

برنامج  
الأغذية  
العالمي



Programme  
Alimentaire  
Mondial

World  
Food  
Programme

Programa  
Mundial  
de Alimentos

**Executive Board  
Annual Session**

**Rome, 21 - 24 May 2001**

## POLICY ISSUES

### Agenda item 4

*For information\**



Distribution: GENERAL  
**WFP/EB.A/2001/4-C**  
17 April 2001  
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

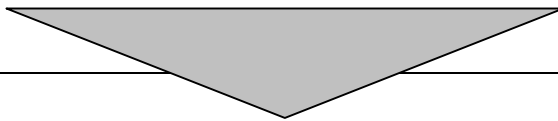
## WFP—REACHING PEOPLE IN SITUATIONS OF DISPLACEMENT

### Framework for Action

\* In accordance with the Executive Board's decisions on governance, approved at the Annual and Third Regular Sessions, 2000, items for information should not be discussed unless a Board member specifically requests it in advance of the meeting and the chair accepts the request on the grounds that this is a proper use of Board time.

This document is printed in a limited number of copies. Executive Board documents are available on WFP's WEB site ([http://www.wfp.org/eb\\_public/EB\\_Home.html](http://www.wfp.org/eb_public/EB_Home.html)).

# Note to the Executive Board



**This document is submitted for information to the Executive Board.**

The Secretariat invites members of the Board who may have questions of a technical nature with regard to this document to contact the WFP staff focal points indicated below, preferably well in advance of the Board's meeting.

Director, Strategy and Policy Division (SP): Ms D. Spearman tel.: 066513-2600

Senior Adviser, Policy Service (SPP): Ms D. Hines tel.: 066513-2233

Should you have any questions regarding matters of dispatch of documentation for the Executive Board, please contact the Supervisor, Meeting Servicing and Distribution Unit (tel.: 066513-2328).



# Executive Summary



At its Third Annual Session in 2000, the Executive Board agreed that the Secretariat, following consultations with the Bureau, would further the discussion on internal displacement through the submission of a paper *for information* to the Executive Board at its Annual Session in May 2001.

This information paper focuses on how to improve the effectiveness of WFP's operational response to internal displacement. WFP's role is framed and fulfilled by its mandate and within broader United Nations discussions that are still evolving. The paper underscores that WFP will provide food assistance to the internally displaced and other groups affected by displacement to promote their food security when requested by Member States of the United Nations or Associate Members of any specialized agency or of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

WFP will target displaced persons on the basis of food insecurity rather than identify them as a particular group. The Programme will apply the same targeting criteria as to other food-insecure groups, while making a special effort to understand and address the particular needs of IDPs. WFP is committed to collaboration with national, local and international authorities on behalf of the internally displaced. The Programme is supportive of inter-agency coordination mechanisms with the aim of enhancing assistance to and protection of IDPs.

## Draft Conclusion



The Board took note of the information provided in the document WFP/EB.A/2001/4-C as a follow-up to a request made at its Third Regular Session in 2000, and commented on the elements of the action framework proposed therein.



---

## INTRODUCTION

1. At its Third Regular Session in 2000, the Executive Board agreed that the Secretariat, following consultations with the Bureau, would further the discussion on internal displacement through the submission of a paper *for information* to the Executive Board at its Annual Session in May 2001. A final report would be prepared after the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations or the General Assembly of the United Nations had concluded its discussion on issues related to situations of internal displacement.<sup>1</sup>
2. The needs of internally displaced persons (IDPs)<sup>2</sup> have been of serious concern to international agencies for a number of years. IDPs face special difficulties not shared with other crisis-affected groups, including refugees. Major concerns are meeting basic food, shelter, health and sanitation needs; creating conditions for early return and recovery; and protecting IDPs from violence and abuse. These concerns reflect situations of internal displacement that are increasingly complex; addressing them requires a thorough understanding of the root causes of displacement and the conditions that will permit return and resettlement. Limited resources, ineffective coordination mechanisms and problems of access often constrain responses.
3. Responsibility for meeting the needs of IDPs rests with the national State. In accordance with General Assembly Resolution 46/182, WFP fully respects state sovereignty: “humanitarian assistance should be provided with the consent of the affected country and in principle on the basis of an appeal by the affected country”. National efforts are sometimes insufficient for meeting IDP needs, thus international assistance is provided when Governments require it to aid displaced populations. In conformity with General Assembly resolution 46/182, the United Nations works with Governments to ensure that the humanitarian effort is, to the extent possible, complementary to the efforts of national and local authorities.
4. It is understood that WFP's role is framed and shaped by its mandate,<sup>3</sup> and will be influenced by broader United Nations discussions that are still evolving.<sup>4</sup>
5. This paper focuses on how to improve the effectiveness of WFP's operational response to internal displacement. It integrates lessons learned by WFP and the experience of other international organizations in assisting displaced persons and emphasizes a case-by-case approach to developing appropriate responses.<sup>5</sup> These lessons are discussed in the following section, which sets the context for WFP's work with IDPs.

