

OD\_Joburg Regional Director's presentation at the  
WFP Executive Board  
8-11 February 2010

Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to begin by extending our appreciation and heartfelt thanks to all of you for your support to WFP's operations in the ODJ region in 2009. Life-saving humanitarian assistance remains the cornerstone of WFP's work in eastern, southern and central Africa. Drought, conflict, economic crisis, high food prices, limited domestic food production, undernutrition and HIV/AIDS result in a situation where over 30 million people are expected to require food assistance in the region in 2010. While addressing the most pressing humanitarian needs, we are also deploying our resources as effectively as possible to support governments in responding to longer term critical hunger challenges and tackling the underlying causes of hunger.

The situation in the Horn of Africa continues to command our attention. Weather related shocks, linked with insecurity, high food and fuel prices, export restrictions + reduced informal trade, means that the needs of the populations in the Greater Horn of Africa will remain high in the coming six months. In some pastoral areas above average rainfall has been experienced. This has had a clearly positive effect, leading to recovery of pastures and groundwater levels. In cultivated areas however the timing of the rainfall did not always coincide with planting needs. The number of beneficiaries in the Horn of Africa increased in 2009 from 17.6 million in January to almost 20 million by September, and is projected to remain high for the first half of 2010.

WFP is providing assistance to 1.8 million people in the northern and central parts of Somalia. A rapid deterioration of security coupled with intolerable demands by Al Shabab led to a temporary suspension of operations in Southern Somalia in recent weeks. However, the harvest is very good in this area and will last up to March/April. Cereal prices are declining and livestock prices increasing. Given the fluidity and complexity of the situation in Somalia, contingency planning is of the essence. WFP and UNHCR held consultations earlier this month to

prepare adequate contingency measures in the event of population movements inside of Somalia or into neighboring countries.

Food assistance needs in Ethiopia will remain high in 2010. A Government-led, multi-agency food security assessment was undertaken in November and December 2009 following harvest. The preliminary assessment results indicate that nearly 5.2 million food-insecure people will not be able to meet their basic food needs.

As agreed during the 2009 Annual Session of the Executive Board, WFP and the Ethiopian government have engaged in a process to improve food management accountability and reporting as well as address concerns regarding the targeting of relief food assistance. The Government agreed to an action plan in three phases: Phase 1 was to verify distribution and delivery data back to 2007 and is now almost complete; Phase 2 is to design and develop a tracking and reporting system to improve accountability and timely reporting - the system is now under development including the core database and related processes and procedures, to be implemented in October 2010. Phase 3 involves broader capacity development interventions in Ethiopia and relates to improving the overall food management system, from

resource mobilisation, logistics, and targeting to distribution, monitoring and reporting on the results of food assistance.

In Kenya the caseload will begin to decline as a result of a general improvement in food security due to the relatively good rains in many parts of the country between October and January, especially in the south eastern agricultural areas. We are already seeing greater availability of short cycle crops such as cowpea leaves and pastures have improved leading to a stabilization of livestock prices. In the coming six months, WFP expects to support food insecure people located mainly in arid and semi-arid areas of Kenya.

Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates,

The situation in eastern DRC remains challenging. A dispute over fishing rights erupted into a new conflict in the Dongo region of Equator province. These ethnic clashes have led to the displacement of approximately 160,000 people of which 50,000 people fled to safer areas within DRC and live now as IDPs. Almost 110,000 Congolese have fled to neighboring Republic of Congo where they receive WFP

assistance. This year WFP plans to assist some 2.4 million beneficiaries in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

In Zimbabwe, food availability has improved as a result of good harvests of the last crop season and fiscal and grain market liberalisation policies of the government. However, the country still faces a substantial national cereal deficit and access to food is a serious concern in the rural areas where cash is in short supply. During the January to March peak hunger season, 2 million people are targeted for food assistance through WFP and NGOs. WFP is currently reviewing its programme portfolio in Zimbabwe in light of the changing humanitarian, economic and political environment. New programme approaches include a cash transfer programme in partnership with Concern Worldwide, a food-for-asset programme and support to mother and child nutrition are being considered for implementation. WFP is also working very closely with FAO to stimulate small holder crop production in Zimbabwe.

With almost 11 million people living with HIV and AIDS in the region, and the region accounting for 60% of new infections and AIDS deaths globally, the pandemic continues to have a devastating social and

economic impact. Food assistance is instrumental in improving treatment outcomes in HIV and TB related programmes and enhancing social safety nets for people affected by HIV and AIDS. WFP currently supports HIV/AIDS programmes through food assistance in 16 countries of the region reaching some 800,000 beneficiaries each month. Livelihood assistance and back-to-work programmes, such as those implemented by WFP in Lesotho, Ethiopia and Kenya, are considered especially relevant to support long term treatment adherence and productive recovery of the clients and their households.

Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Undernutrition is one of the greatest challenges facing the region. Micronutrient deficiencies are well above emergency thresholds in most countries impacting the physical and cognitive development of children.

WFP's strategy to address malnutrition in the region, amongst other approaches centers on local food fortification, local production of nutritionally enhanced foods and partnerships. For example, in Kenya and Madagascar WFP is piloting use of micronutrient powders. In

Ethiopia plans are afoot to start local production of supplementary and therapeutic foods this year. Mother and child health nutrition programmes are being implemented in 10 countries in the region. A government-supported maize fortification project in Uganda is already being implemented with GAIN and we hope to replicate this model in other countries of the region. Plans are well under way to implement REACH (Renewed Effort Against Child Hunger) in Kenya, Uganda, Mozambique, Namibia, Malawi, Rwanda, Zambia and Madagascar. An essential element of our nutrition work in the region is strengthening partnerships with key organizations in the nutrition arena in order to increase programme reach.

Our support to governments in protecting the most vulnerable affected by high food prices and economic recession is also gaining momentum. Cash and voucher programmes are being implemented or planned in 11 countries in the region. As a response to high food prices and economic recession in Zambia, WFP and the government have distributed vouchers to 103,000 beneficiaries in peri-urban areas in Lusaka during 2009. Currently with support from European Union, the programme is being expanded and converted to an electronic one. Under the HIV/AIDS programme, WFP Zambia has developed a new,

innovative mobile delivery and tracking system. The system uses mobile phones and scratch cards to allow real time tracking of ration distribution to 18,000 beneficiaries and automatic transfer of money to the supplier of the food ration. WFP expects to reach up to 380,000 beneficiaries in Zambia through vouchers this year. Innovative approaches, such as the one in Zambia, have potential to considerably improve targeting and cost effectiveness of cash transfer programmes. They also support existing private sector outlets.

An exciting partnership is developing between WFP and the Millennium Village Project (MVP) in Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda. The goal of the partnership is to utilize the new tools of WFP in Millennium Villages with a view to eliminating chronic malnutrition, increase school enrolment and food production.

P4P programmes in ten countries of the region encourage smallholder farmers to produce food surpluses and sell them at a fair price to increase their incomes. In 2009, some 45,000 smallholder farmers in the region benefited from these programmes by selling to WFP 30,000 mt of food valued at \$ 11 million.



Under P4P, innovative procurement modalities such as: smallholder competitive tendering, purchasing directly from farmers' organizations, forward contracting and developing smallholder processing options are being introduced. Innovations also include WFP's participation in commodity exchanges in Zambia and promoting the use of warehouse receipts systems in Uganda and Tanzania. WFP is using P4P as a lever to enhance partnerships with FAO and IFAD. In Mozambique, FAO is providing technical assistance in post-harvest loss prevention activities of cowpea production, IFAD provides micro-credit and WFP takes care of market development.

Local and regional purchases continue to provide an important economic boost to countries in the region, save costs and minimize lead times. In 2009, WFP purchased 638,000 mt of food in the region with a total value of almost US\$223 million.

WFP Country Offices are stepping up support to national governments as they prepare the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme or CAADP. WFP's involvement helps to ensure that hunger reduction programmes and activities are embedded in the CAADP process. In Rwanda, WFP worked closely with the

Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources in the preparation of the Rwanda Agricultural Sector Investment Plan. In Uganda, WFP and the government developed a Joint Plan on Agriculture and Market Support. In several other countries in the region, WFP is an active partner in the CAADP process.

Our efforts to support long term hunger solutions would not be effective without partnerships. P4P programmes have opened new avenues of collaboration with AGRA, FAO and IFAD as well as with numerous local organizations. Our nutrition work in the region involves close collaboration with sister UN agencies and GAIN. We have an effective partnership with NEPAD with a senior WFP staff member seconded to NEPAD secretariat. Memorandum of Understanding is signed between WFP and IGAD and another will be signed with COMESA at the corporate level. MoUs with these two important regional entities will strengthen our ability to support governments, among other things, in developing better strategies and mechanisms to address hunger challenges of pastoralists and other vulnerable groups and re-establish their livelihoods.

Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Meeting effectively the humanitarian needs in the region constitutes our biggest challenge in 2010 but they offer large opportunities as well. We intend to exploit these opportunities to the fullest. Once again I thank you for your keen interest and unwavering support for the work of WFP in the eastern, southern and central Africa region.

Thank you very much.