

**ODJ Regional Director's presentation
at the First Regular Session of the Executive Board, 14 - 16 Feb 2011**

Madam President, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before I introduce our projects, I would like to give you an overview of key issues of interest to you.

1. The year 2011 is projected to be eventful, as highlighted by the Executive Director. The region is faced with a triple threat of high food prices, La Nina resulting in floods and drought and conflicts in several areas.

New Trends

2. High Food and Fuel Prices continue to contribute to unacceptable levels of hunger and malnutrition. Current price monitoring in Central and Eastern Africa indicates that despite substantial production in 2010, maize prices increased slightly during the last quarter of 2010. Regional conflict and socio-political uncertainties in Sudan and Somalia have also resulted in increases in the price of maize in DR Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania Uganda and Somalia. We are also monitoring fuel prices and possible hoarding tendencies by farmers and traders in these markets.

In Southern Africa, food prices are relatively stable due to an early harvest and regular cross-border market supplies. However, in Mozambique, there are indications of a possible rise in wheat prices next month. In Madagascar, a 9% increase in the cost of petroleum has driven up the price of rice - the main staple – to very high levels. We are regularly monitoring the prices of staple foods and fuel in the region and providing data for the global price monitoring bulletins.

3. Erratic weather patterns is a cause for concern this year. The current **La Niña** event in the Horn of Africa and Southern Africa is causing critical changes to normal rainfall patterns. In the **Horn of Africa, La Nina** is causing a reduction in expected rainfall, negatively impacting pastoralist incomes and short rain harvests in Somalia, Northern Kenya, East and Southern Ethiopia. Farmer and pastoralist households are now on the verge of facing yet another drought if the **La Niña** effect continues into the Long Rains season from March to June. Assessments on food security and numbers of people affected are underway, and will form the basis for a regional consultation meeting in March 2011. As part of the risk management culture of the region, mitigation measures have been explicitly factored in the emergency preparedness registers of the HoA countries. Both risks and mitigation measures are being constantly monitored.

Unlike the Horn of Africa, most countries in the **Southern region** are experiencing more than the normal rates of rainfall as a result of the **La Niña** event. Flood warnings are in effect for the major rivers - the Zambezi, the Limpopo and the Okavango. Countries expected to be impacted by increased rainfall in this first quarter of 2011, include the regions of northern Zimbabwe, central Zambia, southern Malawi, central Mozambique and most of Madagascar.

Regional interagency partners in the southern region are engaged with national governments and SADC (Southern African Development Community) to ensure that emergency preparedness measures are in place and are ready to address potential gaps in response capacity. A regional food security task force has been established to analyse the impact of the floods on food security and agriculture in the region. Government-led assessments are underway in Zambia, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Lesotho, and WFP food stocks in most countries are sufficient enough for an initial immediate response to floods. Just like drought risks in HoA, flood risks have been incorporated in the planning processes of the Country Offices likely to be affected by floods. We are sharing our analysis of early warning information with concerned governments' Disaster Management Agencies as they prepare national response measures.

4. Political and security issues also pose major threats to food security in the region.

In anticipation of the referendum in **South Sudan**, WFP, in concert with HCR and other humanitarian partners, prepared regional contingency and preparedness plans for various eventualities. These plans, despite the smooth conduct of the referendum remain alive. In particular, food pipeline analysis; completed. Logistical capacity analysis; completed. Telecommunication assessment; also completed. Regional emergency staff roster: developed. Therefore, we have a regional inter-agency plan ready to be deployed if worse case scenarios should eventuate.

Roll-Out of the Strategic Plan

5. In order to address the high stunting levels in the region, we have customised the Nutrition Improvement Approach to the region, signed a MoU with UNICEF's regional bureau this January and we are currently developing an action plan, with clear division of roles and responsibilities on how to launch a frontal attack on child stunting in the region. We have also embarked on a series of nutrition advocacy workshops in concert with IGAD and its member states in 2010, with workshops to be held in Kenya, Somaliland and Ethiopia in 2011.

6. The ODJ bureau is scaling up the use of cash and vouchers in more than half of the countries in the bureau presently. In **Kenya** cash for work opportunities in rural areas are organised to provide cash through cell phone vouchers and banks, while urban cash transfer project provides 15,000 people in the Muthare slums of Nairobi with cash for work delivered through cell phones and a microfinance organization. In **Zambia**, we piloted a voucher programme targeting 3,000 households with people living with HIV/AIDS or TB through mobile delivery and tracking system that uses electronic vouchers. This innovative approach to food distribution has shown a great potential not only to reduce operational costs but also enable timely and relevant assistance.

7. I also want to reiterate how WFP's support to the HIV/AIDS response in eastern and southern Africa has evolved. 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 260,000 clients in HIV and/or TB care and treatment received WFP's nutrition rehabilitation support in 2010.

8. In 2010, WFP purchased 783,000mt of food in this region with a total value of almost US\$ 241 million. Through **Purchase for Progress (P4P)**, WFP purchased 75,000 mt of food valued at US\$ 22 million from 45,000 small holder farmers in ten countries.

Phase-out and Hand-over Strategies

Madam President, Distinguished Delegates,

9. As part of our commitment to strengthen capacities of countries to reduce hunger through hand-over strategies, WFP's programmes are geared towards collaborating with governments to develop strategies that would pave the way for a transition to wholly government-owned programmes that address food security challenges. In **Tanzania**, our office is working with the government to develop an implementation strategy that would link school feeding programmes to national budgets and locally grown food commodities as part of the CAADP process. In Rwanda, WFP has also prepared a hand-over strategy of the school feeding programme with the government and local communities through the inclusion of a home grown feeding initiative within the school feeding programme. **Namibia**, Though WFP has reduced its refugee operations there, we have agreed in principle, to work together with the government by supporting the development of local capacity and providing technical assistance to address food security issues.

Madam President, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I take this opportunity to once again sincerely thank you for your continued and generous support you provide to our operations. These enable us to rise up to the existing and emergent food security challenges of the region and address the food and nutrition needs of the most vulnerable.

Madam President, I would now like to introduce the one Country Programme and three Budget Revisions that are being presented to you for your consideration and approval. I will not get into the details of these projects since they are all before you already.

Country Programme

1. Tanzania Common Country Programme (200200)

This is the very first WFP country programme based on an integrated Common Country Programme Document (CCPD) in ODJ, as part of the Delivering As One pilot.

Budget Revisions:

1. Rwanda Development Project (106770)
2. Ethiopia Country Programme (104300)
3. Uganda Country Programme (108070)

All these projects are:

- cost effective;
- geographically targeted;

- Gender-sensitive;
- Deploy the appropriate hunger tools; and
- Results-oriented;

They have been prepared in a highly consultative manner with key food security stakeholders in each country, who have endorsed their strategic direction and implementation arrangements.

I highly commend them for your approval. I am here with the concerned CDs and will respond to any questions, comments that you may have.

Thank you Madam President.