---

<sup>1</sup> WFP/EB.3/2000/13—Decisions and Recommendations of the Third Regular Session of the Executive Board, 2000.

<sup>2</sup> Internally displaced persons are defined as persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to vacate their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or man-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border.

<sup>3</sup> WFP's General Regulations, Article IX, entitled Eligibility for Assistance.

<sup>4</sup> A number of issues remain unresolved. Their resolution will require further discussion and consensus within high-level international bodies, particularly the General Assembly and Economic and Social Council.

<sup>5</sup> WFP/EB.3/2000/13—Decisions and Recommendations of the Third Regular Session of the Executive Board, 2000.



## THE REALITIES OF DISPLACEMENT

6. Internal displacement creates vulnerability because it separates people from their families and community structures, terminates employment relationships, disrupts formal education opportunities, limits access to vital health services and denies or limits access to land and traditional patterns of natural resource use. United Nations system-wide experience indicates that the loss of personal documents limits access to essential services. Separation from traditional community support structures can make the displaced more vulnerable to round-ups, forced conscription and sexual assault. Women, children and the elderly suffer disproportionately.
7. Food is often one of the most urgent needs of the internally displaced, sometimes because IDPs are forced to leave their homes with only what they are able to carry, and sometimes because they have no access to land or other assets upon which to secure their livelihoods.
8. The needs of displaced persons change over time. IDPs often are particularly vulnerable to food insecurity during the initial stages of displacement, and the newly displaced are often more disadvantaged than "older" IDPs in their access to assistance. Lack of resources and community ties affect their ability to cope and perhaps establish livelihoods in their new surroundings.
9. IDPs' needs are often indistinguishable from those of other victims of conflict or disaster who have not fled their homes. Once IDPs have set up temporary homes, they usually begin to meet their needs for water, shelter, food and fuel. This may not, however, be the case when IDPs are confined to camps or otherwise prevented from engaging in productive activities that would help address their food needs. During situations of protracted displacement, the concerns of IDPs and other crisis-affected people converge and may often be similar. It is important to assess the needs of IDP groups on an ongoing basis and monitor how those needs change over time.
10. In periods of return and reintegration, the internally displaced have needs that non-returnees do not: the need to rebuild their homes and lands, the need to re-establish title to land and other resources, the need to restore family roots and community structures and re-establish their legal residence. They may also require protection and psychological support.
11. Natural disasters often overlap with conflict or general insecurity, for example in Afghanistan and southern Sudan, compounding the loss experienced by the displaced. It is important that responses be designed flexibly to consider the multiple vulnerabilities the displaced may face.
12. It is often difficult to determine the exact number of displaced people when agencies and governments do not use harmonized definitions or counting methods and/or when various parties have an interest in inflating or understating numbers. Moreover, it is difficult to identify IDPs living outside of camps or centres, for example those living in abandoned buildings or with relatives. A broad analysis of conflict-affected communities, including an assessment of livelihood strategies, can be helpful in determining food insecurity and targeting those in need of food assistance.
13. Displacement, especially when accompanied by loss, disablement or the absence of male family members, often forces women to assume new roles with additional burdens while exposing them to additional risks. A large percentage of displaced households are headed by women. Women also tend to be more disadvantaged in terms of their access to services, such as health care.



