

ODJ Introductory Statement
First Regular Session 13 -15 February 2012

Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and
Gentlemen,

1. The southern Africa region is in the throes of the lean season and this coincides with **tropical storm and cyclone season, and with it, floods and thereby aggravating food and nutrition insecurity.**
2. As we discuss today, the tropical cyclone Giovanna, equivalent to a category 4 hurricane is due to strike the eastern coast of Madagascar tonight. It contains maximum sustained wind velocity of around 145 mph and may result in extensive damage to all kinds of assets and lives are also at risk.
3. This morning, the capital city of Antananarivo has been hit by strong winds and torrential rains. Water and power supplies have been disrupted and huge damages to infrastructure are expected.
4. Depending on the severity of the damages and accessibility to the affected areas, relief distributions will commence as soon as Giovanna passes.

5. Government and partners have already prepositioned fuel stocks as a preparedness measure. WFP had prepositioned 1,000 MT of food in eight strategic locations. A supply of HEBs has arrived in Tamatave. WFP has also activated the logistics cluster.
6. The cyclone is due to enter the Mozambique channel as a Category 1 Tropical Cyclone today.
7. In **Mozambique 120,000 people have been affected by tropical storms Dando and cyclone Funso and further assessments are underway and the situation is being closely monitored.** The Humanitarian Country Team provided the much needed support to the National Institute for Disaster Management in the **design of a national contingency plan.** This has enhanced preparedness and therefore response. To date 25,300 out of 84,000 beneficiaries have been assisted by WFP and a remaining caseload will be assisted shortly.
8. Dry spells were experienced in Zambia, Malawi and southern Zimbabwe in December/January. Rainfall predictions for other countries of the region is favourable and regarded as normal and this trend is expected to continue until March.
9. Working with governments and other partners are central to food assistance strategy in the region. Increasingly, governments are encouraged to take ownership of their programmes. Regional organisations, such as SADC and

COMESA are pivotal in promotion of this strategy. WFP is negotiating a partnership strategy with SADC that will promote the use of innovative models/approaches for responding to safety net issues and emergency challenges in the region. The region has the highest HIV/AIDS prevalence rates in the world and also some of the worse stunting rates. This forces the focus and priority on these issues. Therefore, in the coming months and years, a gender-sensitive regional strategy that harnesses the opportunities in the region, such as Feed the Future, MDG Acceleration Fund, Global Partnership for Education Funds, etc will be developed and pursued. Side by side with this, attempts will vigorously pursued to diversify the donor base. I have had, very recently, separate meetings with both the Executive Secretary of SADC and Secretary General of COMESA and agreed with them that in order to reduce food insecurity in the region and at the same time strengthen resilience to shocks, food access issues should be central to CAADP investment plans for countries in the region. We further agreed that they be revised and any such revision of plans that might be in the offing should involve WFP. Therefore, working together with these regional entities will provide multiple benefits to the most vulnerable people in the fight against malnutrition, especially for kids below 1000 days, HIV affected populations and school kids whilst at the same time build capacity for food fortification.

10. ODJ continues to be a major procurement location for WFP. In 2011, WFP purchased about 225,000 MT of

assorted food commodities from the region, worth of over \$82 million. Procurement from Malawi and Zambia is increasing in importance as demand for non-GMO food increases elsewhere in Africa.

11. **P4P activities** continue to grow by leaps and bounds and demand for their likes is growing in non-P4P pilot countries. In 2011, **50,000 smallholders** in the region participated in the scheme and sold commodities worth over **5 million USD** of commodities. WFP is working with other partners to address disincentives to food production in some countries by encouraging policy reform.

12. Finally, I would like to thank all Delegates for their contributions and generous support to the implementation of operations in the Southern Africa Region in 2011 and trust the excellent partnership will continue in 2012.

Thank you, Mr. President.