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**Executive Board  
Second Regular Session**

**Rome, 12–14 November 2012**

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

### **Agenda item 13**

*For information\**



Distribution: GENERAL  
**WFP/EB.2/2012/13-B**  
17 October 2012  
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

## **REPORT ON THE FIELD VISIT TO COLOMBIA OF THE WFP EXECUTIVE BOARD**

\* 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, well in advance of the meeting, and the Chair accepts the request on the grounds that it is a proper use of the Board's time.

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## NOTE TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

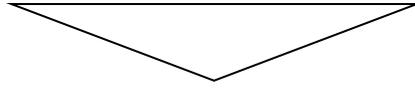
**This document is submitted to the Executive Board for information.**

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 point indicated below, preferably well in advance of the Board's meeting.

Secretary to the Executive Board: Ms E. Joergensen tel.: 066513-2603

Should you have any questions regarding availability of documentation for the Executive Board, please contact Ms I. Carpitella, Senior Administrative Assistant, Conference Servicing Unit (tel.: 066513-2645).

## DRAFT DECISION\*



The Board takes note of “Report on the Field Visit to Colombia of the WFP Executive Board” (WFP/EB.2/2012/13-B).

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\* This is a draft decision. For the final decision adopted by the Board, please refer to the Decisions and Recommendations document issued at the end of the session.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

1. The Board members who participated in the joint field visit to Colombia would like to extend their sincere appreciation to the WFP country team in Bogota and the field, led by Country Director Mr Praveen Agrawal, for its high professionalism, expertise and dedication, not to mention the very warm reception it gave the Board members in Colombia.

## INTRODUCTION

2. The Board visit to Colombia from 5 to 12 September 2012 involved Board members representing India – Mr Shobhana Pattanayak, President of the Board and Head of Mission; Cameroon – Mr MOUNGUI Médi, Second Counsellor, Deputy Permanent Representative; China – Mr GUO Handi, Counsellor, Deputy Permanent Representative; Mexico – Ms Emma Rodríguez Sifuentes, Minister, Alternate Permanent Representative; Finland – Ms Merja Ethel Sundberg, Minister Counsellor, Permanent Representative; the Czech Republic – Mr Jiří Muchka, Second Secretary, Permanent Representative; and the European Commission – Ms Lourdes Magaña de Larriva, Advisor. They were accompanied by the Secretary to the Board, Ms Erika Joergensen.
3. Board members met government officials and representatives of the donor community and United Nations sister agencies, among others. They visited WFP activities in the field in the departments of Córdoba, La Guajira and Atlántico. Visits were made to school feeding activities, food-for-work and food-for-training activities, indigenous communities, the WFP-supported Atlántico Emergency Operations Centre, and nutrition projects. The objectives of the field visit were to:
  - observe the new approach of the protracted relief and recovery operation (PRRO) recently approved by the Board;
  - observe the progress made on implementation of the PRRO's integrated approach, which highlights WFP's shift from food aid to food assistance in Colombia, and explore the possibilities for expanding successful initiatives undertaken with the Government of Colombia to other countries where WFP is present, when appropriate;
  - observe WFP as an active partner of the Government of Colombia in the implementation of WFP's Strategic Objectives, particularly in the area of capacity development and institutional strengthening in nutrition and food security;
  - observe the increased involvement and investment of the Government of Colombia in its social programmes;
  - visit WFP field operations in the country's diverse regions, focusing on vulnerable indigenous and Afro-Colombian populations;
  - observe WFP's joint activities within the United Nations country team (UNCT); and
  - discuss the impact of WFP programmes with the Government, the UNCT, donors and counterparts, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and beneficiaries.

## POLITICAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT, FOOD SECURITY AND THE HUMANITARIAN SITUATION

4. Colombia is a middle-income country that ranks 79<sup>th</sup> in the human development index. It is a stable democracy that attracts increasingly significant foreign investment and has a growing voice in regional and global affairs. The economy is expected to grow by about 5 percent in 2012.
5. Despite these positive indicators, in 2009 about 45.5 percent of Colombia's population of 44.4 million people was living below the poverty line, and approximately 16.8 percent was considered extremely poor. The national average stunting rate is 12 percent, and the underweight rate is 7 percent. The figures for internally displaced persons (IDPs) are considerably higher at 23 and 13.9 percent respectively. Food insecurity in Colombia is a consequence of poor access to and utilization of food – due to lack of purchasing power or adequate water and sanitation infrastructure – rather than a problem of food availability.
6. Almost 50 years of armed conflict with the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC, Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) and the *Ejército de Liberación Nacional* (ELN, National Liberation Army), the presence of drug-trafficking networks, the emergence of other criminal groups after the 2005 demobilization of paramilitary groups, and striking levels of inequity have had a significant impact on human rights and the food security situation, resulting in a large number of IDPs, extreme poverty in rural areas, relatively high malnutrition rates, and one of the highest levels of income inequality in the world. The displaced population is characterized by extreme poverty, poor housing conditions, high dependency ratios, low and irregular access to income-generation opportunities and limited access to government social protection programmes.
7. The most affected groups are indigenous peoples, Afro-Colombian communities, women and children, who face forced recruitment, sexual violence and restricted access to assistance. These populations are generally located in remote, rural or semi-urban areas where institutional capacities are limited and state presence is weak. Natural disasters – a consequence of climate change – also affect victims of the conflict and vulnerable people.
8. There are generally agreed to be about 4 million IDPs in Colombia, of whom 49.5 percent are women, 38.4 percent are children, 2.53 percent are indigenous, and 9.1 percent are from Afro-Colombian communities.
9. In the past two years, the Government of President Juan Manuel Santos Calderón has put in place an ambitious national development plan and an executive and legislative agenda to address some of the root causes of conflict and to consolidate the rule of law. In June 2011, President Santos signed into law the Victims' Rights and Land Restitution Bill, which aims to achieve the reparation of more than 4 million victims through economic compensation and restitution for IDPs and rural communities of land appropriated since 1985. This law was signed by President Santos in the presence of United Nations Secretary-General BAN Ki-moon.
10. While the humanitarian situation has improved during the last decade and the numbers of IDPs have declined, displacements still average 150,000 new IDPs a year, 75 percent of whom are women and children. Displacement in Colombia is unique in nature: the phenomenon is called “*gota a gota*” (drop by drop) in which individual families are expelled from their lands, houses, etc. and there are no camps for IDPs. Most IDPs move from rural to peri-urban areas, where they lack employment, live in precarious physical and sanitary conditions, and face violence and discrimination.

11. Last September, the Government and FARC began peace negotiations, which have been welcomed by the majority of the Colombian population. The negotiating agenda includes, among other issues critical to Colombia's development, food security and rural development as main points to be addressed in the near future.

## **FINDINGS AND OBSERVATIONS**

### **Relationship with the Government**

12. WFP has been working with Colombia's national and regional governments at various administrative levels, with the aim of developing capacity and strengthening institutions. The mission noted with appreciation that WFP is considered a reliable and strategic partner of the Colombian Government, in line with WFP's vision for Colombia "to be the Government's preferred partner for change and development towards reducing food and nutritional insecurity in Colombia". As highlighted by the Vice-Minister of Multilateral Affairs, Patti Londoño Jaramillo, the Government considers WFP an example of good cooperation between the Colombian Government and United Nations agencies, and WFP's objectives in Colombia specifically target Colombia's social needs and requirements, as defined in the National Development Plan and the Colombian International Cooperation Strategy, in line with WFP's strategic shift from food aid to food assistance. It was also noted that WFP is considered an important actor in local development communities, grassroots-level organizations, local and regional institutions, and with national authorities. The Board members observed how WFP provides guidance and technical assistance to Colombian authorities for hand-over of WFP projects to these authorities.

### **Relationship with the United Nations Country Team**

13. The Colombia UNCT concentrates its efforts on strengthening national, social and institutional capacities; 23 United Nations agencies currently work with the Government. An extension of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) was signed on 31 August for implementation until December 2014, in line with the national priorities of the Colombian Government derived from the National Development Plan (2010–2014) and the International Cooperation Strategy. These priorities are poverty reduction; sustainable development; governance and human rights; peace, security and reconciliation; and humanitarian assistance.
14. The team observed that WFP is integrated into the Colombia UNCT. WFP is the largest organization in terms of coverage and level of expenditure, and enjoys a high degree of recognition for its work. It participates in two of the six joint programmes that United Nations agencies have been implementing in Colombia since 2008 – progress on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and humanitarian coordination – and its strategy is aligned with the UNDAF. Notably, WFP leads the UNDAF window on Children, Food Security and Nutrition. Other participants in this window are the United Nations Development Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The MDG Group in New York has given this initiative several mentions as one of the best-led MDG windows and an example of best practice.
15. However, there is significant room for improvement in Delivering as One and broadening the scope of cooperation, particularly with FAO, UNICEF and WHO. The Board members were not able to meet a representative of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) as IFAD is not established in the country.

