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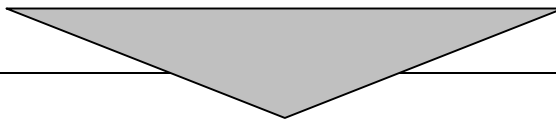


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WFP WORKING WITH NGOs: A FRAMEWORK FOR PARTNERSHIP

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Note to the Executive Board



This document is submitted for approval 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.

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Executive Summary



WFP depends on collaboration with partners to complement food aid with technical and non-food inputs. Currently WFP works with more than 1,100 non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and each relationship is reflective of the country-specific operational context, in particular the timing and nature of the food aid operation and national governments' views of NGOs. WFP recognizes the importance of longer-term partnerships, as evident in its 16 Memoranda of Understanding that outline strategic ways of working with its NGO partners.

Working in partnership is one important way. A partnership is defined here as a mutually beneficial alliance between organizations where roles, responsibilities and accountabilities are clearly defined. These relationships are based on a shared vision regarding objectives and purpose of work. They involve joint resource contributions, shared risks and joint control of information.

This paper builds on lessons learned to identify key elements in a WFP-NGO partnership framework. It proposes capacity-building, advocacy and other measures related to establishing effective partnerships, with a particular focus on strengthening relationships with local NGOs.

Draft Decision



The Board took note of the review of WFP's NGO partnerships contained in document WFP/EB.A/2001/4-B, prepared as a response to a request made at the Board's First Regular Session, 2000, and approved the recommendations on how such partnerships should be pursued, contained therein.



INTRODUCTION

1. WFP General Rule III-1 states that:

WFP shall, whenever possible, associate its assistance with material, financial and technical assistance provided through other multilateral programmes and shall seek similar co-operation with bilateral programmes and non-governmental partners.

2. WFP depends on collaboration with partners to complement its food aid with technical and non-food inputs. However, national government authorities, WFP's designated partners, are not always able to fulfill these functions completely for effective emergency and development programmes.¹ This may be owing to the occurrence of major disasters, the sheer dimension of a given problem, and/or constrained government resources. Therefore, WFP-government-NGO partnerships can act as a bridge in these situations, and play an integral role in national development efforts.
3. Currently WFP works with more than 1,100 NGOs, and each relationship is reflective of the given country-specific operational context, in particular the timing and nature of the food aid operation and the concerned national Government's view towards NGOs. It is estimated that WFP works with 250 international and 870 national and local NGOs. About 90 percent of WFP country offices collaborate to some extent with NGOs, in particular in relief operations, of which 80 percent involve NGOs as implementing partners: About 16 percent of them are directly implemented by NGOs only, 36 percent by NGOs and government authorities, and 28 percent by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR) and NGOs.
4. WFP has a range of collaborative relationships with NGOs. One is partnership. A partnership is defined here as a mutually beneficial alliance between organizations where roles, responsibilities and accountabilities are clearly defined. These relationships are based on a shared vision regarding objectives and purpose of work. They involve joint resource contributions, shared risks and joint control of information. Other collaboration has tended to take the form of contractual relationships in relief and project-specific partnerships to meet objectives within the confines of a development programme or project. Other important relationships are consortia, networks and joint ventures.²
5. WFP recognizes the importance of longer-term partnerships as evident in its 16 Memoranda of Understanding outlining strategic ways of working with its NGO partners. These partnerships with major international NGOs are evolving into long-term relationships that go beyond project boundaries. WFP would like to establish similar long-term relationships with national and local NGOs, but to date has not found this to be a realistic objective in many situations.
6. WFP's commitment to enter into partnership with NGOs and to undertake capacity-building is reflected in a number of the Programme's policy papers and evaluation

¹ Thematic Evaluation of WFP-NGO Partnerships, WFP/EB.1/200/5/2, WFP Executive Evaluation Reports, 1999.

² Contracts involve the provision of services where there is little joint planning or decision-making; consortiums and networks often involve numerous organizations that are aligned around a common purpose or theme, primarily for information exchange; and joint ventures involve two or more organizations that engage in a common design, implementation or management of a project within a finite duration.



reports.³ However, though these documents stress the importance of working in partnership, they do not give clear guidance on how partnerships are to be achieved. They do identify a number of structural issues such as staff capacity, administrative procedures and donor accountability that have at times made it difficult for WFP to establish viable partnerships with national and local NGOs. These structural issues translate into concrete operational concerns that inhibit effective NGO partnerships.

