EVALUATION OF THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME

ABRIDGED VERSION

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Canada – Canadian International Development Agency
Netherlands – Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Norway – Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Evaluation of the World Food Programme

FINAL REPORT

Abridged Version

February 1994

PREFACE

EVALUATION OF THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME

The Canadian International Development Agency, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands and the Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway have collaborated in undertaking a comprehensive evaluation of the World Food Programme, under the management of the Directors of Evaluation of these agencies.

We wish to express our appreciation to the team of consultants from the North-South Institute of Canada and the Chr. Michelsen Institute of Norway. The evaluation is the result of their effort and commitment to the goals which were set for the evaluation. The evaluation remains the work of these independent consultants, and as can be expected in such a complex review, the three donors do not necessarily share all of the views, conclusions and recommendations contained in the reports.

We believe that the reports can serve as a valuable input into the formulation of our respective agency's future policies and in determining our aid commitments. It is also believed that the reports will prove to be useful for the WFP Secretariat, the Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes (CFA), recipient countries, as well as the collaborating partners of WFP.

Finally, we are very grateful for the constructive cooperation and patience, with which WFP has participated and contributed to the evaluation.

January 1994

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Evaluation of the World Food Programme

It is with pleasure that I transmit herewith the Final Report of the evaluation of the World Food Programme which the three donor governments initiated in 1990-91.

Our report is presented in eight chapters, preceded by an Executive Summary with a selection of findings and recommendations spread throughout the main body of the report.

In Annex A we give an account of the evaluation process itself, and identify the sixteen international consultants who have been engaged in this venture; the national consultants supporting the country studies are identified in the respective country reports.

In Annex B we provide an overview of the set of nine countries selected for special study and summarize our evaluation findings for each country in respect of eight major issues areas; we similarly summarize the findings from our evaluation of five WFP relief operations.

The country studies are presented separately, each under separate cover. They have been extensively drawn on in this report and should be seen as integral parts of the overall evaluation.

Throughout this exercise, the staff at all levels of the WFP in Rome and in the field have been open and responsive in providing the material needed for our evaluation, and have generously and constructively shared with us their insights and views, without at any point seeking to unduly influence or bias our evaluation and judgement. Similarly, the three donors cooperated with the evaluation group in setting the terms of reference for our work, and interacted at arms' length and most helpfully with us as the work progressed.

The evaluation was conducted in two phases, under the auspices of the North South Institute in Ottawa, Canada for the first phase, and the Chr. Michelsen Institute in Bergen, Norway for the second phase. The untiring assistance of the support staff of the two institutes is gratefully acknowledged.

The report as here presented draws on the accumulated experience of all members of the evaluation team, of whom nine international consultants constituted a core group, and reflects a distillation of their combined and collective thoughts and insights. The analysis, evaluation and recommendations command a wide measure of agreement within the group, and have been presented as understood and accepted by the general coordinator. No other member of the group bears responsibility for every phrase and recommendation in the main report.

On behalf of the consultants and myself I want to express our appreciation to the three donors for the opportunity they have given us to engage in this study of the workings, contributions and potential of the World Food Programme as a vehicle for relief and development assistance from the international community to people in need.

Just Faaland

Bergen, December 29, 1993

Just Faaland
General Coordinator

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List of Acronyms

BCM	Beneficiary Contact Monitoring
CFA	Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes, of WFP
CMI	Chr. Michelsen Institute, Bergen, Norway
CO	WFP Country Office
CSN	Country Strategy Note
CSO	Country Strategy Outline
DOO	Director of Operations
ECOSOC	UN Economic and Social Council
ED	Executive Director of WFP
EEC	European Economic Community
EMOP	Emergency Operation
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FFW	Food-for-work
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
HQ	WFP Headquarters
IEFR	International Emergency Food Reserve
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IRA	Immediate Response Account of WFP
ITSH	Internal transport, storage and handling
LDC	Least Developed Countries
LIFD	Low income food deficit country
NFI	Non-food item
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NSI	North-South Institute, Ottawa, Canada
PC	Projects Committee of WFP
PDPO	Protracted Displaced Persons Operation of WFP
PRO	Protracted Refugee Operation of WFP
SCP	Sub-Committee on Projects of CFA
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WFC	World Food Council
WFP	World Food Programme

1.0 Introduction

This abridged version of the *Evaluation of the World Food Programme*, which was released in December 1993, is intended for wide distribution to those individuals, governments, and organizations interested in a broad understanding of the findings and conclusions of the evaluation. Those requiring more detailed and comprehensive information are referred to the full report.

This version includes an introduction, a condensed executive summary of Chapters 1 through 7, and the substance of Chapter 8 of the full report which discusses the future of the World Food Programme (WFP).

The condensed executive summary describes the primary findings and conclusions relating to the broad topics examined: food aid in the global context, WFP's mandate, governance and working relationships, resources, organisation and management, WFP as a relief organization, and WFP as a development agency, including a profile of its activities, processes and performance. It is important to note that the evaluation's findings and recommendations reflect a sometimes difficult balance of judgement; they should be understood and assessed in their context, which cannot always be fully reflected in a summary statement of this type.

In addition, the evaluation focused on the WFP and its functioning within the wider system; parallel studies of other channels of assistance for objectives equivalent to those of WFP were not conducted. While the evaluation has identified many of the Programme's strengths and weaknesses, a full assessment of WFP's comparative advantage would require similar evaluation of the alternative channels of assistance.

The concluding section sets forth the evaluators' views on the possible future evolution of WFP. These are not to be considered as formal recommendations. Rather they are shared judgements, reached at the end of this long evaluation exercise, which may be of interest and value to those who will have to take decisions on the shape of the World Food Programme in the future. It discusses the future of the Programme as a relief agency, as a development agency, and as a hybrid organisation combining both. WFP's future policy role is also discussed.

1.1 Background

In 1991, the Governments of Canada, the Netherlands, and Norway developed terms of reference for a comprehensive evaluation of WFP. The three sponsoring governments were concerned with fundamental issues of emerging trends in global food aid supply; and with strategic policy and operational issues regarding the increasing proportion of WFP food aid being used in relief operations. In general, these issues included the appropriateness of WFP's mandate, its

organizational structure, its resources and modalities, and the efficiency and effectiveness of WFP projects, including how well important issues such as gender, the environment, and food security are addressed. The evaluation was to be both retrospective and prospective, providing information on both past performance and future directions.

The evaluation's emphasis from the beginning was on WFP's development activities; however, recognizing the growing importance of relief, a special relief study, based on interviews and existing evaluations, was undertaken for integration into the final report.

1.2 Methodology

The evaluation, which involved both food aid and evaluation expertise from different countries and institutions, was carried out in two phases.

Phase I. The first phase, coordinated by the North-South Institute (NSI) of Canada, was completed in October 1992. Global food aid trends and issues were analyzed by food aid specialists from the University of Sussex and the Overseas Development Institute of England. The core of the evaluation in the first phase, conducted by NSI consultants, was based on available documentation on WFP policies and operations and on interviews with WFP Headquarters' staff in October 1991 and March 1992. This was complemented by an intensive desk study by the Chr. Michelsen Institute (CMI) of Bergen, Norway, of WFP projects in five countries, including Bangladesh, Bolivia, Ethiopia, Tanzania, and Vietnam. The work in the first phase provided conclusive findings on some issues, identified issues for subsequent and more in-depth analysis, and provided background information for Phase II. Though not intended as a detailed institutional analysis, many organizational issues came to light during Phase I; some of these have already been addressed by WFP executive management.

Phase II. The second phase, based on terms of reference elaborated in January 1993, was coordinated by CMI. This phase was organized around a sample of nine country case studies, selected with reference to criteria such as food aid volume, duration and type of activities, geographic distribution, size of the Country Office (CO), food security, and government capacity. The countries selected were Bangladesh, Bolivia, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guatemala, Malawi, Morocco, Pakistan, and Vietnam. The country case study approach relied on an analysis of available documentation, and formal and informal interviews with recipient government officials, WFP staff both at Headquarters and in the field, non-governmental organisations (NGO), UN agencies, donors, and beneficiaries. It also involved site visits to WFP COs and projects. These nine country case studies have been published separately as working documents.

1.3 Overall Conclusions

The evaluation concludes that the World Food Programme has performed its difficult relief functions reasonably well. The report makes several recommendations for incremental

improvements in the way WFP and the Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes (CFA) handle relief responsibilities. The evaluation endorses efforts to maintain and strengthen WFP as the principal international organisation handling food relief.