## **Integrated Approach to Addressing Food Insecurity among Highly Vulnerable Households affected by Displacements and Violence**

16. One of the most important activities of WFP in Colombia is to strengthen institutional capacity for prevention, preparedness and response concerning situations of food insecurity created by the armed conflict. The emergency assistance activities carried out by WFP are directed primarily to food and nutrition-insecure populations affected by conflict. The Board members visited projects related to these activities in the municipality of Tierralta, Córdoba.

### **Food for Training and Food for Work**

17. Members of the Board observed WFP's food-for-training activities targeting the most vulnerable displaced families in Barrio 9 de Agosto, a marginalized area on the urban perimeter of Tierralta municipality where displaced families have been establishing themselves over the last two years. The population in this area is characterized by extreme poverty, poor housing conditions, low access to income-generation and low purchasing power, which result in an insufficiently diversified diet and limited access to government social protection programmes.
18. Members of the Board observed with satisfaction how well WFP collaborates with its partners. In carrying out these activities, WFP works very closely with national authorities such as the Department of Social Prosperity, the *Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar* (IDBF, Colombian Institute of Family Welfare), and the *Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje* (SENA, National Training Institute), as well as with the municipal authorities of Tierralta. A concern is that while WFP provides some of the very needy households with assistance, it leaves others without support, which may create a situation of discontent in the community. The municipal authorities should take responsibility for providing public services to this population, as well as for introducing them into government assistance programmes.
19. Members of the Board observed how food-for-training and food-for-work activities contribute to improving access to food, to diet changes, and to addressing micronutrient deficiencies among children by using the micronutrient powder *chispitas nutricionales* (micronutrient sprinkles).
20. In the rural communities of Predio Santa Rosa and Vereda Canutillal, Board members observed with great satisfaction how projects carried out by WFP and its counterparts have enabled the communities to become self-sufficient and have contributed to longer-term sustainability. These communities were supported within the framework of the previous PRRO (2009–2011) under its food-for-work and food-for-training components in partnership with the Department of Social Prosperity, ICBF, SENA, the Social Development Corporation and Action Against Hunger, Spain. Input from FAO was also recognized.
21. WFP departed from the communities in 2010, and although the residents are regularly threatened by illegal armed groups, families have continued the productive and income-generation activities that were initially supported by WFP, the Social Development Corporation and the *Instituto Colombiano de Desarrollo Rural* (Incoder, Colombian Rural Development Institute).

## **Institutional Strengthening and Food and Nutrition Security among Indigenous Communities**

22. Indigenous communities in Colombia are quite often food- and nutrition-insecure, displaced or at risk of displacement, victims of conflict, or affected by natural disasters caused by climate change. WFP carries out several activities in indigenous communities. The Board members visited some of the projects put in place by WFP in the Wayuu indigenous community in the Department of La Guajira.

## **Wayuu Women's Empowerment for Promoting Food and Nutrition Security for their Families and Communities**

23. Gender inequality is a common phenomenon in Colombia, affecting particularly rural and indigenous women. In close collaboration with the Wayuu community, WFP identified the community's needs, and ways in which Wayuu women could contribute to the food and nutrition security of their families. WFP provides training and sensitization for the indigenous women themselves, indigenous men, local authorities and other key actors. The main partners in this activity are the Cerrejón Foundation for Water in La Guajira, the Cerrejón Foundation for Indigenous People in La Guajira, the Departmental Governor of La Guajira and the Gender Innovation Fund.
24. When WFP is involved in community development work it is important to ensure that successful activities are modelled for replication in other similar communities.

## **Environmental Training with Emphasis on Sanitation, Water Management and Community Participation**

25. The region of La Guajira is constantly affected by droughts, and over the last couple of years it has also been affected by floods as a consequence of the climate phenomenon La Niña. These challenges, together with the high degree of dispersion of indigenous communities, make water and water management one of the major issues that these populations face.
26. In partnership with the Cerrejón Foundation for Water, the Cerrejón Foundation for Indigenous People and the Department for Social Prosperity, WFP is implementing a programme that promotes food and nutrition security and environmental education, emphasizing water management, sanitation and community involvement in seven indigenous communities.