7. In response to a request made by the Executive Board, at its First Regular Session, 2000, for greater clarity on how WFP should pursue partnerships with NGOs,⁴ the Programme undertook a review of its NGO partnerships. A key element of this process were case studies conducted in five countries to identify the current status of, constraints on and opportunities for partnership.⁵ The case studies document lessons learned and contain specific recommendations for improving field-level partnerships. Those lessons are the basis for the framework outlined in this paper. The paper builds on them to identify key elements in a WFP-NGO partnership framework and proposes capacity-building, advocacy and other measures related to establishing effective partnerships.
8. Preparation of this paper included extensive consultations with NGO partners. Discussions were held during WFP's annual NGO Consultation in Rome and a regional NGO-WFP Consultation in Nicaragua on operational issues. An informal e-mail working group, comprising NGO partners and WFP field and Headquarters staff, also contributed to the formulation of this document.

LESSONS LEARNED

Lesson 1: Benefits of Working with NGOs

9. In *relief situations* where governments are unable to cope fully with a crisis, or where there is no government, NGOs are vital WFP implementing partners. WFP's collaboration with NGOs permits the expansion of programmes in scope and scale, and allows food aid to achieve humanitarian objectives more effectively.⁶ With respect to *development activities*, the rationale for partnering is directly related to the country situation; there is no *one* reason to collaborate with NGOs.
10. The benefits to WFP of partnering with NGOs include:
 - support of weak public-sector implementation capacity;
 - an increase in the availability of complementary inputs to the Government and WFP programmes;
 - the introduction of innovative approaches that enhance the quality of WFP activities;

³ These papers include "WFP and the Environment", "From Crisis to Recovery", "Participatory Approaches", "Disaster Mitigation: A Strategic Approach", "Partnership with NGOs", "Thematic Evaluation of WFP-NGO Partnerships" and "Enabling Development".

⁴ During the discussion on the paper "Thematic Evaluation of WFP-NGO Partnerships".

⁵ The case studies included Indonesia (economic emergency), Ethiopia (chronic food insecurity and drought emergency), Mozambique (flood emergency and rehabilitation), Angola (complex emergency) and Guatemala (chronic food insecurity and disasters). In all of these countries, WFP is collaborating with both international and national NGOs. The case studies also represent a cross-section of partnerships that take place under different relief/development conditions and in different operational environments.

⁶ Thematic Evaluation of WFP-NGO Partnerships, WFP/EB.1/2000/5/2, Executive Evaluation Report, 1999.



- the sharing of common concerns and objectives regarding nutrition, food security, gender and humanitarian issues and a willingness to advocate on behalf of the poorest (as NGOs have gained considerable recognition from national governments, multilateral agencies and bilateral aid donors for their efforts in alleviating poverty, promoting social justice and mobilizing local communities);
- extensive NGO experience with food management (as NGOs are responsible for channelling one third of global food aid,⁷ they and WFP can jointly scale up food programmes quickly in emergency settings, when additional implementation capacity is required); and
- enabling participatory approaches (as NGOs possess strong grass-roots linkages; field-based development expertise; the ability to innovate and adapt; skills in participatory methodologies and tools; long-term commitment and emphasis on sustainability).