14. United Nations agencies and others assisting IDPs have learned that the requirements of displaced women often include:
  - support to develop new coping mechanisms and livelihoods and gain access to entitlements, including employment and training opportunities;
  - steps to ensure that displacement does not reinforce socio-cultural biases that discriminate against women and reduce their food security (for example, situations of displacement accompanied by food shortages are particularly damaging to women, especially those who are expected to eat last in the family);
  - protection from physical violence; and
  - protection of property rights and entitlements (these often do not transfer to women heads of households).
15. Children are particularly vulnerable in situations of displacement. War and displacement replace the security of the family with unpredictability and instability, undermining the very foundation of children's lives. Displacement is a major contributor to child malnutrition, and with their immune systems weakened, malnourished children are at greater risk of disease. Displacement exposes children to physical danger, the risk of emotional trauma, poverty, discrimination and exploitation, and may remove their chances of obtaining an education. Girls and boys may face specific problems during displacement related to their gender, for example recruitment as child soldiers or the increased likelihood of sexual abuse.
16. Agencies' priorities, needs assessments and delivery systems often ignore older people's vulnerability and their potential contribution to relief and rehabilitation efforts.
17. Generally during the initial stages of displacement and with major new occurrences, the food aid component is significant and well resourced, while non-food items are often insufficient. To ensure that IDPs are able to make optimal use of the food rations provided by WFP, essential items related to food must be provided during the initial phase of displacement. These include fuel and water for cooking, and utensils. Other basic requirements of IDPs include safe drinking-water, shelter, health care, sanitation, agricultural inputs, education and income-generating activities.
18. Gaps in these assistance areas are well documented. They are related to insufficient resources overall for IDP operations and uneven commitment on the part of donors and governments to address the needs of IDPs in a comprehensive manner.
19. Gaps in the provision of non-food assistance (shelter, health, water and sanitation) can limit the overall impact of WFP food resources in meeting the full range of IDPs' basic needs. Other assistance gaps (education, small-scale income-generation activities) can preclude activities that foster self-reliance and a more targeted distribution. This can lead to problems of dependency and inappropriate uses of food aid.
20. At the field level, problems facing the overall United Nations system response to IDP needs may include: the lack of coordination of operations; a "selective response" by donors; impeded humanitarian access; inadequate protection of and security for beneficiaries and humanitarian staff; insufficient attention to the prevention of displacement; limited local government capacity in addressing IDP-related issues; lack of specific responsibilities assigned to other agencies by the Humanitarian Coordinator/Resident Coordinator (HC/RC); and the difficulties in developing, at early stages in the crisis, strategies for longer-term solutions.
21. Stronger advocacy and coordination are needed, under the leadership of the HC/RC, to assign responsibilities for a concerted effort by agencies and donors early on in an



emergency. Of particular concern to WFP are efforts to match food assistance more closely with other basic assistance needs. The Senior Inter-Agency Network, of which WFP is a key member, has a mandate to reinforce operational responses to situations of internal displacement. It is undertaking a number of actions to close gaps and meet assistance needs.

22. Addressing the needs of IDPs can be particularly difficult in conflict situations where humanitarian access to displaced populations is often limited. Such access limitations and intentional attacks on humanitarian and peacekeeping personnel have become a daily reality. These challenges demand agency-coordinated strategies and approaches that are neutral and impartial and that promote the security of beneficiaries and humanitarian workers.
23. Greater collaboration among United Nations agencies, governments and other partners is essential for ensuring that assistance programmes do not place intended food recipients and aid workers at risk. The Senior Inter-Agency Network can play a key role in working with governments in addressing the full range of IDP needs and strengthening capacity to ensure a coordinated protection response.

## WFP'S IDP ACTION FRAMEWORK

24. The Executive Board is invited to comment on the following elements of WFP's proposed action framework. These would guide country offices in enhancing the effectiveness of emergency operations (EMOPs), protracted relief and recovery operations (PRROs) and development activities that assist IDPs. A final policy paper will be prepared after the ECOSOC or the General Assembly of the United Nations has concluded its discussion on issues related to situations of internal displacement.

