



OFFICE OF EVALUATION

Full Report

of the thematic evaluation of

**Recurring Challenges in the
Provision of Food Assistance in
Complex Emergencies**

**The Problems and Dilemmas faced by
WFP and its Partners**

Prepared by Ron Ockwell

Consultant, WFP/OEDE

Rome, September 1999



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	Introduction
	<i>Part I: The Context</i>
2	Characteristics of 'Complex' Emergencies
3	Role of Food and the Impact of Food Aid
	<i>Part II: Relationships</i>
4	Access and Relations with Warring Parties
5	Overall Planning and Management of International Assistance
6	Relations with Peace-Keeping Forces and Political Initiatives
	<i>Part III: Programme Issues</i>
7	Assessment and Monitoring
8	Objectives and Programme Strategies
9	Targeting, Distribution and Misappropriation
	<i>Part IV: Security and Management Issues</i>
10	Staff Safety and Security
11	Delivering Food, Preventing Losses
12	Mobilizing Staff and Resources
	<i>Part V: Underlying Issues</i>
13	Ground Rules, Principles and Ethical Dilemmas
14	Epilogue
	Appendix: Consolidated List of Recommendations



Acknowledgements

This report is based on previous evaluation reports, on field visits undertaken during the last quarter of 1998 and on information and perspectives provided by a large number of WFP staff, staff of other UN agencies, NGOs and other institutions as well as private researchers and consultants; they all responded to requests for inputs and/or gave of their time to discuss issues with the author. Many also provided comments on a draft circulated in May 1999. The contributions of these many individuals are gratefully acknowledged.

Except where a specific reference is given in the text or one of the endnotes, the information presented in this report derives from interviews and personal communications.

Responsibility for the selection of material presented, the opinions expressed and any errors rests solely with the author. Publication of this report does not imply endorsement by WFP of the opinions expressed.



Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACC	Administrative Committee on Coordination (of the UN system)
ACF	Action Contre la Faim
CAP	consolidated appeal process
DAC-OECD	Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
DHA	Department of Humanitarian Affairs (now, since 1997, OCHA)
DPA	Department of Political Affairs (of the UN)
DPKO	Department of Peace-Keeping Operations (of the UN)
ECHA	Executive Committee for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN headquarters, NY)
ECHO	European Commission Office for Humanitarian Assistance
ECOMOG	Economic Community of West African States Cease-fire Monitoring Group
ERC	Emergency Relief Coordinator (the UN Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FFW	food for work
FSTF	Field Security Task Force (in WFP headquarters)
HC	Humanitarian Coordinator (of UN at country level)
HF	high frequency (radio)
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee (for Humanitarian Assistance)
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP(s)	Internally displaced person(s)
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
INGO	international NGO
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ITAC	UN Inter-Agency Telecommunications Advisory Committee
LRA	Lords Resistance Army (in northern Uganda)
LTSH	land-side transport storage and handling
MOU	memorandum of understanding
MSF	Médecins sans Frontières
NGO(s)	non-governmental organization(s)
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (formerly DHA)
ODI	Overseas Development Institute (London, UK)
ODT	Operations Department, Technical Support Service, WFP
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OLS	Operation Lifeline Sudan
OLS-south	Operation Lifeline Sudan, southern sector
RASS	Relief Association of South Sudan
SAT	Security Awareness Training (global training programme of WFP)
SCF(UK)	Save the Children Fund (UK)
SFP	supplementary feeding programme
SMT	Security Management Team (of the UN at country level)
SP	Strategy and Policy Division, WFP
SPLA	Sudan People's Liberation Army
SPLM	Sudan People's Liberation Movement
SRRA	Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Association
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary-General



UN	United Nations
UNAVEM	United Nations Verification Mission Angola
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNITA	Union for the Total Independence of Angola
UNMOT	United Nations Monitoring Mission of Observers in Tajikistan
UNOCA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian and Economic Assistance to Afghanistan (1988-92)
UNOMIL	United Nations Observer Mission Liberia
UNOSOM	United Nations Operation in Somalia (1992-94)
UNRC	United Nations Resident Coordinator
UNSECOORD	United Nations Security Coordinator (in New York)
USAID-OFDA	U.S.A. Agency for International Development - Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance
VHF	very high frequency (radio)
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization



Abstract

This report describes the ethical dilemmas as well as operational challenges faced by WFP and its partners in getting food assistance to those who need it in complex (i.e. conflict) emergencies. It highlights the need to combine operational capabilities—the ability to do things—with careful, continuous analysis and political sensitivity—the ability to determine what best to do, how to do it, what to avoid, how to adapt in rapidly-changing circumstances and when to stop. It is not definitive. While acknowledging the enormous efforts made and initiatives taken by WFP, its partners and individual staff in complex emergencies, it identifies aspects of policy, procedures and practice to which WFP should give further in-depth consideration and attention.