Lesson 2: Diversity in the NGO Community

11. The term *non-governmental organization* is very broad and encompasses many types of organizations. Each NGO displays diversity in its mandate, philosophy, orientation, capacity and clientele and in the size and scope of its operations. The NGO community acknowledges its own diversity and has taken measures to standardize performance, as demonstrated by the recent Sphere Project, which has developed a Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards for Relief Assistance.
12. WFP's NGO partners display significant differences that are most evident in their structure and composition and the role they play in national development. The NGOs WFP works with assume distinct roles and responsibilities and perform a variety of functions at different levels. For example, in Guatemala, WFP works with four types of NGOs, giving the Programme a varied pool of potential partners for its activities. These are large international NGOs, smaller international NGOs, local NGOs and community-based organizations (CBOs).
13. In general, *larger international NGOs* (e.g. CARE, Catholic Relief Services [CRS], Oxford Committee for Famine Relief [OXFAM] and the Save the Children Fund [SCF]) have demonstrated their capacity to design and carry out relief, rehabilitation and development programmes, and many have considerable experience in dealing with food assistance on a large scale. They tend to have their own reporting and accounting systems as well as qualified staff for both administrative and programmatic functions. In addition, they are often in a position to apply their own cash resources to programmes. WFP tends to work in partnership with these NGOs. However, in emergency situations these relationships are often only contractual in nature.
14. *Smaller international NGOs* and *large national NGOs* often possess capacities similar to those of larger international NGOs, but on a lesser scale. However, their cash resources and administrative capacities tend to be more limited, although their overhead costs can also be lower. Some of these NGOs choose a specific programmatic area on which to focus, such as education or environmental conservation. Thus, based on its needs, WFP forms a range of relationships with such NGOs, from full implementing partners to separate entities with strictly contractual arrangements.
15. *Local NGOs* and *community-based organizations*, through their grass-roots approaches and long presence in communities, are able to maintain close working relationships with

⁷ NGOs' share of development resources has increased, representing more Official Development Assistance than the entire United Nations system (excluding the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund).



local communities, which is consistent with WFP's people-centred approach. Also, many have demonstrated their commitment and ability to encourage and mobilize community-based programmes. This is especially important for targeting the most food insecure people, who are WFP's main target groups. However, local NGOs generally have less technical and administrative expertise and little or no cash resources of their own with which to implement projects. Also, their reporting and accountability systems are often lacking or inadequate. As a result, WFP usually engages in only contractual arrangements, rather than longer-term partnerships, with these and CBOs.

Lesson 3: Understanding How Partnerships Evolve

16. WFP's emergency focus tends to encourage institutional relationships that are based on *contractual agreements* rather than on long-term partnerships.⁸ This is primarily because the time for decision-making and setting up emergency operations is very brief, especially in a rapid-onset emergency. In emergencies, the capacities that tend to be emphasized are logistics and resource tracking, not programming per se. And in terms of monitoring, the emphasis has so far tended to be on project outputs rather than results.
17. As activities move from emergency towards rehabilitation and development, the opportunities for more strategic forms of collaboration increase. However, it takes vision and commitment to build durable partnerships that go beyond relief. Also, to move these relationships past contractual arrangements, there must also be respect for respective mandates, a sharing of objectives and a commitment to partnership. This must be expressed early on in the formulation of a programme.

Lesson 4: Understanding Government and NGO Points of View

18. When developing partnerships, WFP must take into account a range of mandates, views and circumstances. Government views and relationships with international and national NGOs are central to defining the type of relationship WFP may establish and the level of capacity-building that can be undertaken. WFP's programme effectiveness could be strengthened through improved dialogue—between international and local NGOs, and between governments and national and local NGOs—in particular on issues related to joint programming and advocacy. This dialogue can influence government receptiveness to work with national and local NGOs, leading to tripartite agreements between WFP, the Government and NGOs.
19. WFP has worked in a limited number of situations to ensure that NGOs and governments become effective players in tripartite relationships through better communication and the active participation of the NGOs in planning as well as implementation. Although WFP has exerted influence with donors and governments on behalf of NGOs, country offices could foster still stronger partnerships by facilitating government and NGO working relationships.

Lesson 5: Need for Developing Capacity within and outside WFP

20. Capacity-building has emerged as a central concern in all United Nations operational activities. According to a recent Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC)

⁸ When emergencies are recurrent, such as that in Angola, partnerships with NGOs can be longer term and more complex.



Guidance Note, capacity-building and sustainability should be explicitly articulated as an operational goal of the United Nations at the country level.⁹

21. To facilitate effective partnership, WFP needs to support capacity-building measures within the Programme as well as for NGOs. These measures range from changing institutional structures to implementing specific skills training and could include: making time available for WFP staff to engage in partnership activities; demonstrating corporate commitment to partnership; and making resources available for skills training, including in communication and understanding partner organizations. A number of local NGOs have acknowledged their limitations in areas such as accountability procedures and food management and have suggested that capacity-building support for local NGOs is an essential element for full partnership.
22. Experience shows that capacity-building initiatives, especially at the local level, are most successful when they are preceded by a thorough assessment of existing capacities.¹⁰ WFP needs to undertake capacity assessments in a more comprehensive fashion, within time and resource availability, if NGO selection is to be based on a solid understanding of capacities.

