in the districts of Karimama and Malanville, which as I mentioned previously, has been selected as the convergence zone of the UNDAF.

WFP Benin will pay particular attention to Monitoring & Evaluation. The Country Office will prepare a comprehensive monitoring plan, including a baseline survey, impact evaluations, post-distribution monitoring and a Food Security Monitoring System using mVAM data collection methods will be implemented in targeted area. After Action Reviews and joint field missions will be conducted with UN agencies, partners and donors in the convergence zones.

PARTNERSHIP

The three components will be implemented in close collaboration with the Government, especially the Ministries of Education, Agriculture and Health. UN agencies and civil society will also be strongly involved. FAO and IFAD will play a key role in the implementation of school gardens, and in strengthening the capacities of farmers' organizations to promote local purchase. Furthermore, WFP is to sign a joint programme with UNICEF and WHO to prevent stunting in the convergence zone. WFP will also work with UNDP to enhance Disaster Risk Reduction activities in that same region. Finally, WFP will continue to work with the Centre of Excellence against Hunger of Brazil whose valuable support will help lead Benin towards ownership of school initiatives.

CONCLUSION

The strong and fruitful relationship WFP has built with the government in Benin has contributed to improve the situation. The government itself had contributed two million dollars to the school feeding project, and is expected to continue with this new programme. By focusing the resilience and nutrition components in only two districts, WFP Benin really aims to achieve tangible results and improve the living conditions of these vulnerable population.

The Country Programme document has been shared with partners and donors locally and it has received a very good feedback. We very much appreciate the support of the Executive Board members present here today. Thank you very much.