The analysis of WFP's development activities, based on documentation, interviews, and country case studies, notes some successes but has also identified a disturbing number of weaknesses. The Programme performs well in the physical movement of food but is much less successful in the developmental aspects of its projects. At the project level there are many weaknesses in design, primarily in the targeting of food aid, the technical content of projects, and the sustainability of activities and assets. There are some compelling equity reasons to maintain some level of development activities within WFP if it improves its performance. There are numerous recommendations in the report on how to do this. Three alternative scenarios are discussed which include: reducing the number of countries in which the Programme operates, concentrating on those with the lowest incomes, and especially those which are disaster-prone; keeping the present spread of countries, but limiting activities to a much narrower band of project types in which food aid functions well, such as natural resources management and human resources development; and phasing out development projects except for relief-related development activities, such as disaster preparedness, rehabilitation and repatriation.

This leads into the important consideration of how WFP can combine its growing relief responsibilities with development activities. The evaluators find merit in retaining WFP as a hybrid organisation, accepting that WFP's main focus will likely be in relief in the years to come.

WFP and the CFA have not to date exercised much authority in international food policy issues. The lack of performance may be partly due to the fact that food aid policies have not in recent years been high on the international agenda. The evaluation concludes that the CFA should play a more active role in the future.

2.0 Condensed Executive Summary

This version of the executive summary presents the findings and recommendations of the seven thematic chapters of the full report. The evaluation covers a broad range of issues on policies and operations. This coverage is reflected in the structure of the full report, which progresses through global food aid policies and trends, mandate and governance, resources, organization and management, and performance in relief and development. For a more complete understanding of issues raised in this summary, the reader is referred to the full report.

2.1 Food Aid in a Global Context

Since 1950, farm output in the developed world has reached levels exceeding domestic requirements and trading opportunities. In the developing countries production has also increased - in some cases most impressively - but in the Least Developed Countries (LDC) and Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) this has not been enough to prevent a decline in per capita food output in the last decade. According to FAO projections, the grain import requirements of the developing world will continue to grow in the remainder of the present decade. The problem is expected to be most acute in SSA, where food aid may be required to cover an increasing share of imports.

According to current estimates there are between 700 and 800 million chronically undernourished people in the world. Massive food aid would not provide a lasting solution to this problem, which is essentially one of poverty, but it is worth noting that a trebling of food aid from its present level of 15 million tonnes per year could provide minimum dietary requirements to these people if properly distributed.

In recent years, food aid has accounted for less than 10 percent of official development assistance, and the ratio has been falling. Multilateral food aid accounts for approximately 20 percent of all food aid, of which 80 to 90 percent is administered through WFP.

The extent to which food aid is *additional* to other forms of aid (i.e. the level of food aid does not affect the quantum of non-food assistance) remains a controversial question. In the cases of surplus-producing countries, such as the United States, the EEC, and Canada, at least part of the food aid accorded appears to be additional to other aid resources, but this is hardly the case for many other major donors.

Cereals have predominated in food aid, accounting for about 90 percent of the total. The United States has provided well over half of this, and EEC countries and Canada are strongly represented. The current Food Aid Convention assures a minimum level of cereal food aid amounting to some 7.5 million tonnes.

Food may be provided as programme aid for balance of payments and budgetary support, as project aid, and as relief shipments. Programme aid has been restricted to bilateral donors; programme aid of cereals has traditionally accounted for over 50 percent of the volume of all food aid. Food aid is usually delivered in kind by donor countries, but there has been increasing use of "triangular" transactions whereby food is purchased in one developing country for delivery in another, and of local purchases in the recipient countries.

In 1992, cereal food aid was 0.7 percent of the world production of grains and 6.8 percent of world cereal imports. This level of food aid has provoked a largely inconclusive debate on the effects of food aid on domestic agricultural production. The most critical argument against food aid appears to be that it may make policies for increased domestic food production less pressing for recipient governments.

There are several processes underway in the developed world which could affect the outlook for food aid. There is a worldwide trend to de-link income support to farmers from production, so that surpluses may tend to diminish. The Uruguay Round of negotiations in GATT, for example, has led to agreements for a gradual reduction in export subsidies and thereby may lead to higher international food prices. In turn, this may stimulate production in some developing countries but create difficulties for the poorer nations in financing food imports.

If world prices of some of the most important commodities in the food aid basket were to increase, it would most probably raise the opportunity cost of such aid to the donors. Donors would be likely to review the efficiency of food aid in support of development projects compared to financial aid, including WFP food aid.

These reflections suggest that the future of food aid as part of the overall aid package will, to an increasing extent, depend on the particular suitability of food aid compared to other forms of aid. In particular, the use of food aid for development projects is likely to be increasingly closely scrutinised.

The macroeconomic effects of food aid do not differ in principle from other forms of aid. Relief food aid, like other forms of aid, provides balance of payments and budgetary support, but the main justification and effect is to restore the nutrition levels of people affected by disaster. Project food aid is intended to provide resources for specified development activities, usually through the direct distribution of food to project beneficiaries.

Food aid is a form of tied aid with associated inefficiencies, but its value to recipient countries in the forms of programme aid and relief are obvious. The use of food aid as a resource for development projects raises more complicated issues. The recipient country would probably prefer cash if there were a free choice, but there will generally not be this option. The greatest drawback to the use of food as a development resource is that it is expensive to transport and

manage, and it is perishable. On the other hand, it can be targeted to the needy in some situations (although the evaluation finds that WFP's performance in this area is disappointing), and unlike cash in local currency it cannot lose its value from inflation.

As a general guideline, it may be said that the use of food as a *tool,* as opposed to food aid as a *resource,* should be considered only when there is particular merit in using food as an input. Some illustrations of this emerged from the country studies that were carried out. What is also clear is that the use of food as a resource adds a further dimension of difficulty to almost every aspect of project design and implementation.

When food is used as a tool in development projects, the people who design and implement projects are extremely important. Bilateral agencies who support food aided projects, the many non-governmental organizations (NGO) which are active in this field, and WFP have all acquired valuable experience in project activities which include feeding poor and vulnerable people as a major objective. This experience could possibly be put to even better use if they were to handle projects for which financial aid was also available.

In addition to the possible cost inefficiency of food aid in food-for-work development projects, these projects sometimes suffer from shortages of non-food items, including both material and human support, for which there may be an inadequate budget. At the same time it must be recognised that this kind of project has two aims: to do development work, and to provide poor people with better nutrition. The feeding element of food aid assisted projects is an important objective in itself. That objective might or might not (according to country circumstances) be attainable with financial aid alone.

There are strong arguments for providing the maximum possible amount of emergency food aid in cash. This permits food to be purchased either in the stricken country or nearby, and avoids the long lead-time required for the mobilization and transport of food from donor countries. However, the public in donor nations may wish to express their solidarity by sending food from their own countries.

In summary, given that vulnerable nations may face increasing difficulties in mobilizing foreign exchange for food imports, and considering the extent of under-nutrition in many developing countries as well as the extent of food insecurity at household level, the case for food aid remains strong. Food aid has two advantages: to some extent it is additional to other development aid; and in a number of cases it can be effectively used as a tool for development, provided that it is the right kind of food, arrives at the right moment, and reaches the intended beneficiaries.

Donor countries without surpluses, where food aid funding is taken from the development budget and does not constitute an additional resource, should consider providing their contributions in cash, whether through WFP or through another agency, concentrating on the ways and means of

improving the short-term food security of the intended beneficiaries while at the same time achieving long-term development effects. It would then be for the development agencies that donors support to determine how much and what kind of food to buy, and where to buy it.

2.2 Mandate, Governance and Working Relationships

In 1961, matching resolutions were adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) Conference, establishing WFP on an experimental basis as a joint undertaking. In 1965, the Programme was placed on a continuing basis "for as long as multilateral food aid is found feasible and desirable". In 1974, the World Food Conference (WFC) recommended that the WFP Intergovernmental Committee be reconstituted as the Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes (CFA), with a dual mandate to oversee the operations of the Programme, and to help in the evolution and coordination of food aid policies. In 1978, the International Emergency Food Reserve (IEFR) was also created. WFP continues to report to both the UN and FAO, each of which elects half the members of the CFA.

The operational mandate of WFP, and the detailed procedures and arrangements which govern it, are enshrined in its General Regulations, which are approved by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the UN and the FAO Council. The General Regulations have been revised several times; the current version came into effect in 1992. The revisions have not resulted in great changes to the Programme's mandate. It now consists of implementing projects using food aid for economic and social development, meeting emergency food needs including the provision of logistic support, and promoting world food security.

As the housekeeping body of WFP, the CFA approves projects which exceed the Executive Director's (ED) delegated authority of USD 3 million, approves the administrative budget, and reviews all activities of the Programme. Projects are examined by a Sub-Committee on Projects (SCP); in this evaluation some suggestions have been put forward as to how the work of the SCP could be strengthened as part of an overall approach to upgrading the quality of WFP's development work.

As a body for handling international food aid policies, the CFA has achieved little in recent years. If a situation emerges in which such policies become of major international importance, the debate on policy questions should be much more clearly separated from WFP housekeeping matters, and countries should be encouraged to send special representatives chosen according to the precise nature of the issues to be discussed.