Lesson 6: Understanding How Organizational Requirements Affect Partnerships

23. A number of structural problems constrain WFP-NGO partnerships:
 - limited or no involvement of NGOs in programme design;
 - the complexity of WFP reporting formats and procedures;
 - lack of local NGO capacity;
 - poor NGO relationships with host governments; and
 - irregular donor funding and NGO accountability mechanisms.
24. To pursue partnerships in development and in transitional settings, WFP needs to look carefully at programme design processes, institutional agreements, capacity-building efforts and monitoring requirements. The Programme's reporting requirements are often viewed as burdensome, particularly by local NGOs, and as a barrier to working with WFP. While accountability for performance is required, mutually agreed-upon formats for reporting that met donor requirements for accountability and transparency would facilitate WFP-NGO relationships.

Lesson 7: Understanding the Resource Implications of Partnership

25. A number of resource issues affect WFP-NGO partnerships:
26. The level of resources available to different types of NGO partners varies, depending on the size and scope of the organization. Larger international NGOs possess considerable

⁹ "ACC Guidance Note on Capacity-building", Administrative Committee on Coordination, Geneva, March 2000. According to the ACC, sustainable capacity-building is now viewed as "encompassing the building of organizational and technical abilities, behaviors, relationships and values that enable individuals, groups, and organizations to enhance their performance effectively and to achieve their development objectives over time. It includes strengthening the processes, systems and rules that shape collective and individual behavior and performance in all development endeavors as well as people's ability and willingness to play new development roles and to adapt to new demands and situations".

¹⁰ Ibid, 1999.



capacity in comparison with local NGOs, and often bring their own resources to collaborative efforts. For this reason, WFP often relies on larger NGOs when scaling up emergency operations.

27. Smaller NGOs and CBOs often have difficulty obtaining resources to complement their food resources. Without such complementary resources it is often difficult for local NGOs to scale up their programmes, even if food resources are the principal input to interventions. On occasion, WFP has helped NGO partners secure funding for complementary resources, and for the reimbursement of costs associated with transporting commodities (transport, storage and handling [LTSH]), but NGOs have suggested that WFP could take a more active role in facilitating funding from donors for these costs.
28. Breaks in the food aid pipeline or unreliable deliveries result in accountability and credibility problems, harming the reputation of implementing partners vis-à-vis communities.

KEY CONCLUSIONS

Need for a WFP-NGO Partnership Framework

29. Recognizing that effective NGO partnerships do not just happen, and building on the strengths of NGOs and the potential for complementarities, a number of organizations have developed NGO partnership strategies in recent years. These include the Asian Development Bank, CARE, the Department for International Development (DFID), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), USAID and the World Bank. The ACC has also issued a Guidance Note on partnerships. To move WFP's relationships with NGOs towards full partnership, a global framework for collaboration with NGOs is needed.
30. WFP will continue to establish two main types of relationships with NGOs:
 - (i) contractual relationships; and (ii) partnerships founded on a shared vision, mutual accountability and resource contributions. The global framework would be based on:
 - **Shared goals and mutual respect and trust.** Partners must share ownership of programmes as well as responsibility for programme/activity successes and failures, including common approaches to the media and donors.
 - **Joint design of joint decision-making on joint activities.** The decision to establish effective partnerships cannot take place unless WFP and NGOs regard their joint efforts in implementing programmes as achieving more than they could achieve individually.
 - **Commitment to building and nurturing partnerships.** Partnerships are not built in a day, and they require significant investments of time and staff.
 - **Willingness to give up a certain amount of independence to pursue joint programmes.** A written agreement is the key to clarifying responsibilities and roles.
 - **Commitment to accountability and transparency.** Partnership is based on a commitment to share information and agree jointly on the processes necessary for achieving accountability to donors.