Although WFP and most humanitarian agencies have attempted to be ‘neutral’ and to provide assistance ‘impartially’ in conflict situations, the assistance provided -- especially bulk food assistance -- has not been without consequences for the course of events and the actions of the parties. Lives have been saved, but many needy people have not been reached, there have been unintended side effects, delivery costs have been high, some food has been lost, stolen or misused, and increasing numbers of WFP and other humanitarian workers have been killed or injured.

In most conflict situations, food has been used as a weapon and source of influence and, in some cases, warring parties have profited from or sought to impede assistance operations. This and other characteristics of ‘complex’ emergencies, the implications for assistance operations and the particular role and impact of food aid are discussed briefly in Part I.

Access to affected civilian populations and the delivery of supplies have often had to be negotiated with parties to the conflict, but agreements have not always been respected and serious issues of principle have arisen. The motivations of the different parties to the conflict and their relationships with the civilian population in areas they control is one among a number of critical factors that has influenced relations between WFP (and other agencies) and parties to a conflict and the possibility of meaningful agreements on access and safe passage. Access, arrangements for the overall planning and management of international assistance, relationships with peace-keeping forces and the sometimes-difficult interaction with political initiatives are discussed in Part II.

Assessing needs -- the number of people in need of assistance and the level of assistance needed -- and keeping up-to-date with changes, has been difficult in most conflict situations, as has monitoring the impact (and sometimes even the distribution) of food assistance provided. The targeting of assistance to the most needy has been particularly problematical. These aspects together with issues relating to objectives (assistance has variously sought to save lives and to promote recovery, rehabilitation and reconciliation), distribution arrangements, the selection of NGO partners, direct distribution by WFP teams, and problems of misappropriation, are discussed in Part III.

Ten WFP staff were killed, apparently deliberately, in complex emergency countries in the period July 1997-July 1998. It is not known how many staff of WFP’s contractors and NGO partners have been killed or injured. Elaborate security systems have been developed among the UN agencies in Southern Sudan and Somalia, WFP has taken broad-ranging measures in the Great Lakes region and initiated a worldwide security awareness training programme, but a number of issues relating to staff security remain. These, and issues



concerning the delivery of commodities, measures to reduce cargo losses, the use of armed escorts, and mobilizing personnel and food commodities are discussed in Part IV.

'Ground rules' provide the basis for humanitarian operations in the southern sector of Operation Lifeline Sudan. 'Codes of conduct' have been drawn up by agencies in Liberia and Sierra Leone. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and some donor bodies have recently taken initiatives in relation to 'principles' and 'principled programming'. But many operations have not benefited from a clearly-define framework of operating principles and WFP staff have yet to receive any training or guidance in relation to the dilemmas they are often confronted with and the difficult judgements they sometimes have to make. These and issues relating to political and human rights concerns, conditionality and what may justify the withholding or suspending of assistance are discussed in Part V.

Principal recommendations relate to:

- Clarifying the Programme's policy and basic principles for assistance in complex emergencies, and providing corresponding guidance to staff including on human rights issues and the circumstances under which it may be necessary to suspend assistance;
- Continuing and enhancing WFP's engagement in ongoing inter-agency processes relating to the co-ordination of international assistance and the interaction between humanitarian, political and human rights concerns, emphasising adherence to humanitarian principles;
- Reviewing experience in depth and developing, with partners and in consultation with donors, methodologies, check-lists and guidelines (as appropriate) for assessment, targeting and assistance strategies in conflict situations, including assistance through market interventions;
- Consolidating and refining arrangements for the mobilisation and management of resources on a regional basis where necessary to respond to changing needs between neighbouring countries;
- Continuing and continuously refining security measures and training in collaboration with the United Nations Security Coordinator (UNSECOORD), other operational UN agencies and NGO partners, with attention to increasing acceptance of as well as protecting the Programme's humanitarian operations;
- Providing adequate detailed, country-specific briefings to staff being assigned in conflict situations, and giving attention to inter-personal and negotiating skills in the selection and training of all staff in such situations.

A consolidated list of specific recommendations is presented in Appendix I.



1 Introduction

1.1 A 'complex emergency' is: "a humanitarian crisis in a country, region or society where there is a total or considerable breakdown of authority resulting from internal or external conflict and which requires an international response that goes beyond the mandate or capacity of any single agency and/or ongoing UN country programme." [Definition agreed by the IASC Working Group in 1998]

1.2 Through the 1990s, WFP has been delivering large quantities of emergency food aid into such situations involving armed conflict, sometimes violent, sometimes low level. Despite enormous problems, many affected civilian populations in need of assistance have received food and related assistance, and have thus been helped to survive and recover. To do this, WFP and its partners have developed new approaches, procedures and partnerships. But other populations have not been reached or have received only minimal quantities, delivery costs have been high, some food has been lost, stolen or misused, and increasing numbers of WFP and other humanitarian workers have been killed or injured. At the same time, humanitarian assistance operations have come under increasingly critical scrutiny and there has been much soul-searching by some of the agencies and individuals involved who have attempted to analyse the actual impacts -- intended and unintended -- of their efforts.