Both emergency operations and development projects are implemented by recipient governments, and the legal basis and practical procedures governing implementation are reviewed. One way of minimizing the risk of failure in project implementation is to build close relationships with the implementing agencies to ensure that WFP projects receive the necessary attention, and to include arrangements for training in the project if a shortage of trained staff is likely to be a

bottleneck. In the worst case, the Programme should be ready to select a new working partner within the government. Sometimes the best solution may be to work with stronger development partners, for example, in World Bank or International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) sponsored projects.

WFP cooperation with other UN agencies, as required by its General Regulations, has been briefly examined. This cooperation may be extended and assume a more integrated form in the future, going far beyond present arrangements, if UN resolutions to those ends are fully implemented. The Programme does not have a technical staff of its own, but draws on technical support from appropriate agencies, particularly FAO; this support has not always been satisfactory. WFP works closely with NGOs, particularly at country level, and NGO support is especially important in emergency operations.

As the global food supply and trading situation unfolds, the food aid policies of the major food aid donors change, and perceptions for appropriate development modes evolve, the further consideration of WFP's mandate and operations will be necessary. But any major mandate review would be premature at this stage; it should follow rather than precede a membership-wide discussion and resolution of issues of the purpose, focus and role of the Programme.

The risk of weak projects could be reduced by changing WFP's approach to its development role. It appears that the CFA - and management - have been unduly reluctant to get into sector-based discussions of food as a tool for development. They have not gone nearly far enough to focus WFP's work at country level. WFP should move towards a programme as distinct from a project approach. The CFA should also have a more active role in monitoring the quality of WFP programmes at country level, through, for example, an external review at regular intervals.
A shift from projects to programmes, in conjunction with a more focused sectoral and country approach, could enable the SCP (with expanded terms of reference, as needed) to have greater impact than is possible at present. It would also permit greater delegation of authority for project approval to the ED.

Agreement needs to be reached on a clearer policy regarding country eligibility for WFP development food aid. The issue should be tackled through the adoption of objective criteria rather than by *ad hoc* decisions on particular projects. The overall thrust of WFP programming should be to reduce the number of countries in which the Programme operates.

It is open to question whether the present arrangement for the FAO Finance Committee to review the WFP budget should be continued, or an internal Finance Committee of the CFA established. The latter change would require an amendment of the General Regulations, and approval by ECOSOC and the FAO Council; this is not recommended unless it is clear that change is important and that it will not generate major political frictions.

WFP and each recipient country should reach a clear understanding on how the Programme's development aid can play a strategic role in support of recipient government policies and priorities. This will require a policy dialogue, with which the Programme should seek to associate other food aid donors and funding agencies. The outputs should include a Country Strategy Outline (CSO), which is greatly improved over those so far produced and clearly linked to the Country Strategy Note (CSN) or other document setting forth the overall approach of the UN system in the country concerned.

Arrangements should be made for recipient governments to be more closely and systematically associated with the development of Project Ideas. In the later stages of the project cycle, Headquarters should refrain from making unilateral changes without consulting either the Country Office or the recipient government.

2.3 WFP Resources

WFP resources in commodities and cash are made available through a series of "windows"; while changes in the resource systems of WFP are not a priority at this time, over the long term, simplification in the form of a smaller number of resource windows would be desirable.

Donors may, at their discretion, request that pledges to WFP be considered as contributions under the Food Aid Convention. *Regular resources* are used mainly for development projects and the administrative budget. A biennial pledging target is established by the CFA and approved by the UNGA and the FAO Conference. Total pledges have been falling slightly since the 1987-88 biennium, and the cash proportion, needed for rising transport and administrative costs, still falls short of the target of one-third of resources. A separate window within the regular resources was established in 1989 for *Protracted Refugee or Displaced Person Operations (PROs)*. Commodity pledges under this window are accompanied by the cash needed for their transport. WFP needs to give increased priority to cost control of internal transport, shipping, and handling (ITSH) charges, considering the large proportion of WFP resources which they will probably continue to absorb.

The *International Emergency Food Reserve (IEFR)* currently funds all WFP emergency operations (EMOPS). Pledges to the IEFR can be made in advance, or may represent *ad hoc* responses to appeals for particular emergencies. Advance pledges may be untied or restricted to a specified purpose. The IEFR is difficult to manage because of the relatively small proportion of untied advance pledges. Despite its makeshift air, the IEFR succeeded in coping with a massive increase in requirements for the southern Africa drought in 1992.

The IEFR in its present form bears only a limited resemblance to what was envisaged at the World Food Conference. Indeed it is now little more than a label attached to contributions for WFP EMOPS. In order to make the IEFR easier to manage, and to reduce response time to emergency requests, donors are urged to increase the level of untied advance pledges, and find ways to carry over unutilized resources from one financial period to another until they are

required. In this way it would be possible to build up in periods of low activity a genuine reserve that could be drawn upon in years when relief needs were high.

It is disturbing that WFP does not appear to have a formal system for recording and reporting on shortfalls in resources mobilized as compared with quantities provisionally committed for EMOPS under Letters of Understanding. Such a system should be put in place.

The *Immediate Response Account (IRA)* is a cash window to get emergency operations off to a quick start by purchasing foodstuffs near the stricken area. Its target is USD 30 million; for 1993, contributions by mid-year amounted to only USD 17 million. Donors are urged to give a higher priority to cash contributions to the IRA, with a view to reaching the USD 30 million target. The separate window could be eliminated if there were ample cash within regular resources.

Special emergency operation contributions cover airlifts or other major logistic expenditures for relief. Contributions for special emergency operations in 1992 amounted to USD 103 million. Clearer reporting on activities under this window would be of general interest and should be instituted.

There appears to be a case for a less absolute division between resources for emergencies and resources for development. Greater flexibility at country level in using food aid for either purpose could in some cases lead to more effective approaches.

Non-food items (NFI) are provided on a limited scale for projects and PROs. The system for handling NFIs needs to be made less rigid and partially decentralized. WFP COs might be encouraged to approach potential donors locally. The donors could then channel the items either through the CO or the national agency implementing the project. Fundraising via Rome would take place only if there was no expectation of achieving results locally.

Bilateral services are provided by WFP to donors - working in effect as their agent - in the fields of food purchase, transport and monitoring.

As a result of the very high cash costs of relief operations, just over half of WFP's USD 1.7 billion expenditures in 1992 were in cash rather than commodities. About a third of the cash expenditure was for the purchase of commodities, of which nearly three-quarters came from developing countries. Slightly more than a quarter (by value) of all commodities handled by WFP in 1992 were purchased. A major item of cash expenditure consists of charges for the ITSH of commodities, which may be paid by the Programme in LDCs or other countries in similar conditions.

WFP practices in commodity purchases, commodity swaps and monetization were reviewed in this evaluation. These devices increase the flexibility of WFP operations. The Programme's food basket, augmented through swaps and purchases, appears to be reasonably satisfactory. It does not appear useful to maintain an arbitrary limit of 15 percent on monetization, and, on

balance, the technique of monetization has probably been under-utilized by WFP in recent years. The evaluation advocates a more flexible approach to monetization, under which WFP, including Country Offices, would have some liberty to monetize resources in particular circumstances and for pre-defined purposes.

WFP should review its information system for purchases, swaps and monetization, certainly in respect of its own resources and perhaps also for food aid in general. The first stage in such a review would be to develop improved conceptual and operational monitoring tools. Ambiguities in coding should be sorted out, the risk of double-counting eliminated, and a clear set of definitions and guidelines adopted.

Commodity pledges are retained by donors until they are called forward for a specific project or operation. An individual donor thus may exercise veto power over the use of its pledge. The evaluation found no evidence that this has compromised the multilateral nature of the Programme, since donors have come forward with contributions even for "unpopular" countries.

Projects involve the commitment by WFP of commodities over a period of up to five years. Resources, on the other hand, are pledged by donors for not more than two years into the future. Not surprisingly, this has created problems. In order to reconcile short-term pledging with longer-term project commitments, the Programme should develop a more sophisticated model for projecting the total resource requirements of approved projects in future biennia. Adjusted projections should be made biennially, or perhaps even annually, taking account of progress under each project. Projected requirements should be disaggregated by type of commodity.

The biennium for pledging is out of phase with the biennium for the administrative budget, which follows the cycle adopted throughout the UN system. There has been some preliminary discussion of bringing the two biennia in line later in the present decade. When achieved, this would make the Programme somewhat easier to manage, although at the cost of some disruption in the transitional period. The ED and the CFA should examine the costs and benefits of synchronizing the pledging and budget cycles, and should proceed if synchronization is found to be advantageous.