Need for Country-level NGO Partnership Plan

31. Given the diversity of NGOs and WFP Country Programmes, specific operational elements for NGO partnerships must be developed at the country level. A global WFP-NGO partnership framework as described above would help facilitate country-specific planning for NGO partnerships (and build on existing country collaboration mechanisms; for example the Common Country Assessment [CCA]). Such planning also would help WFP better select its partners and manage the partnership process.

ELEMENTS OF A WFP-NGO PARTNERSHIP FRAMEWORK

32. A WFP-NGO Partnership Framework would guide the development of country-level NGO partnership planning and allow country offices to determine when it was appropriate to shift a relationship with a given NGO from one of a contractual nature to one of full partnership. There will be a number of situations where contractual types of relationships suit the needs of WFP and NGO partners well. In other situations, effective programmes may require a longer-term perspective and full partnership. Specifically, serious consideration will be given to developing longer-term NGO partnerships in countries where:
- WFP has in place a CSO or a PRRO;
 - NGOs are part of national development strategies;
 - NGO capacities complement those of WFP and result in more effective programmes, and in particular in greater participation of WFP beneficiary groups;
 - accountability mechanisms are in place; and
 - opportunities exist for working with local NGOs.
33. The three components of WFP's NGO Partnership Framework, to be discussed below, include:
- partnership principles;
 - a statement of purpose or strategic direction; and
 - key elements.

Partnership Principles

34. During the consultation process, WFP's NGO partners stressed that partnership was based on valuing other peoples' knowledge and dignity and affirming the rights and responsibilities of poor people to lead their own development process. These basic principles are central for building and managing partnership relationships and for creating trust and mutual accountability. WFP and its NGO partners agreed on the need for a set of principles that would create trust and mutual accountability and upon which partnerships could be based. These principles, identified in collaboration with NGOs, include:
- having a shared vision, values and interests;
 - recognizing the importance of building trust and working in a transparent manner;
 - recognizing the need to respect differences and emphasize complementarities;
 - recognizing that partnerships change and evolve and are a learning process;



- respecting power differentials in the range of resources and strengths that each organization brings;
 - demonstrating mutual accountability, risk-sharing and joint decision-making; and
 - having flexibility.
35. To insure that they became operational, country offices would need to adhere to these basic principles. The quality of the partnership would depend to a large extent on the degree to which the principles guided the partnership rather than by the relationship mechanism (e.g. joint venture, sub-contract, network). However, each relationship, influenced by context, will be unique.

Strategic Purpose and Direction

36. As country offices pursue partnership relationships, they must be clear about the objectives they are trying to accomplish. One objective may be to engage in advocacy initiatives with a group of NGOs to bring about policy change. Another objective may be to increase the coverage, sustainability or impact of services provided to households. The objectives of a country-specific framework would indicate clearly the “value added” of WFP-NGO partnerships.

Key Elements in a Global NGO Partnership Framework

Partnership Selection Criteria

37. Selecting appropriate partners is a mutual process. And it is not easy. Given the diversity of NGOs operating in the various countries where WFP works, not all potential candidates make equally good partners. To facilitate the selection process, a joint assessment exercise would be carried out with potential partners to look at the strengths and weaknesses of each organization and to determine the value added of partnering from individual agency perspectives. The following generic selection criteria, identified jointly with NGO partners, would help NGOs and WFP decide if and how they wanted to work together. Country offices would further refine these criteria based upon country-specific circumstances:

The potential partner has demonstrated:

- transparency and accountability;
- credibility and local acceptance (with a demonstrated track record);
- financial stability and capacity; and
- its legal status.

The potential partner has demonstrated a commitment to:

- shared vision and goals, values and interests;
- the value added of partnerships and the potential for complementarities; and
- gender policies.



