

OD Johannesburg Regional Director's presentation at the Second Regular Session of the WFP Executive Board, 8-11 November 2010

Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Eastern, Central and Southern Africa Regional Bureau has seven project documents for your consideration and or approval. Before I introduce our projects, I would like to raise some strategic issues and challenges that are of priority concern and interest to the bureau.

1. There has been an improvement in the food security situation in the Horn of Africa this year. The cycle of recurrent droughts had led to over 20 million people in need of food assistance in 2009. But as I reported to you last June, this caseload drastically reduced by about 40% in 2010, as a result of the effects of good rains on agrarian, pastoralist and agro-pastoralist communities.

However, the prospects for next year are not so promising as drought conditions are forecast for certain countries of the Horn. Somalia, Kenya and Eastern Ethiopia may experience reduced rainfall with serious consequences for food availability, access to food, prices, terms of trade, livestock conditions, etc. WFP is working with other partners and concerned governments to prepare for the necessary contingencies.

In Southern Africa, the Regional Climate Outlook Forum projects that most countries in this region face prospects of normal to above normal rainfall between now and March 2011. Cognizant of the possibility of the overflowing of the banks of Lower Zambezi River, WFP is working within the frameworks of the UNCTs and concerned governments to ensure adequate contingency

planning and preparedness for any possible humanitarian interventions that may be needed.

2. At the request of EB members regarding improvements in commodity management and reporting in Ethiopia, I would like to inform you that substantial progress has been registered so far. You will recall that the exercise is divided into three pillars. Pillar 1 is about data reconciliation with the Government on food movement (dispatch, delivery and distribution) in 2008 and 2009. Work on this pillar is almost completed. In October 2010, the Government submitted an interim report to WFP on this pillar indicating 97% of dispatch and delivery data reconciled and 82% of food distribution data also reconciled to date. Work on this pillar is continuing and the Government has promised to submit a final reconciliation report to WFP by the end of the year. Pillar 2 relates to the design, development and the implementation of a new reporting and commodity tracking system. An external database expert arrived in the country in late October 2010, to examine the requirements for the new system and propose a way forward. All parties have committed themselves to implement the experts' recommendations. Pillar 3 aims to enhance Government's logistics management capacity at both federal and regional levels. A proposal in this regard has been prepared by WFP and discussed with both the Government and WFP's major donors in Ethiopia. In the meantime, within the context of Pillar 3 and as an interim measure, WFP has been providing training to counterpart staff in warehousing and commodity management, and to date over 600 counterpart staff across the country have been trained in this regard.

3. As Distinguished Delegates are aware, the forthcoming events in Sudan are preoccupying indeed which do not rule out the possibility of population movements should our worse fears eventuate. Therefore HCR and WFP met in Nairobi on 29 October to update the Regional contingency plans prepared in February. This meeting was co-chaired by the Regional Director for Africa of HCR and myself. We concluded that there is high probability of cross border movements into neighbouring countries and thus the need for not only planning for this but enhancing preparedness measures. We agreed to work together and have the various country-specific contingency plans ready by end of this week for consolidation by the bureau. We intend to have this integrated with that of HCR.

4. In line with the advice of the EB to have the Rome-based agencies of FAO, IFAD and WFP working together on issues of mutual concern, FAO and WFP organised the first ever seminar on Disaster Risk Reduction and management on 18 and 19 October in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia to better harmonise our country and regional level interventions. It was attended by AU, COMESA, IGAD, donors, representatives of member states, UN agencies and donors. The seminar, which was hailed by all and sundry, as a very good initiative, prepared a roadmap for greater coordination and collaboration of our efforts, preparation of joint plans that are implementable and monitorable. We also agreed to incorporate other agencies into the fold as time progresses.

5. WFP continues to encourage local and regional procurement wherever feasible. In 2010, WFP purchased 584,000 mt of food in the ODJ region with a total value of almost US\$180 million! As a matter of fact, for the first time since the Southern Africa food crises began in 2002, WFP purchased over 2,000 MT in Zimbabwe and will explore possibilities to purchasing more in the future.

The Purchase for Progress, P4P, activities in the region are growing by leap and bounds. We have purchased 55,000 mt, valued at US\$ 16 million from 45,000 small holder farmers in ten countries in 2010. A variety of models are being used in the region, such as the warehouse receipt system in Uganda and Tanzania, the commodity exchange system in Ethiopia and Zambia, direct procurement from farmer associations. In Kenya, the Kenyan Koptegei Widows Group, through the P4P programme has graduated from being food recipient beneficiaries to food supplying society to WFP. DRC, though still is a hot emergency, is piloting P4P and FAO is the supply side partner in the Katanga province. It is being funded by the Government of Belgium. 4,000 farmers are targeted in 2009/2010, and 9,000 should be reached this year. Capacities of small holders and associations are increased with concomitant expansion of transport networks and storage capacities. This has created a very positive signal to small farmers. The country office plans to expand this scheme to Equateur province, thanks to the contribution provided by the French Government. Partnerships with FAO, IFAD, AGRA, Millennium Villages and other NGOs have been very useful and instrumental in launching a frontal attack on hunger at its root using this approach.

