

Mali CP 105830
November 2013
Country Director Opening Remarks

Thank you Mr President.

As you will all know, over the past two years, Mali has faced a severe drought, a political crisis and a security crisis. With the election of a new President in August 2013 and legislative elections scheduled for November, the country is now in a phase of political stabilization.

However, the improvement of the political situation should not make us forget the chronic food security problems that could pose a threat to the stabilization. Mali has one of the highest demographic rates of growth in the world compounding the problem. At least 40 percent of households are moderately or severely food insecure. 38 percent of children from 6 to 59 months are stunted, and acute malnutrition affects 9 percent of children. Food access remains a major concern for the majority of households due to a lack of purchasing power.

The Mali Country Programme was initiated in 2008 and was originally a country-wide operation. Following the occupation of Northern Mali in 2012, WFP launched an Emergency Operation to respond to the crisis, and the Country Programme was reoriented largely towards the South of the country. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework was suspended and replaced by the Joint United Nations Framework in Support to the Transition for 2013 and 2014. Budget Revision 8 therefore entails a one-year extension to cover the gap during the transition period up to the next UNDAF cycle that begins in 2015 and to ensure that programmes are in line with the food and nutrition strategies that are being developed by the new Government.

In consultation with the Government, donors and partners WFP plans to develop a PRRO which would replace the Country Programme and EMOP from 2015. The PRRO would focus on social safety nets, resilience and nutrition activities for the most vulnerable communities across Mali.

Budget Revision 8 lays the foundation for the post 2014 programme by increasing the size and scope of activities. It will address the cyclical problems of drought by building resilience for the most vulnerable communities, by enabling beneficiaries to develop their human capital and acquire or retain productive assets that will change the quality of their lives and prepare them to face the recurrent shocks.

The programme focuses on both rural and urban populations using food and cash transfer modalities, and is built on an integrated approach through the strong partnerships with UNICEF, FAO and a number of NGOs. WFP is supporting local markets and small scale farmers by purchasing increasingly large quantities of cereals and pulses directly from local producers and through its Purchase for Progress initiative

The Government of Mali has signed up to the Scaling Up Nutrition movement. Thanks to the REACH coordination a multi sectorial plan for nutrition has been developed with six of the key ministries. The Country Programme will support these initiatives to improve nutrition through a number of innovative approaches including a pilot package to prevent stunting. Cash transfers will be provided as an incentive for women to attend pre - and post natal nutrition consultations. This pilot project will be evaluated in collaboration with two international research institutes - IRD and IFPRI.

WFP will continue to actively support the National Early Warning System and the review of the PRMC in coordination with the Ministry of Rural Development and the other technical and financial partners through its leadership of the Food Security and Nutrition Sub Thematic Group. WFP will also support the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Rural Development for the reinforcement of sustainable resilience programmes. The school feeding programme has been expanded at the request of the Government and WFP will accompany the Ministry of Education's Centre for School Feeding in its activities so that it can resume a gradual handover of the school feeding programme to the Government.

While the crisis in the North draws most of the international community's attention, it is imperative that the longer term efforts to provide safety nets, build resilience, treat malnutrition and prevent stunting continue.