Stakeholder Analysis to Assess Capacity

38. A number of analytical tools have been developed for assessing institutional capacity.¹¹ WFP would use some of these tools more systematically, in particular a stakeholder analysis, which would be carried out with potential partners as part of the situation analysis during the preparation of a CSO or PRRO.
39. The stakeholder analysis influences a number of programme design aspects. It provides the basis for assessing opportunities for: establishing or strengthening partnerships; addressing food security problems at the local level; and using participatory approaches at the community level. It allows for the assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of each organization, the value added of entering into a given partnership, the potential points of tension between stakeholders, the local situation, and the political and cultural context within which a given partnership will operate.
40. While there is no one correct way to undertake a stakeholder analysis, the views of national and local authorities would underlie such an analysis. Four key elements would be part of all stakeholder analyses conducted by WFP and its NGO partners:

Capacity

- organizational capacity to partner (roles, responsibilities, relationships, leadership, structures, systems);
- current capacity of individual staff members to partner (skills, experience, attitudes, behaviours);
- capacity of organization to implement activities in the field (area of coverage, legitimacy, systems of accountability);
- capacity for creating an enabling environment for programming (flexibility);
- security factors that needed to be taken into account; and
- scope of activities that could be supported with WFP food assistance.

Interest

- areas for collaboration based upon agreed-upon programme objectives and results;
- areas for mutual capacity-building; and
- involvement of key stakeholders in programming.

Resources

- potential for joint contribution of resources; and
- sharing of responsibility for securing complementary resources.

Points of Conflict

- willingness to address differences;
- working with stakeholders to anticipate and resolve conflicts.

¹¹ See USAID/PPC/CDIE/PME Best Practices Paper, "Measuring Institutional Capacity", Vol. 3, July, 1999. This paper identifies a number of tools for assessing organizational capacity.



41. If both parties saw value in the relationship, then a long-term partnership would be established. A positive assessment would result in a jointly derived work plan, a plan of action for capacity-building, if needed, and a formal NGO partnership agreement.

Capacity-building

42. Capacity-building is an ongoing process in which individuals and organizations expand their abilities to achieve their purpose. It is more than training. It is information sharing, the harmonizing of organizational support structures and the sharing of financial sustainability.¹² Building capacity to partner may involve both organizational and individual change, including changes in roles, responsibilities, relationships, policies, staffing and systems. Examples of individual partnership skills are mediation and conflict facilitation, good communication, problem analysis and the ability to build and nurture relationships. Capacities that are important to partnerships also include attributes such as confidence, trust and understanding. Individual capacity-building may involve changes in skills, attitudes and behaviours.
43. A practical tool has already been developed, by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD's), Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Informal Network on Institutional and Capacity Development, to assist in these capacity-building efforts. With this tool, donors and agencies such as WFP can assess their progress in implementing partnerships and capacity-development principles.¹³ The tool assesses agency requirements for capacity development and how internal policies facilitate that development.
44. Most capacity-building carried out by WFP has focused on training in food logistics and accountability systems, giving little attention to strengthening programming dimensions. In emergencies, building capacity is no easy task because of overstretched structures, weak civil societies and unstable institutions. Also, the short time horizon for most funding relationships makes it difficult to plan longer-term capacity building efforts. The enduring nature of some recent complex emergencies has allowed donors and international organizations to appreciate the important role that local organizations and institutions can play in reducing vulnerability and supporting livelihoods, making it easier for local NGOs to build or expand their capacities.
45. With due consideration to opportunities and constraints, capacity-building is essential for effective programmes. The trade-off for WFP is working with organizations that already have the capacity to scale up food distribution programmes or taking the time to develop capacity in local organizations. The value added of doing the latter is that local NGOs work much more directly with the beneficiaries WFP wishes to target. Nevertheless, large NGOs often are given greater resource allocations for scaling up operations owing to their experience in food logistics and accounting systems (e.g. in Angola).
46. Capacity-building must be focused with respect to objectives and types of activities. WFP would identify capacity-building activities through capacity assessments. It would undertake capacity-building activities when they were crucial to the implementation of its programmes, to demonstrate results and to strengthen programme sustainability. Priority would be given to fostering and strengthening local NGO capacity.

¹² "Partnership in Crisis: Collaboration Between International and Local Organizations in Disrupted Societies", Woodrow Wilson School Graduate Policy Workshop, December 1999, Princeton University.

¹³ Criteria for Donor Agencies' Self-Assessment in Capacity Development, DCD/DAC(99)4, OECD, February, 1999.