An important problem area is the funding of the administrative costs of relief operations. The volume of relief programming handled by WFP now surpasses development, and the traditional administrative budget cannot be expanded to meet the new situation. A 4 percent levy has been introduced on emergency operations and PROs but has not proved compatible with the domestic legislation of some donors, including the largest. A satisfactory formula to generate funding for the administration of relief operations is urgently required. The issue of administrative costs for the development programme could then be tackled separately in its own right.

2.4 WFP Organisation and Management

Basic issues in organisation and management. It was only in 1992, when revised General Regulations came into effect, that WFP secured full management autonomy over its personnel and finances from FAO. Since then there have been major changes in the organisational structure, partly in response to the recent increase in recent years in the volume of relief operations.

Among other changes at WFP, the Regional Bureaux have been made responsible for all phases of development projects, EMOPs and PRO/PDPOs. The Bureaux are now under the direction of the Emergency and Development Divisions. The rationale for these changes is to bring relief and development closer together, but there are important structural ambiguities in the new organisation. A formal mechanism between the Director of Emergency Operations and the Regional Managers should be established to reach decisions on emergency issues. It is also possible that the organisational structure will require further modifications.

The Programme should assess how well staff are performing these various relief and development functions, from the Regional Bureaux Managers downwards. Those who do not appear to possess the necessary aptitude for relief work should either be reassigned, or be allowed to concentrate exclusively on development. Training courses in emergency management should be devised for members of both Headquarters and field staff who possess the aptitude but not the experience.

The Programme should form a Rapid Response Team, described in Chapter 5. WFP could also make use of a roster of individuals who could be made available immediately when required. These could include people in the various developing regions who have experience in relief operations.

The question of special conditions of service for staff exposed to physical danger is of interest to all humanitarian organizations of the UN system, and is under widespread discussion. This is very relevant to WFP, which, if necessary, should be ready to table a proposal. The Programme should consider recruiting some international staff especially for service in areas of conflict.

Surprisingly, the Programme has never developed fast-track administrative procedures for use in emergencies. Special procedures should be worked out to cover personnel appointments and movements, budget and finance, and procurement, notably of vehicles and communications equipment. Within general guidelines, operational managers should have delegated authority to take quick decisions, subject to reporting afterwards.

The Programme should review its information management system for relief operations; not only is this required for normal standards of administration, it is also part of building up an institutional memory of relief operations.

WFP Headquarters facilities are not adequate; in addition, there need to be improvements in office automation, telecommunications, and management information systems. The status quo undoubtedly seriously affects WFP's performance in many areas, and aggressive measures should be taken to resolve these problems.

Country Office management. In January 1993, WFP maintained 87 staffed Country Offices (CO), often in areas of the world where basic infrastructure, facilities and communications are poor. The complexities of WFP country operations and relations between HQ and COs place considerable strain on management. One of the difficulties is that local WFP staff are, in effect, UNDP employees. The bureaucratic delays of working with such a system can be frustrating, as many routine clearances and decisions are taken between Rome and New York.

Of particular importance are the capabilities of Directors of Operations (DOO). The professional experience of such officers can range from personnel grades of P-3 to D-1. Finding qualified DOOs may be difficult, particularly as expanding roles in management, emergencies, and development programming will require even greater skills.

Many of the COs consider themselves understaffed and overworked. In some countries the situation may be eased by substituting national for international staff. The number of COs should be reduced in order to arrive at a more cost effective structure, with better staff resources. WFP has not critically assessed its potential to manage some activities more fully from Rome, or whether experience points to narrowing the range of activities and projects assisted. Despite their political ramifications, these choices need to be made.

One solution in countries with few WFP activities might be to locate a single WFP officer in the UNDP office to carry out food management and monitoring. Other functions would then have to be covered by visiting missions from HQ or a nearby CO. This in turn would involve concentrating on fewer projects in order to simplify management. The choice of locations for fully fledged COs would have to be carefully examined.

Where there is no CO, the watching brief on emerging needs of food aid relief must be clearly given to the UNDP Resident Representative, as the WFP Representative, and his staff in the UNDP.

The relationship between the CO and the UNDP Resident Representative as representative of WFP is not typical of country representation of other UN agencies, and this is a cause for serious concern within WFP. While sympathetic for this concern, the country studies revealed no major operational difficulties resulting from the relationship. In the circumstances, particularly in view of the ongoing efforts to ensure better coordination between the development work of UN agencies, and the shortage of sufficiently experienced officers in WFP, the evaluation finds it unnecessary to consider formally upgrading DOOs to become independent WFP representatives. Problems generated by the present arrangements should be removed through direct negotiation between the parties.

The length of overseas postings also needs to be considered from the point of view of efficiency. Short postings are not generally economical, given the learning time to become fully efficient in a new station. Better support to staff posted in difficult countries should make a lengthening of posting acceptable.

Whether WFP as a whole is overstretched is open to question. There is little evidence of this in the handling of relief, at least once an operation is fully under way. The real question relates to development. Can the Regional Bureaux handle development on top of relief without sacrificing quality? The evaluation clearly suggests that WFP is not carrying out certain functions effectively, notably in project design. There also appears to be great pressure on units handling resource management, food purchasing, shipping and logistics.

Financial management. The ED has recognised that the Programme now suffers from unacceptable and inadequate financial control; redressing this will require an increase in financial staff. WFP is subject to usual financial auditing procedures. It is noted that in his 1988-89 statement the Internal Auditor made over 100 substantial recommendations; these are not analyzed in the evaluation.

Food management. The commodities available to WFP from year to year are still strongly correlated with surpluses in WFP's major donor countries. In spite of this, WFP has obtained a reputation for relatively efficient resourcing of commodities.

The outstanding reputation of WFP in moving food was confirmed by a recent "Evaluation Study of Food Aid Transport Costs and Options" carried out for the European Community. This view was endorsed by the Nordic Study of 1990 which "recommended that the World Food Programme be formally designated as the UN agency with primary responsibility for matters relating to logistics and transport for both food and non-food items, including assistance to countries in developing their own transport arrangements".

Internal decision making structures. A weakness of the current structure appears to be the project approval process, and most notably the functioning of the Projects Committee (PC). The PC does not exercise full quality control over project proposals, resulting in projects which are weak in problem analysis, set unrealistic objectives, and do not address important issues. Headquarters staff appear to "massage" elements of project proposals, such as expected effects on women, to satisfy the CFA. CO staff and national officials complain that the Project Summaries approved in the CFA have sometimes been substantively changed from those which were submitted, without proper consultations between HQ and the CO. It is understandable that the PC, whose members have heavy workloads and travel schedules, is unable to examine projects better, but this clearly demonstrates that more in-house technical staff is required.

WFP has taken steps to improve its internal communications. The ED has also expressed support for decentralized decision-making to the extent possible. These are both principles of management highly encouraged by previous WFP management reviews, particularly the McKinsey Report. The evaluation generally supports giving more responsibilities to those

individuals closest to the work, but remains doubtful about how much further decentralisation is justified, and in which areas. The ED has recognised this problem and has requested all division heads to determine the degree to which decision-making can be more decentralised. The results of this analysis are not yet available, but its completion and follow-up actions should be closely monitored by the CFA.

In the evalution, it was found that COs seem to be reluctant to take full advantage of the degree of decentralized decision-taking already open to them. CO authority, notably over operating funds, training funds, and local staff issues, needs to be clarified. The perceptions of several DOOs in the case studies would indicate a need for more delegation and more flexibility depending upon the management capacity of the field office. However, HQ reports that some delegations are grossly underutilized, and that there is already some flexibility to increase delegations on a case-by-case basis. The unwillingness of DOOs to exercise their management authority has been attributed both to complex procedures which are not fully understood and to a reticence on the part of DOOs to take responsibility.

Personnel management. It is recognised that personnel management has not been well developed, and that there is considerable scope for improvement which is apparently now being addressed. Particular problems are caused by the need to have staff who are flexible in their ability to move between development and relief. The problems in project planning and management referred to in the country case studies are so pressing that limits need to be set on the number of projects undertaken at any time, and also on their scope and complexity. The most visible weakness in the staff complement is the few specialists who are available for support in the design and implementation of development projects.

In this era of UN reforms and donor constraints, it is unlikely that WFP will be able to significantly redress staffing issues by recruiting staff. The need for additional staff in financial management and logistics, aspects fundamental to the Programme and donor confidence in WFP, has already been identified. Other specialist staff are also needed. WFP should consider closing some COs, consolidating its diverse portfolio, relying more on national staff in COs, and more fully joining forces with other UN agencies, international finance institutions and other donors, so as to better match WFP activities and responsibilities with existing staff.

The concept of Unified Service adopted in 1986 for greater interchange of staff between headquarters and the field has never been fully implemented. The divide between the two still persists to some degree. On the other hand, staffing has benefited from the employment of Junior Professional Officers at relatively little cost to the organisation and likewise from the use of United Nations Volunteers.

Dependence on host governments for project implementation has demonstrated the need for training of counterparts, and a minimum of half the budget for training is reserved for this.