### Principles

25. WFP will provide food assistance to the internally displaced and other groups affected by displacement to promote their food security and the immediate and longer-term re-establishment of coping mechanisms and livelihoods when:
  - requested by Member States of the United Nations or Associate Members of any specialized agency or of the International Atomic Energy Agency. WFP may also provide emergency food aid, associated non-food items and logistics support at the request of the Secretary-General, in accordance with the Programme's mandate and General Regulations and General Rules (Article IX);
  - there is a food consumption problem. WFP will address the food insecurity of the internally displaced and assess the food needs of other groups affected by internal displacement, including host families and resident and resettlement communities, and assist them on the basis of food-insecurity criteria;
  - access to affected groups is obtained for assessments, targeting, distribution, monitoring and evaluation of assistance;
  - security is sufficient for WFP to operate in accordance with the United Nations Minimum Operational Security Standards (MOSS) developed at the country level.
26. WFP will act as part of a coordinated United Nations response, recognizing the importance of cooperation and collaboration based on complementary mandates.



27. WFP will incorporate measures to support longer-term self-reliance through the development of livelihoods for IDPs at the earliest possible stage in a crisis. WFP will strengthen linkages between its assistance to IDPs and its other activities in countries where it has ongoing programmes.

## Targeting

28. WFP will target displaced persons on the basis of food insecurity rather than identify them as a particular group. The Programme will apply the same targeting criteria to displaced persons that it does to other food-insecure groups, while making a special effort to understand and address the particular needs of IDPs. Assistance programmes that reach the displaced should not discriminate against other food-insecure groups or cause tensions with host, resident or resettlement communities. In general, it is not appropriate to target IDPs per se as a group for food assistance, especially when there are other needy and vulnerable persons in the same situation. While there will be some situations in which the internally displaced will be specifically targeted (for example those living in transit centres or camp-like situations), in others, IDPs are much better assisted through programmes aimed at broader segments of the food-insecure population.
29. WFP will work with governments and implementing partners to ensure effective methods for counting, targeting and monitoring IDPs, since the Programme generally relies on its partners for such information.
30. WFP will assess the food needs of all groups affected by displacement, including host, resident and resettlement communities. The assessment of needs will be conducted on an ongoing basis in order to track changes in circumstances as people move through different phases of displacement. WFP's food needs assessments will examine factors affecting safe access to food, the security situation, the extent to which other basic needs are being met, coping mechanisms and asset levels. Special attention will be given to assessing the particular concerns of vulnerable groups, especially displaced women, the elderly and children.
31. WFP will continually update and monitor this information and ensure that it is incorporated in assessments, targeting and programming. Regular assessments will help WFP respond rapidly to changing situations and adjust ration levels and targeting to reduce the risk of dependency while integrating newly affected population groups in its programmes. Ongoing assessments and monitoring will in particular consider:
- population movements and changes in the location of IDPs;
  - conditions affecting access to vulnerable groups; and
  - the security situation in the place of origin and factors influencing a quick and viable return.
32. WFP will ensure that gender and age considerations figure prominently in assessment and monitoring processes for IDP operations. For example, the Programme will examine factors such as the particular concerns of women-headed households, the special needs of expectant and nursing mothers and the ability of women to reach distribution sites.
33. WFP will, as part of the wider United Nations family, work to: ensure that women have access to resources and basic services, and equal access to information, including their entitlements and rights; support the participation of women in peace-building and conflict resolution; promote a gender perspective; and encourage the participation of women's organizations in capacity-building.





34. WFP will seek to address the special nutritional needs of displaced children through therapeutic and supplementary feeding.
35. WFP will work with national and local authorities to secure food-related entitlements for IDPs (e.g. government food coupons) and entitlement and property rights (e.g. land use, forest products, fishing access) in relation to its food-for-work programmes.