1.3 This report highlights the principal recurring problems and dilemmas in providing food assistance in these conflict-related situations and makes recommendations for follow-up action. It is based largely on the experiences and perceptions of practitioners in WFP and other organizations who have been involved in providing food assistance in complex (i.e. conflict) emergencies. It also draws on existing reports and literature.

1.4 *Scope:* This report focuses on the particular problems associated with working in situations of conflict but also discusses some problems which, though common to all emergency operations, are particularly acutely felt in conflict situations. It draws mainly on experiences during the decade 1989-98 but also takes account of those in some earlier conflict situations.¹

1.5 *Method:* The consultant interviewed and consulted by phone and e-mail with a large number of individuals in WFP and other concerned organizations and institutions. A particular effort was made to get inputs from people who had fulfilled management responsibilities for WFP in conflict situations. In addition to interviews with individuals in Rome, Geneva and London, short visits were made to Kampala, Nairobi and Lokichoggio (Kenya) where meetings were held with individuals presently working in the Great Lakes region, northern Uganda, eastern Kenya, Somalia and southern Sudan (OLS-south). Many of the individuals contacted had experience in several different operations. Recent WFP evaluation and other reports were reviewed, as was some of the recent published literature on the role and impact of international aid interventions in 'complex' emergency situations.

1.6 *Limitations:* The study has sought, with limited resources, to identify and highlight the main recurring problems and issues in complex/conflict situations. It is not an in-depth analysis -- indeed it only scratches the surface of some issues -- and does not presume to propose solutions to many of the problems. Nor does it reflect all the positive accomplishments, experiences and lessons. It suggests an agenda for follow-up action to address identified problems.



Part I: The Context

2 Characteristics of 'Complex' Emergencies

Roots, effects and food

2.1 The roots of 'complex' emergencies are essentially political, sometimes ethnic and/or religious, and often include competition for the control of resources. Some parties may have an interest in the continuation of the conflict and the associated economic systems, including that surrounding the externally-funded assistance operations. The conflicts and, therefore, the resulting humanitarian emergency conditions, are sometimes influenced by outside commercial or political interests.²

2.2 Insecurity and the fragmentation of state structures typically results in large-scale disruption of infrastructure and economic systems, large numbers of displaced people and high levels of food insecurity. The effects are often compounded by the deliberate targeting of civilian populations and their means of survival, aggressive criminality and, in some cases, ethnic cleansing or indiscriminate killing. The problems are aggravated when there is a coincidence of conflict with drought or floods as, for example, in Ethiopia and Mozambique in the 1980s, and in Somalia and southern Sudan both then and in 1997/8.

2.3 Food has been an important factor in most if not all complex/conflict emergencies in the last 30 years. It is a basic survival need for people, an essential, strategic resource for a fighting force, and an economic good which can be traded, and hoarded (see section 3). The control of food supplies is a source of power and influence and, therefore, of interest to most political and military parties. Although WFP and most humanitarian agencies attempt to be 'neutral' in these situations, and to provide assistance 'impartially' (on the basis of need), the assistance provided -- especially bulk food assistance -- is not without consequences for the course of events and the actions of the parties to the conflict.

Duration and unpredictability

2.4 Most complex emergencies are protracted affairs -- the emergency phase drags on for years during which the conflict ebbs and flows, sometimes seasonally³, and the level of humanitarian need changes accordingly. Over time, WFP and other agencies accumulate local knowledge and experience (albeit hampered in some cases by a high staff turnover, incomplete records and poor institutional memory), and operational systems are refined. But those who seek to subvert humanitarian aid for their own purposes also hone their skills. And 'donor fatigue' can set in, especially as new crises occur elsewhere. Changes also take place within the society. At the beginning of a crisis, the population typically falls back on its traditional structures and coping mechanisms. After years of stress and dependence on assistance, those structures and mechanisms, and the potential for sustainable recovery, may be undermined. Expectations of continuing assistance may develop and eventual reductions and phasing-out of particular forms of assistance become difficult and hazardous for staff (e.g. in Somalia 1996).