WFP's General Regulations indicate that the FAO and other UN agencies will normally supply the required technical expertise. WFP pays to support liaison officers in these agencies as well

as for the consultant services actually provided. There are mixed reviews among WFP managers on both the services provided by these liaison officers and the timing and quality of technical assistance. The spectrum of opinion runs from total disappointment to complete satisfaction. In the spirit of integration and cooperation being discussed in the UN system, the consultancy relationships with UN agencies should as far as possible be maintained, although new formulas and understandings should be considered.

2.5 WFP as a Relief Organisation

It is demonstrated in Chapter 3 of the report that the volume of WFP relief shipments surpassed those for development in 1991, and in 1992 was about two-thirds higher. Commitments for EMOPs in 1992 came to almost USD 900 million and for PROs to more than USD 400 million. WFP is currently handling more than half of all international food for relief. In recent years, the bulk of relief operations has been in response to drought or crop failure in Sub-Saharan Africa, in support of refugees and displaced persons in sub-Saharan Africa, and of refugees and displaced persons in WFP's North Africa, Near East and Europe Region. One of the most remarkable developments in the recent past has been the increasing involvement of WFP and other relief agencies in areas of conflict, notably in Somalia, Sudan, Angola, Mozambique, Liberia, Afghanistan, Iraq, the former Yugoslavia and some of the Newly Independent States of the former USSR.

The first important stage of a relief operation is the assessment of needs. Very different approaches are needed in cases of crop failure and in situations involving refugees or displaced persons. In the former, a macro-level assessment of the food situation and outlook and an estimate of food aid needs are normally prepared jointly by FAO and WFP in consultation with the government. The two organizations are cooperating well, and their work appears to be appreciated by both donors and recipients. However, the recent drought emergency in Malawi has thrown into prominence the need for much better information at micro-level, including the geographical location of the emergency by district, the economic classes affected, the relevance of traditional coping systems and the local trading sector, emerging or expected nutritional problems especially of vulnerable groups, and any differential impact of the emergency by gender.

Micro-assessment is foreseen in WFP's manual on "Food Aid in Emergencies", but has not been fully developed. WFP should develop a methodology for micro-assessment, incorporating a range of possible approaches, that should be available to its own staff at HQ and in COs, as well as to governments and other organizations. The development of micro-assessment should be accompanied by improved planning to better target relief; adapting operations to local coping systems, and maintaining the resilience of communities; taking account of the role of the commercial sector or local trading system; and seeking, wherever possible, to get at the root causes of the emergency and to reinforce long-term development objectives.

The evaluation suggests ways of improving the planning of emergency operations by setting the operation in a policy framework. Included should be a more systematic approach to phasing out EMOPs at the earliest possible stage. WFP, in association with UNHCR for refugees, FAO for agriculture and the International Labour Organization (ILO) for training and employment, should consider organizing a "horizontal" review of the development content of PROs and PDPOs, and develop more sophisticated guidelines for the passage from an EMOP to a PRO. PROs are expected to have a developmental dimension. The development role of WFP may vary according to circumstances, but there should be better guidelines for increasing the development content of PROs. Improved guidelines are also required for dealing with environmental effects of PROs and PDPOs.

WFP should develop arrangements for bolstering a CO quickly in case of a major emergency; the proposal for a Rapid Response Team put forward in the WFP Programme Support and Administrative Budget, 1994-95 appears to be a suitable mechanism. The Programme should be prepared to make relief planning expertise available at short notice in answer to a government request. This could be one of the functions of the proposed Rapid Response Team.

The Programme does not have a standard set of forms or software for such activities as food movement, beneficiary registration, or in-country reporting. These should be developed and placed at the disposal of COs as soon as feasible. They can be adapted as necessary to local circumstances.

In the case of refugees or displaced persons, the key planning issue is the number of people to be fed. Under a recent Global Agreement with UNHCR, WFP has taken over the responsibility for providing basic foods in all refugee situations involving more than 1,000 people. There have been serious and long-standing problems in assessing the refugee and displaced person caseload in Ethiopia and Pakistan. WFP should seek recognition from UNHCR that deciding on numbers of refugees to be fed is a joint responsibility. The Programme should also press UNHCR to develop more sophisticated techniques for the assessment of numbers, that could be applied without precipitating a confrontation with the refugees.

The monitoring of relief operations is taken seriously by WFP, which uses UN Volunteers extensively for this purpose. Further strengthening of the monitoring function could permit the fine-tuning of operations, including their phasing-out at the earliest feasible stage. Wherever feasible WFP should organize extended monitoring including economic, social or nutritional indicators. Indeed, monitoring could become a form of continuous assessment. The overriding purpose of such an approach would be to make the best use of available resources. If the Programme decides to go for improved monitoring systems, it may wish to consider a workshop on methodologies, with participation from other UN agencies and NGOs.
The Programme has a well-formulated policy on evaluating relief operations, but unfortunately it has not been implemented in recent years. COs have not been preparing the prescribed evaluative reports, which they should prepare in all cases, nor were any formal evaluations undertaken between 1985 and 1993. The resumption of the formal evaluation of relief operations by WFP should be accompanied by stock-taking on the methodologies for carrying out such

evaluations. If it emerges - as appears likely - that there are no satisfactory and generally acceptable methodologies now available, WFP should take the lead in developing them. To that end, it could organize a workshop (possibly combined with monitoring) that would bring together all interested parties.

Since its inception, WFP has been wrestling with the long delivery-cycle for food coming from distant donor countries to meet emergency needs, appealing to donors to speed up their internal procedures for making pledged commodities available; this has to some extent been done. However, many donors still have domestic constraints of a legislative or procedural nature which hinder a quick response. The Programme should informally take this matter up again with individual donors, and press for further action. Borrowing from in-country stocks, purchasing food in the country or nearby, and diverting shipments already on the high seas are the basic techniques that are now used to get operations off to a quick start. This does not fully resolve the problem, but none of the country studies reported major difficulties.

The Programme's fine reputation in the field of transport and logistics appears to be fully justified. Particularly impressive was the way in which it handled the logistics of the southern Africa drought operation. As reported in Chapter 4, deliveries to Malawi achieved twice the level that had previously been estimated by the government as the maximum possible ceiling. Action should be taken by the central coordinating mechanisms of the UN system, together with the Programme's own governing bodies, to formalize a system-wide logistic mandate for WFP in emergency situations as originally recommended by the Nordic Study.

In-country arrangements for the distribution of WFP relief supplies are normally handled by a recipient government agency, either directly or through NGOs. The Ethiopia, Malawi and Pakistan case studies identified a few problems, but relief arrangements functioned reasonably well with help from WFP itself, from UNHCR in the case of refugees, and from NGOs.

There has been considerable interest recently in the idea of monetizing food aid for relief purposes. The biggest danger is that aid may reach those who can afford to buy food, and elude those who are destitute. WFP should cautiously continue to experiment with monetization in emergency situations, making after every case a full evaluation of the pros and cons. The monetization of relief as the "wave of the future" should be discouraged - at least for the moment.

WFP concerns itself seriously with the nutritional aspects of the food basket for relief operations. Reported problems have not been major and at the policy level no corrections appear to be required. The nutritional impact of operations for refugees and displaced persons is generally monitored by NGOs, but little has been done to organize the collection of data on EMOPs. As far as possible nutritional data should be systematically generated in the monitoring phase and analyzed during evaluations.

The relief and development interface is a fashionable theme. The country studies suggest that success in this area is difficult to achieve without the requisite capacity of the national

administration concerned. The evaluation distinguished between attempting to reach developmental goals through relief operations, and gearing development projects to disaster preparedness. WFP documents have reported some successful examples in both categories. Early warning systems, vulnerability mapping, post-emergency rehabilitation, and the use of food security stocks for disaster preparedness were also briefly examined. In the case of refugees, it is only repatriation that can open up the possibility of development. The Guatemala case study found serious weaknesses in WFP's assistance to refugees repatriated from Mexico; WFP should ensure that there is adequate planning and coordination between WFP COs, before repatriation begins.

In November 1992, the CFA endorsed the Secretariat's proposal for a more extensive and systematic application of WFP assistance to support disaster prevention, preparedness, mitigation and rehabilitation measures in Africa. The evaluation recommends support for this work which is still in its early stages. Of particular importance could be cooperation with IFAD, the World Bank and UNDP. WFP should take up with FAO the possibility of creating a joint mechanism on agricultural rehabilitation which could permit the systematic mobilisation of FAO's technical knowledge for the purchasing of inputs, and WFP's skills in transport and logistics.

The evaluation recommends supporting WFP participation in work on vulnerability mapping, subject to cost-effectiveness being kept clearly in view. An investment in vulnerability mapping will only be justified if it yields new and usable information not available from any other source. If and when the methodology has proved its value, the Programme should also promote capacity building in the countries concerned, so that they can make effective use of the new technique.