47. Capacity-building would focus on:
- food logistics and management (in emergency settings);
 - programme planning and design (including logframes and exit strategies);
 - gender assessments;
 - monitoring for results; and
 - budgeting, reporting and accountability procedures.
48. To support the capacity-building efforts of local NGOs, WFP would strengthen its own internal capacity in many of these same areas. To facilitate mutual accountability, the Programme would work with NGOs on reporting procedures, establishing provisions or contingencies to prevent delays or breaks in the delivery of food resources, developing a more flexible formal agreement, and sharing the liability of risk with its partners. (Risk pertains to the management of resources or the image of organizations.) Collaborative planning between partners would be enhanced, with both partners taking responsibility for transforming their roles in predictable and mutually understood ways.
49. WFP would strengthen accountability procedures by:
- developing strict selection criteria and assessing the capacity of potential partners, in particular with respect to commodity tracking, beneficiary selection, and participation and gender approaches;
 - spelling out requirements for reporting and financial management in Country Partnership Agreements; and
 - monitoring performance during the programme cycle.

Advocacy with NGO Partners

50. Joint advocacy for common causes is relatively new ground for WFP-NGO collaboration. It involves starting with local concerns to gain a good understanding of the issues that affect peoples' lives. Each issue can then be tracked through its cause-and-effect linkages in the society to its macro-level causes, with constituencies built en route.¹⁴ Such advocacy would be conducted in collaboration with NGO partners for policy themes at the global and national levels on issues of mutual concern (promotion of food security, women's access to food). For example, WFP has been instrumental in the process of strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and NGOs on security, with its chairing of an inter-agency task force on security issues.

Facilitating Good Relationships

51. WFP would work to facilitate better working relationships with governments and NGOs to better meet the needs of its target groups. Because WFP works directly with both governments and NGOs at the policy and operational levels, the Programme is in a strong position to facilitate better working relationships and to play an important bridging role among governments, donors, NGOs and civil society in situations where such facilitation would be useful. This would involve helping to improve the image of NGOs vis-à-vis governments and donors.

¹⁴ Stuckey, Joseph, "Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue on Capacity Strengthening: Skills Session on Enhancing Capacity for Advocacy: Integrating Policy Advocacy and Management Programmes", Interaction Forum Capacity-building Session Summaries, Unpublished paper, New York: CARE USA, 2000.



52. As WFP decentralized many of its regional advocacy efforts, its role as facilitator would become more prominent. The Programme is strategically placed to promote the coordination of different actors working towards food security goals at the local, regional and international levels. WFP would continue to support the involvement of NGOs by advocating on behalf of the hungry poor and their advocates.

Resource Implications of Partnership

53. Effective WFP-NGO partnerships are contingent upon two resource considerations: (i) securing funding for complementary non-food items; and (ii) funding for capacity-building.
54. Lack of access to complementary non-food resources is one of the critical constraints affecting WFP-NGO partnerships. This constraint affects primarily local NGOs and CBOs. WFP tries to work with these groups, as they tend to have the most direct connection to WFP's beneficiaries. However, they have the least technical and administrative expertise and little or no cash reserves to implement programmes. Thus, these groups have the greatest need for WFP's support in accessing non-food resources to implement WFP-assisted programmes.
55. At the country level, WFP would dialogue with donors to ensure that essential non-food resources were made available to local NGO partners where the impact of food assistance was jeopardized. The Programme would also highlight the funding needs in CSOs, Country Programmes (CPs) and PRROs, as well as in Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) documents, urging donor support for comprehensive food security programmes.
56. Resources for capacity-building in both technical and administrative areas would be required to make local NGOs more effective and enable them to operate on a larger scale. WFP could pursue a number of options for funding capacity-building measures, depending on the type and scale of activities to be introduced. A minimal level of capacity-building funding restricted to local NGO implementing partners would be derived from sources already available to the country offices, including direct support costs and other direct operational costs.
57. In some situations, additional donor support may be required to expand WFP's partnering with a wider range of national and local NGOs. To that effect and to enhance the effectiveness of its partnerships, WFP would seek additional voluntary extrabudgetary support for the establishment of a fund, the purpose of which would be to strengthen local NGO capacity as outlined in this document. Modalities for the establishment and management of the fund would be reviewed with approval of this document.
58. This option would allow country offices to match their design and implementation support requirements more strategically with local institution-strengthening, resulting in more sustainable programmes. This is consistent with the measures outlined in the Enabling Development policy and NGO-WFP partnership priorities. It also reflects country office experience that shows that effective NGO partnerships are often viable only with donor support.