6. Implementation of Cash and Voucher initiatives are well underway in the region. The Executive Director referred to both Zambia and Kenya where the use of electronic-voucher systems and mobile phones have been successfully piloted. Zimbabwe's new protracted relief and recovery operation that is before you today, borrows a page from the Zambia's voucher model. Plans are afoot for introducing it in Madagascar as well. The Regional Bureau has developed a monitoring and evaluation system in support of these initiatives. It is estimated that USD 53 million will have been distributed to 1.8 million beneficiaries across 11 Countries by way of cash transfers using electronic vouchers and or mobile phones by 2011. WFP is partnering with host governments, donors and International NGOs in rolling out this market friendly and cost-effective hunger tool.

7. Micronutrient deficiencies are well above emergency thresholds in most countries of the region, negatively impacting the physical and cognitive development of children. In response, the Regional Bureau has customized the corporate Nutrition Improvement Approach and developed a Regional Nutrition Approach, a key feature of which is support for Under two-year olds and linking this to local production of fortified foods. The projects presented before you today, address malnutrition issues through local food fortification, local production of nutritionally enhanced foods and partnerships. Seven countries in the region are now involved in local production or utilisation of nutritionally enhanced food products. In Lesotho, the Nutrition support project, tabled today for your consideration, is part of the joint UN maternal health and child nutrition programme, under the Delivering as One approach. It is one of the first projects of its kind to link the addressing of chronic

malnutrition to improvement of economic outcomes. In Mozambique the UN agencies (WFP, UNICEF, FAO and WHO) and the GoM are about to start the implementation of the approved National action plan to reduce the high levels of Chronic malnutrition in the country through targeting of under two with special fortified foods. UNICEF is a key nutrition partner in the region.

8. WFP's support to the HIV/AIDS response in eastern and southern Africa has evolved rapidly and extensively in the past few years. The number of patients on anti retroviral treatment and receiving WFP nutritional support increased from 95,000 in 2008 to 119,000 in 2009, in 16 of the 20 countries in the ODJ region. Food assistance contributes to improved treatment outcomes in HIV and TB related programmes and offers enhanced social and productive safety nets for people affected by HIV and AIDS. In Ethiopia, A WFP supported programme has considerably increased ART adherence among 17,000 treatment patients. In Mozambique, WFP provides technical support to the Ministry of Health in delivering a basic food basket to malnourished ART patients in the form of a voucher scheme, while also delivering direct food assistance to some 28,000 malnourished people living with HIV. In Zambia, electronic vouchers developed by WFP in partnership with the private sector facilitate ART patients' easy access to food packages through retailers while reducing the burden on health workers.

9. The COs in the region are taking an active part in the CAADP conversations and planning in the region. About eight countries have been assisted by WFP in their CAADP COMPACT and Investment Programming. Our strategic partnership with COMESA has been instrumental in this regard. FAO and IFAD are strategic allies in this endeavour.

10. As mentioned by the ED in her opening remarks, WFP and UNDP in the region are working very closely to translate the principles of the WFP/UNDP Cooperation Framework Agreement into concrete actions. As we speak, 12 countries in the region are already implementing joint activities or have plans of doing so in the not-too-distant future.

Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before concluding my general remarks, I would like to express my sincere thanks to all of you for your generous support and wise counsel that you have consistently provided to our operations. We hope that such types of support will continue to enable us rise up to the food security challenges of the region in the future.

Mr President, I would now like to introduce the projects that are being presented to you for your consideration and approval. These essentially are five new operations and two Budget Revisions. I will not get into the details of these projects since they are all before you already.

The projects are:

1. Zambia Draft Country Programme (200157)
2. Lesotho Development Programme (200169)

3. Democratic Republic of Congo Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (200167)
4. Zimbabwe Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (200162)

The two budget revisions are:

1. Ethiopia PRRO 106650 , Budget Revision 10
2. Mozambique Country Programme (104460), Budget Revision 06, and

All these projects will deploy anti-hunger tools that I have just described,

- Are gender-sensitive;
- Geographically targeted;
- Been prepared in a highly consultative manner with key food security stakeholders in each country and they endorse their strategic direction and implementation arrangements;
- They are market friendly, high return and cost effective

I highly commend them for your approval.

Thank you Mr. President.