During its relief operations WFP should continue to look for opportunities of capacity building, especially in disaster-prone least developed countries.

To obtain feedback on WFP's performance in the relief field, discussions were held with people from the main UN agencies concerned and from a cross-section of international NGOs. The image of WFP that emerges is generally very positive; WFP is considered to be straightforward, cooperative and easy to work with. The most frequent criticism of the Programme's overall performance was that it was slow to get started when an emergency arose. WFP is participating well in the new arrangements for coordination focused on the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs. However, the lack of any serious evaluation of recent relief exercises and the absence of agreed criteria for judging cost-effectiveness in complex emergency operations require caution in expressing any definitive judgment.

The Programme is responsible for coordinating emergency food aid from different sources. At the international level it does this by collecting and circulating information. At country level, it has played a particularly useful role in difficult and complex situations, such as Malawi, Ethiopia, Sudan, Eritrea, Mozambique, Liberia and the former Yugoslavia, where it has served as the consignee or coordinator of food aid from most or even all donors. As far as can be judged, the Programme has acquitted itself creditably in operations undertaken in zones of conflict.

Donors have three main options: they can provide emergency assistance bilaterally; they can work through NGOs; or they can use WFP. There is no other polyvalent international organisation in a position to provide the services offered by WFP. Provided the Programme continues to search for ever higher quality in its relief operations, donors can continue to give it their confidence.

2.6 WFP as a Development Agency: Profile and Activities

WFP's development portfolio was examined in order to see whether there are any discernible patterns of project effectiveness which might suggest that some types of development activity are meeting with greater success than others. The question of the distribution of activities on a country basis was also addressed.

There has been considerable stability in the broad composition of WFP's project portfolio over time. Human resource development projects account for about 40 percent of WFP's current development activities, directly productive activities account for about 50 percent, and the rest are classified as economic and social infrastructure projects. Analysis of a more detailed classification of WFP's portfolio raises the question of whether WFP ought to concentrate its activities and reduce the diversity and complexity of its operations in the interests of greater efficiency. Each type of activity requires its own specialist expertise to design, implement and evaluate, and makes its own special demands on government capacity. Such concentration is necessary to enable WFP to perform at acceptable levels of efficiency and effectiveness.

An examination of agricultural projects gives a very mixed picture of project effectiveness. This is evident both in WFP's own evaluations of projects and in the nine country studies conducted for this evaluation. Key problems noted in the evaluations carried out by WFP have included lengthy payback periods for investment by farmers, lack of integration of project activities into local production and marketing systems, and very limited success in achieving agricultural development objectives in the wider context of rural development projects.

A number of evaluations of forestry projects have also shown that performance has varied greatly. Projects carried out in China appear to have been very successful, but in a number of other countries considerable difficulties have been encountered. In the absence of cost-benefit studies it is not possible to assess the rates of return that can be expected to emerge from such projects, although there could be potentially high returns with efficient implementation.

Altogether the review of food-for-work (FFW) projects shows that there have been considerable problems in the design of projects; they were sometimes based on unrealistic assumptions about the implementation capacities of governments, and they were often provided with insufficient technical assistance. There has been very little impact evaluation and there were a number of examples of FFW projects benefiting people who could not be considered the most disadvantaged. More attention needs to be paid to targeting and to community participation.

Supplementary feeding projects cover school feeding and vulnerable group development activities. These projects are intended to improve nutrition, attendance and performance of school pupils and, in the case of projects concerned with primary health care, to improve nutrition and encourage attendance at clinics. It is again evident from WFP evaluations and the country studies that there are wide variations in the performance of such projects. It appears that vulnerable group feeding projects are capable of giving satisfactory results but often experience difficulties in implementation. Improvement in relating vulnerable group feeding projects to the overall national response to malnutrition and malnutrition-related disease is required.

A number of difficulties have also been experienced with school feeding projects. It is very difficult to establish how far they attain their objectives. Reduction of malnutrition may be frustrated because rations are shared with the family, and there is little evidence of nutritional improvement though it may be that the concentration of pupils in school is improved. In some cases the provision of food serves only to relieve school budgets of these expenditures; and in many instances it appears unlikely that governments would fund school feeding projects if WFP support were withdrawn.

Problems have been encountered with supplementary feeding projects; these include difficulties in targeting and the emergence of institutional dependence. There have been very few assessments of project effectiveness, and there was often an unclear link between such projects and their objectives. These projects need to be recast in light of what they can realistically achieve.

As a general conclusion to the discussion of food for work and supplementary feeding projects, there is no demonstrated general case for WFP to favour one over the other. Neither is there a demonstrable reason for eliminating or favouring projects in agriculture, forestry, vulnerable group feeding or school feeding. Success is highly dependent on local conditions and on the strengths of the key counterpart agencies, as well as on WFP's capacity to ensure adequate project design, implementation and evaluation. There is a marked need to integrate food aid with financial and technical assistance, for instance, from UNDP, the World Bank or IFAD.

WFP attempts to give priority to countries designated as low income food deficit (LIFD) countries. In 1991 there were 74 countries classified in this category, having a per capita income as high as USD 1235. WFP and the CFA should reconsider the criteria for classifying a country as LIFD. It appears that WFP has only recently been considering the relative allocation of resources to countries. As a result some middle income countries have had large programmes.

Constrained resources have recently led WFP to draw up guidelines for country allocations. This is a welcome attempt on the part of the Secretariat and WFP to target resources to the most needy. An examination of the regional distribution of resources shows some interesting shifts in allocation patterns. It is noticeable that between 1963 and 1992 the Latin America and the Caribbean region increased its share from 11 percent to 20 percent although it includes only one Least Developed Country.

It is not clear at the present time if WFP aims to allocate food aid to the most food insecure countries or to the largest groups of impoverished and food insecure people. For 30 years WFP has used a project approach to allocate its resources and until recently there have been no guidelines for limiting the size of any given country allocation.

If a programming approach is to be fully implemented within the UN system, WFP will have to further orient itself as a UN team member. This may lead to the approval by the CFA of multi-year programmes of assistance to recipient countries. Although WFP has a wide understanding of the implications of the adoption of a programme approach to planning, a major impediment to adopting it is the unreliable nature of the resources provided to it, such as having to programme on a biennial basis, and uncertainties about the types and quantities of commodities available. For WFP to be able to cooperate fully in a programming approach, it would also be necessary to improve its capacity to develop country programme strategies; the country studies noted weaknesses in this area.

2.7 WFP as a Development Agency: Processes and Performance

It is necessary to ensure that WFP's activities are integrated into the national development strategies of recipient countries. WFP is seen as rather passive in the debate on how to use food to support development and on the criteria to be met if food is to be used efficiently and effectively for development. The preparation of a Country Strategy Outline (CSO) is one device which is intended to foster a dialogue with the WFP Regional Bureau to ensure consistency of assumptions regarding the framework for future project activities. The country studies found weaknesses in the capacity of COs to prepare CSOs. For most if not all COs it is unrealistic to expect them to develop such strategic documents on their own. In the future, the CSO may feed into the preparation of UN Country Strategy Notes, the strategy for integrating the operations of all UN agencies.

The evaluation recommends that the Programme move towards a country programming approach which seeks to identify the most effective uses of food aid in support of development projects, and that it adhere to programming objectives when approving projects. This will require more technical support in the preparation of the CSO, better analysis of economic and social conditions during project design and implementation, and more severe scrutiny in the project approval process.

WFP has laid down a series of six steps that are to be followed in project preparation; nonetheless, there are a number of ways in which project preparation should be improved. The evaluation notes key problems in targeting food aid to the poorest and most food insecure, ensuring participation by target group members in project design, development and implementation, addressing gender issues in project design, and ensuring adequate measures for sustainability of assets, activities and institutions created or supported by WFP assistance. In addition, there is a general need to improve the technical quality of projects. The country case studies draw into question WFP's current *capacity*, not its willingness and good intention, to ensure a reasonable level of design quality for the projects it supports with food aid. The

evaluation therefore urges the Programme to consider moving towards fewer, perhaps larger, projects with less complex objectives and lower expectations, more focused sector approaches, and full-scale operations in fewer countries.

A number of the country case studies indicate that WFP will need to upgrade the technical capacity in development project design if it is to achieve more acceptable levels of project quality. This will require *inter alia* a stronger complement of technical specialist staff at HQ; more flexible and innovative arrangements for using outside consultants, including those from other UN agencies; and an expanded use of national consultants by COs.

The evaluation recommends that the Programme apply more effort to improve the targeting of projects to ensure that the benefits will more fully reach the most food-deficit regions, and the poorest and the most food insecure. In addition, greater attention should be given to effective community-level participation in identifying project activities in order to ensure community ownership and responsibility for the maintenance of assets created in development projects. There are also needs for concrete measures to ensure that women participate in influencing project orientation and in management and implementation, and that they receive an equitable share in project benefits.

