

ODJ Introductory Statement: EB A/2011
Tuesday, 7 June 2011

Madame President, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. The Southern Africa region encompasses nine countries, which continue to be hit by the triple threat of food insecurity – both weather related and endemic – weakened government capacity and high prevalence of HIV/AIDS. This is not a new phenomenon, and indeed, over the course of time, is wearing away the fabric of society and the resilience of the population. This notwithstanding, there are emerging bright spots which I would like to share with you in this presentation.

New Trends

2. I would like to start upfront by informing you that risk awareness and its mainstreaming in our programme fabric are accorded high priority in the region. We have ensured that all 2011 performance plans for the RB and all country offices within the region explicitly take risk issues into account, nature of the risks, how to mitigate and report on them. It has been decided all projects reviewed by the RB will be subject to rigorous risk analysis. In addition to this all COs are required keep and maintain a live risk register. Country of very high risk (political) is Madagascar.

3. In an effort to encourage governments to contribute to implementation of their own food security policy and programmes, I am happy to report that, since we met last February, Malawi has announced its contribution to the school feeding programme by \$3.3 million which will be brought before Parliament for consideration and approval before the end of this month. Lesotho has just similarly allocated \$173,000 to its programme. Zambia has allocated about 15,000 MT of maize for expansion of school meals programme in the countryside.

We are encouraging other governments in the region to do similarly. South African government has been and continues to contribute to WFP operations. The latest was to the IRA for DPRK and Niger.

4. Johannesburg continues to be the second largest procurement hub for WFP. From the beginning of the year to now, WFP procured about 66,000 of assorted food commodities, valued at about 28 million US dollars from South Africa. Also, about 20,000 MT have been purchased from other countries in the region

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5. I informed you in the last EB session that La Nina is a cause for concern in the region. We have since then been closely monitoring its effects on the

countries in the region and have been working very closely with FAO and OCHA. Adequate contingency planning and other preparedness measures were put into effect by WFP and host governments alike as far back as January of this year. The countries worst hit in the region were Malawi, Lesotho and Namibia. With WFP's help in targeting and capacity building in Malawi and Namibia, they are responding to the needs of the affected populations. WFP's food assistance by the way of strengthening safety nets to Lesotho has also been very timely and adequate.

6. High Food and fuel prices are matters of great concern in the region and WFP has been and continues to monitor these very closely. Whilst prices have been erratic in the past, they are becoming stable in many parts of the region because of the harvest season which has just set in. Prices remain 8 to 15 percent above corresponding period of last year. Governments and regional economic entities have been alerted.

7. We are closely following up with SADC political developments in Madagascar and Zimbabwe very closely because they have a direct impact on the food security situation in these two countries. The Madagascar Road Map is yet to signed off by all parties and a formula for resolution of issues within the coalition government in Zimbabwe is being developed by SADC.

Roll- out of the Strategic Plan

Madam President,

The rolling out of the tools in the new Strategic Plan is accorded a high priority in the region.

8. In order to address the high stunting levels among the under 2s in the region, WFP has signed a regional MOU with UNICEF which is in support of the Nutritional Improvement Approach that you approved. A regional action plan in support of this is being developed which will guide and inform national UNICEF/WFP plans of action. The UNICEF RD and myself plan to undertake joint missions in selected countries in the region to see how together we can advocate for issues of common interest to the COs. In the meantime, we have done a mapping of countries with national fortification programmes and nutrition policies. In Namibia, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Malawi, we are helping draft national strategies that address chronic malnutrition.

9. It is worth noting also that WFP's support to HIV/AIDS response in southern Africa is fast evolving. In Namibia, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe, WFP has provided assistance to government counterparts in the design and implementation of national nutrition programmes for people living with HIV/AIDS and TB. An estimated 300,000 clients in HIV and or TB care and treatment are receiving WFP's nutrition rehabilitation support.

10. Cash and Voucher use within the region is growing by leaps and bounds. Over 60% of the countries within the region are implementing Cash or voucher programmes or a combination of both. Mozambique has started to roll out a voucher programme modelled along the lines of the Zambia experience. Zimbabwe is doing similarly. This market friendly food transfer modality is being hailed by national governments as the fastest way of empowering vulnerable households out of food insecurity. We intend to consolidate these gains in the remainder of this year.

11. Purchase for Progress within the pilot countries of the region is regarded as a sustainable tool for attacking hunger at its root. From January to May of this year, WFP purchased about 13,000 MT of assorted food commodities from 51,000 smallholder farmers in Malawi, Zambia and Mozambique.

Madame President,

13. Hand-over strategies are a cornerstone of fostering ownership and sustainability of WFP support to governments in the region. In Swaziland, the Government has started managing WFP-assisted schools since May of this year. In Mozambique, WFP will support the government redesign the school feeding programme which will be within the spirit and understanding embodied in the Tripartite Agreement signed between Government of Mozambique, Brazil and WFP. The new Country Strategy being developed in Malawi foresees a take-over of supplementary feeding in 50% of the districts and the Ministry of Education taking over 36% of the schools currently being supported by WFP.

Sincerely thank the EB for your continued support to our operations in Southern Africa.

This, in brief, is the statement from ODJ. Thank you Madam President.