COUNTRY-LEVEL NGO PARTNERSHIP PLANNING

59. Building on the NGO Partnership Framework, each country would plan NGO partnerships at the country level, outlining the concrete steps required to facilitate full partnerships. Such planning would be based on good analysis of the given situation and



stakeholders. A number of ongoing processes would be drawn upon, for example, the Common Country Assessment/United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). This joint government/international agency review provides an opportunity for building partnerships with a number of agencies around development issues. In particular, as outlined in the UNDAF process, contingency planning for emergency and rehabilitation—an area where strong NGO involvement is essential—would receive attention as appropriate.

60. Solid country-level NGO partnership planning would link the underlying causes of food and nutritional security, geographical targeting and the operational environment with a stakeholder analysis laying out the comparative advantages for each partner, programme objectives and anticipated results. Thus the CSO and the PRRO would reflect with whom WFP wanted to establish a partnership, how the Programme would do so and why.
61. The CSO, CP or PRRO strategy would:
 - provide a statement of purpose that identified the value added of partnerships, opportunities and perceived benefits;
 - highlight partnership principles as well as partnership selection criteria;
 - include a plan for capacity-building and advocacy based on the results of jointly carried-out stakeholder analysis;
 - specify the role that WFP would play in coalition-building and partnerships among governments, NGOs and development agencies; and
 - include a financial plan for funding capacity-building and staff development.
62. The administrative, financial and programming roles and responsibilities delineated at the country level would be reflected in country-level agreements, or Letters of Understanding (LOUs), operational contracts, Plans of Operations and NGO Partnership Agreements.

RECOMMENDATIONS

63. The Executive Board is invited to approve the following recommendations, put forward for consideration by WFP and its NGO partners.
 - WFP would work in partnership with NGOs, in particular local NGOs, to reach its target populations more effectively when appropriate.
 - WFP would facilitate government, NGO and WFP tripartite arrangements to the extent feasible as a normal course of action and leading, where possible, to formal agreements.
 - WFP would adopt an NGO Partnership Framework that defines the key elements for strengthening partnerships with both international and local NGOs.
 - Country offices would plan at the country level for partnerships, developing country-specific partnership arrangements based on the WFP-NGO Partnership Framework. Key planning elements would be summarized and included in the Country Strategy Outline, Country Programme and recovery strategy.
 - Country-level partnership planning with NGOs would be consistent with existing WFP policies and approaches to financial accountability and management.



- WFP would support capacity-building with its NGO partners and WFP staff, within available resources. Capacity-building would focus on food logistics and management (in emergency settings), programme planning and design (including exit strategies), gender assessments, monitoring for results, budgeting, reporting and accountability procedures.
 - As appropriate, WFP would engage in joint partnership advocacy initiatives on behalf of the hungry poor. The Programme would also facilitate better working relationships among NGOs, governments and donors to secure additional non-food resources in support of WFP programmes. WFP would also commit itself to the timely delivery of agreed-upon food commodities and associated non-food items.
 - Formal agreements would define roles and responsibilities but be flexible enough to allow for amendments as circumstances change. WFP would include programmatic roles and responsibilities in NGO Partnership Agreements, in addition to the agreed-upon financial and administrative conditions. These arrangements would be reflected in country-level agreements, or Letters of Understanding, operational contracts, Plans of Operations and NGO Partnership Agreements.
 - WFP welcomes partnerships where both partners contribute resources of their own, based on individual capabilities. However, given WFP's strong desire to work with local NGOs and CBOs, the Programme would give priority to international and national NGOs that facilitated local NGO involvement.
64. To expand the range of partnerships and capacity-building measures with local NGOs, WFP would pursue two options: (i) identifying resource requirements in conformity with WFP cost structures; and (ii) possibly establishing an NGO capacity-building fund. WFP encourages donors to support its efforts in meeting broader capacity-building objectives.
65. Following the decision of the Executive Board, operational guidelines for planning and implementation of NGO partnership activities would be prepared.