### **Collaboration with Partners**

36. WFP is committed to collaborating with national, local and international authorities on behalf of the internally displaced. The Programme is supportive of inter-agency coordination mechanisms aimed at enhancing assistance to and protecting IDPs.
37. Under the leadership of the HC/RC, WFP will continue to work in support of a comprehensive process for addressing the needs of IDPs. Of particular importance is the IDP Senior Inter-Agency Network and its work to develop arrangements to close assistance and protection gaps and strengthen coordination mechanisms; the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and its work on the protection of IDPs; and other ongoing discussions to strengthen HC/RC capacity and authority to exercise leadership in responding to situations of internal displacement.
38. WFP will offer logistical, transport and operational services to operating partners on behalf of the internally displaced. These services could include, for example, transport of essential assistance items and the management and accounting of funds and contracts for infrastructure development in camp-type situations. WFP could also undertake, on a full-cost recovery basis upon the request of the Humanitarian Coordinator or relevant agency, other services (such as the transportation of displaced persons to safer locations or of humanitarian assistance items funded by partners). WFP will be proactive in providing its services in situations of natural disasters, in acute stages of conflict-induced emergencies and for resettlement.

### **Complementary Assistance**

39. WFP recognizes the importance of providing effective emergency assistance to the newly displaced as quickly as possible. Flexibility in funding both food and non-food items on short notice is vital for incorporating the newly displaced in ongoing programmes. During the initial crisis WFP will advocate on a case-by-case basis for the provision of complementary non-food items when these are indispensable for the effective use of WFP food. These essential items are primarily related to the storage, cooking and consumption of WFP food. WFP is prepared on a case-by-case basis to provide funding to fill crucial gaps in the provision of these essential complementary items.
40. WFP may seek—with the agreement of the HC/RC—resources for the provision of other non-food assistance that is necessary to meet immediate survival needs of IDPs in an emergency, if the host government or another partner United Nations agency is not immediately in a position to provide such assistance and WFP has the capacity to do so. WFP will provide such items during the initial period of the crisis and will not commit itself to the provision of such items on a long-term basis.
41. The Programme will also advocate with authorities, partners and donors for the provision of other essential items that would improve the self-reliance of IDPs and other target groups when these items are crucial for WFP's food-for-work activities.



## Advocacy

42. WFP will strengthen its advocacy at the country level through the Consolidated Appeals Process/Common Humanitarian Action Plan. WFP will also articulate the particular needs of IDPs as part of United Nations Country Team efforts, with the aim of:
- encouraging national responsibility for IDPs;
  - minimizing the provision of international assistance to substitute for a lack of assistance provided by the relevant national authorities;
  - working to address the broader needs of IDPs, including entitlements and property rights, especially for women, in the context of food-for-work activities; and
  - encouraging the search for long-term solutions, including peace-building and conflict resolution, with all parties affected by the conflict.

## Security

43. IDPs are citizens of sovereign States and their protection falls within the *responsibility of their national States*.
44. In conflict situations where IDPs are present, WFP has concerns over the security of its target groups, its staff and the staff of its partners. Forced displacement, threats to the security of IDPs and staff and misuse of resources will influence the readiness of WFP to commence or continue assistance programmes.
45. Insensitive distribution practices can lead to violence against women and tensions among groups. Of particular importance for women is that they have safe access to fuelwood and water and freedom of movement to obtain food assistance. To avoid putting beneficiaries at risk, WFP will adopt situation-specific measures during the delivery, distribution and implementation of food-assisted activities that will decrease the likelihood of diversion and attack, for example by:
- involving beneficiaries in considering and developing measures to be included in WFP's operational strategies, assessments and monitoring processes;
  - distributing smaller quantities at a given time;
  - changing distribution sites, moving them closer to where beneficiaries are situated;
  - varying food delivery schedules;
  - avoiding the use of high-value commodities, when possible and consistent with the nutritional needs of the most vulnerable, in insecure environments;
  - negotiating access for the safe passage of food and essential humanitarian items; and
  - providing, in extraordinary situations, daily cooked rations.
46. WFP will endeavour to sensitize national and local authorities regarding the operationalization of the approaches described in this paper to increase the effectiveness of its assistance to IDPs.