## **Food and Nutrition Security and Climate Change**

27. Of all the countries in the world, Colombia is one of the most affected by natural disasters related to climate change. The La Niña climate phenomenon caused the worst natural disaster in the country's history, affecting about 3.8 million people with a series of natural disasters including floods, blizzards and landslides, which resulted in losses in the agriculture and livestock sectors. The rainy season and resulting floods also had significant negative effects on the health of the population and on natural habitats, and were responsible for population displacements, shortages of water for domestic consumption, reduced crop productivity, and damage to social services infrastructure, drainage systems and other key infrastructure.

## Atlántico Emergency Operations Centre

28. In the Department of Atlántico, WFP has provided inputs, technical assistance and training for the government staff involved in managing the Atlántico Emergency Operations Centre, and in emergency preparedness for response. These activities are aimed at strengthening emergency preparedness and response capacities in the Department of Atlántico and the Caribbean region, particularly for emergency food assistance provision.
29. The Board members visited the emergency operations centre and met Mr José Antonio Segebre, Governor of Atlántico, and the military and government staff in charge of the centre.

## Food Assistance

30. The Board members visited the Bethel Child Welfare Community Home in the Department of Atlántico. This centre is part of the anaemia reduction project conducted by WFP together with the Governorate of Atlántico, the National Institute of Health and ICBF. In this project, WFP has contributed to the reduction of anaemia in children aged 6 to 59 months, through the provision of micronutrient powder, coordination of activities and technical assistance.

## Private and Public Partnerships

31. WFP has supported the implementation of school feeding programmes in Colombia for many years; to strengthen this intervention based on food assistance and to draw on the complementary resources and expertise of the public and private sectors, WFP currently works in partnership with The Coca-Cola Company, the Howard G. Buffet Foundation and ICBF to improve the nutrition status of highly vulnerable children in the Caribbean coast of Colombia by promoting the consumption of a school meal in combination with a fortified beverage called Vitingo.
32. The Board members visited Brisas del Rio School in the neighbourhood of Barlovento, in the Department of Atlántico, which is part of this project. The school's management explained how children benefit from three distinct components: the nutrition component, comprising a nutritious school meal and the fortified drink Vitingo; a pedagogical component, which promotes healthy lifestyles through training on nutrition and food; and an infrastructure component.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

33. Although Colombia is a high-middle-income country, economic and social inequities remain acute – among the highest in the region and the world – and there are poverty pockets, especially in rural areas. These factors, together with the armed conflict, create a situation of hunger and food insecurity in several areas of the country. It is necessary to refine targeting to identify the poorest, most food-insecure and vulnerable people, and to strengthen collaboration between WFP and the Government of Colombia, particularly in the area of capacity development, but also in early warning and disaster preparedness.
34. In general, WFP activities are well targeted and WFP has counterparts to share the work and responsibilities. Taking into account WFP's core mandate of humanitarian assistance, it is recommended that its work in Colombia focus more closely on addressing acute humanitarian and food security needs.
35. WFP should continue to explore possibilities for reinforcing collaboration and partnerships with other United Nations agencies such as FAO, WHO and UNICEF to

develop activities based on the comparative advantages, strengths and mandate of each agency. More collaboration among the three Rome-based agencies, including IFAD, would be desirable for tackling food insecurity and hunger in Colombia in a sustainable manner.

36. While WFP is addressing the food security situation in collaboration with national and local entities and NGOs, the food safety issue needs to be better addressed; this is an area where collaboration among FAO, WHO and WFP could be enhanced.
37. The Colombian Government is working in the right direction by addressing food insecurity, despite the continuing humanitarian situation arising from the armed conflict. As outlined in its country strategy document, WFP is well placed to provide technical assistance through a strategic/integrated approach that ensures appropriate hand-over to the Government and other institutions by building empowerment and ownership in projects that are currently carried out under WFP responsibility, as Colombia and WFP move through this transition phase from food aid to food assistance.

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## ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FARC	<i>Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia</i> (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia)
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IDP	internally displaced person
NGO	non-governmental organization
PRRO	protracted relief and recovery operation
SENA	<i>Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje</i> (National Training Institute)
UNCT	United Nations country team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WHO	World Health Organization