Project designs must also more fully analyze institutional relationships and capacity, including the potential involvement of other agencies, mechanisms of coordination, and the traditional and existing government institutions and their capacity. One of the key design weaknesses noted in the country studies concerned unrealistic assumptions about the administrative and programming capacity of counterpart agencies. In addition, there were often inadequate measures taken to secure technical assistance or to provide relevant training or to strengthen systems for more effective project management.

The responsibility for project design at WFP is blurred. Though initiated at the CO with recipient government involvement, Project Summaries are sometimes modified at HQ in substantive ways and sent for approval without full consultation. As project approval processes are now practised, proposed projects do not in all cases have the full and explicit approval of all the parties involved.

Once a project is approved, implementation is entrusted to the recipient government with some assistance from WFP. WFP is responsible for delivery of food to the recipient country and for monitoring food deliveries and distribution. It is also expected to strengthen the capacity of implementing agencies. Another area where WFP is involved in conjunction with others is in the provision of non-food items.

One of the major functions of WFP lies in the monitoring of projects. Monitoring operates at both formal and informal levels; both are important and both need improvement. WFP should strengthen the relationship between HQ and the field through more consultative visits, seminars, and training. After a few years the Programme should review its reporting procedures with a view to simplification. The required implementation reports appear to be of little relevance and

use when it comes to planning a project expansion, with the result that the significance of difficulties experienced in the past is under-rated.

The quality of monitoring and reporting is sometimes negatively affected by the absence of agreed and relevant indicators for achievements, particularly at the "immediate" objectives level. There is little systematic monitoring of project pre-conditions. Beneficiary Contact Monitoring (BCM) is one of the more important elements of improved project planning and implementation; it does, however, require specialized skills for obtaining and analyzing information and requires the involvement of nationals of the country concerned.

It appears that WFP's capacity to monitor development projects directly or indirectly is stretched beyond reasonable limits. In most of the country studies, monitoring by WFP was limited to food movements, to numbers of beneficiaries participating, and to output indicators, with little analysis to affect changes in project direction or implementation. It appears that almost all the COs visited were able to successfully manage food movements and support the logistics involved. More effort is needed to understand how well benefits are provided to the poorest and most food insecure people.

One of the overall weaknesses emerging from the country studies is the neglect of the assessment of effectiveness and impact at country level. A number of important evaluation problems were identified: there is a lack of baseline data and of qualitative information on beneficiaries; targeting is seldom considered in depth in project design or evaluation; very little is known about how WFP food is used by households; and economic analyses of projects are seldom done.

The evaluation found the quality of management reviews and interim and thematic evaluations to be good, except for the lack of impact information. It is doubtful whether management reviews and evaluations should be combined with appraisal missions; the tight time schedule does not permit analysis and the integration of findings.

It appears that WFP has been able to deal with commodity exchanges in a generally effective and acceptable way. The country studies found that available commodities were acceptable and valued. However, at times rations had a higher value than local wages; this situation can defeat the self-targeting nature of food aid to the poorest as better off farmers and labourers also seek to participate.

One issue is that projects that require non-food inputs were sometimes approved without any assurance that such inputs could be provided, with serious consequences for project implementation. The CFA should assure itself that non-food items are available and committed before projects are approved and initiated.

It is possible from the country studies to form impressions of WFP project performance. The overall picture of effectiveness was mixed with weaknesses in design and implementation often overshadowing basic benefits to project participants. In most cases projects fell short of their potential because of problems associated with poor design and inadequate technical assistance.

Rarely was the basic development rationale found to be simply wrong, but there were many opportunities for increased effectiveness through changes in design and implementation. Commitment of the recipient government to project activities was another factor that explained the relative success of certain WFP assisted projects.

There was evidence in the country studies of food for work and human resource development projects having medium and long term positive effects, but the fact that there was little quantitative or even qualitative information on the impact of WFP projects made systematic analysis difficult.

The country studies threw considerable doubt on the sustainability of project activities; WFP analysis of this was often weak or absent. The Programme should be much more active in ensuring that assistance to projects, which tends to create budgetary dependence for key ministries, is accompanied with clear and concrete plans for phasing out and for budgetary and institutional sustainability. Otherwise, an unacceptable level of dependence is created and the inevitable end of WFP support will cause undue hardship for both project staff and beneficiaries. There are, however, situations where it is fully justifiable to keep a project going for many years, even decades. Phasing out is not necessary in the case of project activities that have proved reasonably effective and have improved and benefited different people over time in poor countries that remain dependent on foreign grant aid.

Many of the most successful WFP projects are those where other development organisations have taken the lead and where the Programme supplies food as an input. The evaluation recommends far greater efforts to integrate WFP food aid into projects formulated and implemented by other organisations with stronger technical expertise, such as the UN agencies, the international financial institutions, and donors.

WFP has recognised the importance of enhancing the participation of women in its activities following guidelines introduced in 1989. CFA and SCP guidance has been decisive and ensures some continued attention to gender issues in WFP project design and implementation. The country studies, however, revealed attitudinal and practical difficulties in translating the guidelines into effective and concrete measures in a number of countries. Nevertheless, many of WFP's projects have benefited a very large number of women. The need remains, however, to pursue the gender issue systematically so that opportunities to benefit women will not be lost.

In general, the country studies confirmed that WFP activities can have positive effects on the environment.

3.0 The Future of the World Food Programme

Findings and recommendations on specific issues are presented in Chapters 1 through 7 of the evaluation report. This section, taken from Chapter 8, sets forth the evaluators' views on the possible future evolution of the World Food Programme. These are not to be considered as formal recommendations. Rather they are shared judgments, reached at the end of this long evaluation exercise, which may be of general interest, and perhaps of value to those who will have to take decisions on the shape of WFP in the later nineties.

3.1 WFP as a Relief Agency

WFP's performance in relief is impressive. The recommendations we have put forward aim at incremental improvements rather than radical changes.

Several factors have contributed towards giving a special prominence to the Programme's role. International emergency needs have escalated sharply in recent years, largely as a result of the increasing number of armed conflicts underway in different parts of the world. Relief has become a global priority, with a political as well as a humanitarian dimension. Food, together with the related transport and logistic costs, is generally the most expensive single item in an emergency. At its present level of operations, WFP is handling over half of all international food for relief. Consequently, the Programme's relief role is widely perceived as being more important than its role as a development agency.

This is a reversal of the situation that prevailed during the Programme's first twenty-five years, when its true vocation was seen as development. Relief operations generally ran at a much lower level than development projects, and absorbed a smaller part of the energies of the staff and the governing body.

It may be that the present situation is only a temporary one, with the traditional balance between relief and development likely to be restored at some stage in the not too distant future. Of course it is impossible to make a confident prediction, but it is to be noted that WFP itself is estimating that relief operations will continue at roughly the 1992 level through 1994 and 1995. For planning purposes, it seems prudent to assume that relief will continue to be the central concern for some time to come.

It is important to recognize that the level of relief operations is not determined by policy decisions on the part of the Programme. What has happened is that the total level of relief needs has gone up, and at the same time the donor community has found WFP an effective channel for its aid. The arrangements for funding WFP relief operations are open-ended, in the sense that contributions can be sought and made for whatever amount may be required, without any upper

limit. If donors want to use WFP as the main vehicle for emergency food aid, there is no obvious reason why they should not do so. The structure of the Programme's resources is, however, somewhat unbalanced, with 70 percent of all relief contributions in 1992 coming from just two donors: the United States and the EEC. The level of operations could fall away or further expand rapidly if either of these donors was to alter its preference for the channelling of its relief contributions.

The possibility might be contemplated of forcing a cutback in relief operations, with a view to maintaining WFP as an organisation devoted primarily to development. However, such a course of action would run counter to common sense, since the evaluation indicates that the Programme handles relief better than it handles development. Furthermore, there is no other United Nations or non-governmental organisation in a position to take over WFP's relief functions, particularly in the field of transport and logistics. Consequently, this is hardly a worthwhile option for WFP's future.

The coordination of relief is both difficult and important, because of the many organisations involved both inside and outside the United Nations system, and because of the fast-moving nature of the work. Within the UN system there has almost always been tension among and between operating and coordinating organisations. The evaluation has found WFP to be conducting itself well; the existing tensions appear creative rather than destructive. In particular, the Programme cooperates effectively with the UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. WFP appears to be doing a good job as a specialized coordinator of emergency food aid from different sources. Further movement is indicated on the recommendation advanced by the Nordic Study of 1990 that WFP be designated as the UN agency with primary responsibility for matters of logistics and transport for both food and non-food items.

In summary, it would seem to be in the interest of all countries, both donors and recipients, to maintain and strengthen WFP as the principal international organisation for handling food relief.

3.2 WFP as a Development Agency

The analysis in earlier chapters has pointed to some successes, but has also identified a disturbing number of weaknesses, in WFP development projects. In essence, the Programme performs well in the physical movement of food but is much less successful in coping with the strictly developmental aspects of its projects. Both Headquarters and Country Offices are strong on food management but weak on development planning. There is little evidence that Country Strategy Outlines are seriously addressing the question of how food aid could be used most efficiently to support national priorities. At project level we have found many weaknesses in design: the targeting of food aid on the poorest areas and people is often unsatisfactory; the technical content of projects often leaves much to be desired; the phasing out of a project is often not planned at all.

In this evaluation considerable thought was given to whether it makes sense for WFP to remain in the business of implementing food aid projects for development. Donors that contribute surplus food to WFP development projects could, in theory, utilize NGOs for such activities, or programme food aid bilaterally with recipient governments. Donors that contribute cash rather than food would have no difficulty in finding alternative uses for their funds. While various views were put forward within the evaluation team, the argument of equity was highlighted. Even some of the richest nations have domestic food programmes for the benefit of people living below the poverty line. A development programme targeted at the poorest people in the poorest countries, organized by the UN system, based on bringing food to the hungry, and aimed at long-term impact as well as short-term benefits should surely be maintained by the donors as long as it can be run effectively and efficiently. The WFP membership should be thinking about improving their effectiveness and efficiency, not about winding up the Programme.

A particular option might be to provide other funding agencies such as UNDP, the World Bank, IFAD or the regional development banks with a "food window" permitting them to manage a certain amount of food aid directly and incorporate it in their own projects. On balance, however, such an approach would be unlikely to offer a practical alternative to a WFP development programme. Food management is a specialized task, and there are strong arguments for having all types of food aid handled together by a single staff. It would be useful, nevertheless, for the financial institutions to be invited to make use of WFP-managed food aid in any of their respective projects where it could play a role.

Looking at WFP's performance over the last few years, it should be borne in mind that food is a less flexible - and in some ways more difficult - resource to handle than financial or technical aid. Furthermore, WFP is increasingly concentrating its efforts on the least developed and other low-income countries, where implementation capacity is weakest. Consequently the Programme has been facing a challenge of extraordinary difficulty. Nevertheless, even in the face of these constraints WFP could have done a better job.

The evaluation suggests that the Programme has made two strategic errors. It has gone in too much for stand-alone WFP projects, whereas the Programme's aid could have been used more successfully as an input into broader projects handled by other agencies, particularly the funding organisations. And it has offered too broad a range of project types, instead of concentrating on those for which food aid is particularly well suited. Moreover, there is a case for focusing efforts on a smaller number of countries.

More positively, the Programme has built up over the years a very considerable capacity for handling poverty- and hunger-related projects, and a wide experience of what works and what doesn't work in particular countries. This provides a good basis on which to build a stronger programme in the period ahead.

In thinking about possible courses of corrective action, the evaluation kept in mind that recommendations for strengthening the staff in terms of numbers would likely be unrealistic. Proposals for further increases in the budget could hardly be acceptable to donors in the present

economic climate. However, the quality of the development programme could be upgraded without a budget increase by such approaches as: making joint projects with funding agencies a standard approach; narrowing the focus of the programme in geographical or sectoral terms or both; renegotiating the arrangements for technical support from other UN agencies; and reducing the number of Country Offices so as to strengthen those that remain.

The evaluation therefore puts forward for consideration the following three options regarding the future course of WFP's development work. These are highly condensed and schematic. A great deal more work would be needed to translate any one of them into a set of specific proposals.

(A) Reduce the number of countries in which the Programme operates, perhaps to about 50, concentrating on those with the lowest incomes, and especially on those which are disaster-prone. Programmes in other countries would be phased down gradually, and there would have to be a substantial period of transition. At an early stage it should be possible to close down some thirty to forty COs, maintaining only a modest presence through the UNDP Resident Representative's office. Resources could be redeployed to strengthen the COs that are retained, particularly in the field of development planning. WFP would operate to the maximum extent possible through joint projects with funding agencies.

(B) Keep the present spread of countries, but limit activities to a much narrower band of project types in which food aid functions well. Possible candidates might include natural resources management (soils, water, forestry) and human resources development (school feeding). But it should be borne in mind that no type of project is guaranteed to work in all countries; allocation of funds should take account of what works well in the particular country concerned. As in option (A), the Programme should work as far as possible through joint projects with funding agencies. Insofar as joint projects do not prove a satisfactory vehicle for mobilizing technical support, the present arrangements with FAO and other technical agencies should be renegotiated so as to enable the Programme to acquire resident expertise in one or two high-priority sectors, and the possibility of hiring local experts in recipient countries.

(C) Phase out development projects except for relief-related development activities (disaster preparedness, rehabilitation, PROs, settlement of repatriated refugees).

It would be possible to combine elements from the three options in different ways. For instance the geographic focusing which is the basis of (A) could be combined with sectoral focusing as in (B), or the more drastic focusing suggested in (C). Indeed, discussion of the best way to combine these various suggestions might be the most constructive approach to the future of WFP's development work.

Whatever the option that may be adopted, WFP development assistance should be slotted into the total effort of the UN system in a logical and effective manner. The dispositions already adopted by the General Assembly, for instance on a programme approach and the preparation of Country Strategy Notes, should help to bring this about.

It would be hazardous to attempt to guess the future level of resources that might be available to WFP for development. At the time of this evaluation there was no evidence that the surge in relief operations has so far led to any reduction in funding for development projects, but this may not be maintained over a period of several years. In any event, the food aid channelled through WFP for development is only a part of the total flow. The interest of donors in supporting the Programme will depend mainly on their perception of whether it is doing a satisfactory job. Numerous criticisms have been advanced in this evaluation, but corrective action is feasible. Whatever the steps that may be taken, it is important that the donors be consistent. If they agree to a refocussing of the development programme, whether it is along the lines suggested above or following another approach, it will be vital that they maintain their support and that they help WFP to achieve the necessary quality improvement.

3.3 Combining Relief and Development

If, as seems likely, relief continues for some years at least to be the main focus of WFP's work, then this major shift of emphasis will have to be absorbed into the Programme's thinking and the way in which it works, at both Secretariat and CFA levels. In order to permit a smooth and rapid transition to a new balance between relief and development, it would be advisable to reach early decisions on any change in the Programme's developmental role.

Looking first at the relief side, WFP will have to see itself as a fast-moving body, taking quick decisions and often acting in a non-bureaucratic manner, particularly on the administrative aspects of relief operations. Top management must look at the time and attention devoted to relief as compared to regular programme issues, including fund-raising for the biennial pledging target. It will need to ensure that a clear decision-making structure is in place for handling the strategy and tactics of particular emergencies, as distinct from operational decisions on logistics or other aspects. The structural changes put in place at the beginning of 1993 should be assessed after an adequate shaking-down period, and modified if necessary. Policy staff, already heavily laden with issues on the development side, will have to be much more concerned about the problems of a policy framework for relief operations. The availability of a Rapid Response Team, or a similar mechanism, will be important for reinforcing COs in an emergency, and ensuring that WFP overcomes its reputation as a slow starter. Staff recruitment and training will need to emphasize the skills required for relief operations; the Programme may consider recruiting people ready and suited for service in danger zones. The CFA will certainly wish to look at the balance of attention it devotes to relief and development.

On the development side, the exact nature of the changes required would of course depend on the decisions about a refocussing of WFP's development role, whether along the lines of the options suggested above or not. Over the short term it will, in any event, be important to ensure that the Regional Bureaux are able to handle their development responsibilities effectively despite the load of relief operations. Over the medium and longer term, any of the options advanced above is likely to require new modes of cooperation with both funding and technical organisations. The need for a more strategic use of food aid at country level, possibly combined with the advent of a programme approach, will place greater responsibility upon COs, and call for skills in development planning which most of them do not at present have. New project proposals will have to be rigorously screened from the earliest stage.

Taking relief and development together, there is clear value in retaining WFP as a hybrid organisation. If relief is accepted as the main focus there is still a strong case for continuing - as a minimum development profile - an active programme oriented towards disaster preparedness, mitigation and rehabilitation.

3.4 WFP's Policy Role

The role of WFP with regard to food aid policies in general is vested in the CFA rather than in the Secretariat. The results achieved by the CFA are not impressive. The lack of performance may, however, be partly due to the fact that food aid policies have not, in the recent past, been high on the international agenda. This could change in the course of the next few years if the industrialized countries succeed in establishing agricultural policies that lead to lower levels of production, a decline in surpluses and a rise in international prices. Broader questions of the food security of the poorest countries will certainly be followed by the FAO Committee on World Food Security, but there could be important specific issues relating to levels of food aid. These could include the future shape and level of the Food Aid Convention. The CFA should actively exercise its policy role as these events unfold.