2.5 Complex emergencies are also volatile with sudden changes sometimes affecting new populations and causing new displacements. Splits within parties to the conflict and changes of alliances -- sometimes predictable, sometimes not -- are often the cause of changes. A split in the SPLA was a major contributory factor to the famine in southern Sudan in 1991 while the defection of a renegade commander back to the opposition in



February 1998 greatly compounded the humanitarian crisis in Bahr-el-Ghazal in 1998. (His earlier defection to the government side in 1995 had completely changed the operational context in the same area at that time.) In Liberia, the conflict took on a new intensity following the breaking of a truce between the factions in Monrovia in April 1996, following earlier flare-ups in 1990 and 1992. In Somalia in April 1999, Merca, which had previously been a relatively tranquil area and the transit point for assistance to much of the southern part of the country, suddenly became highly insecure due to an intra-clan power struggle for the governorship (leading to the relocation of international staff and the closure of the airstrip). The situation in Somalia has also been disturbed by the outbreak of war between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

2.6 The eventual processes of reconciliation and recovery are invariably difficult and slow, and regression all-too-frequent. Afghanistan (1991), Angola (1992 and 1998) and Sierra-Leone (1998) all slipped back into acute crisis following the breakdown of the peace agreements. Recovery, when it begins, is often uneven. In Somalia, three different types of 'zone' have been recognized in the UN consolidated appeals since 1997 -- crisis, transition and recovery -- each requiring a different general approach to programming while recognizing that individual localities can slide, or suddenly change, from one category to another. Similar categorizations have been adopted in Afghanistan.

Characteristics of and implications for assistance operations

2.7 International response to humanitarian needs in complex (conflict) emergencies has depended heavily on media coverage -- what has come to be known as 'the CNN factor' -- and the (political) interest of the major donors in the affected country. The usual high profile of these crises at their onset typically results in initial commitments and a large number of external agencies flooding in, many of which have little previous experience in the country concerned. The resources and the number of agencies dwindle as time passes. Even more than in other environments, personalities and the relationships between individuals at all levels are critical to the level of coordination and cooperation and, ultimately, to the effectiveness of overall international assistance.

2.8 In almost all complex (conflict) emergencies, assistance operations are hampered by restricted access to the affected areas and civilian populations as well as by logistic constraints and general insecurity affecting staff and operations, particularly the delivery and distribution of food. Assistance agencies have to adapt to the absence, or disruption, of normal government structures and civil society institutions and, in some cases, to the presence of peace-keeping forces, political negotiators and/or human rights monitors, as discussed in sections 5 and 6. Other challenges specific to conflict situations include:

2.9 *Uncertainty.* All operations are characterized by considerable uncertainty -- uncertainty concerning: the actual situation and needs in many areas (or of different population groups); the motivations and likely actions of different groups and power brokers,⁴ and whether agreements are likely to be honoured; the risks for the population if assistance is not provided, and the risks for humanitarian workers. These uncertainties come on top of the problems of insecurity and limits on access, and together make the planning, management and implementation of assistance operations particularly difficult. Assistance in these situations requires a careful assessment and balancing of risks, and the adoption of strategies to minimize the risks for all concerned and flexibility to respond to changes and new information. But decisions often have to be made on the basis of incomplete information: the management, evaluation and analysis of available information



are critical. Specific scenario-based contingency (emergency) plans have been prepared in Liberia, but not in all operations.⁵

2.10 *Demands on staff.* In these environments, staff are called on not just to fulfil specific technical or management functions in extremely difficult and often dangerous circumstances, but also to be patient diplomats and negotiators. All need a thorough understanding of the complex situation in which they are operating: without it they can create problems for themselves and the operation. Some staff assigned in these situations have, or develop, the necessary understanding and capacities, others do not. Local staff, in particular, but also out-posted international staff, are often under extreme pressure from particular factions, the government or (in the case of local staff) their own communities, to favour specific groups. The challenges in terms of the selection and recruitment of personnel, and provision of support and supervision, are considerable, especially when operations have to be set up or expanded in a hurry.

2.11 *Dependence on independent air transport.* In almost all operations, independent air transport for UN personnel, their partners and small items of equipment has been a basic requirement for both operational and staff security purposes (e.g. in Afghanistan, Angola, Ethiopia in the 1980s, the Great Lakes, Somalia, southern Sudan). In most recent cases, WFP has arranged and managed such services for the UN system as a whole.

2.12 On a more general level, there are issues relating to the role of assistance in protracted situations. These have recently been summarized as follows: “The prime purpose of humanitarian aid is, of course, to save lives in crisis situations. Much aid does this. But the reality is that many aid programmes get extended beyond the immediate crisis. Many turn into holding operations. Because there is no normality to return to, no state system ready to pick up the pieces and few buoyant local coping mechanisms kicking in, many people on the fringes of war rely on long-term assistance as one amongst their survival strategies. With refugees or the internally displaced, agencies often find themselves involved for many years in providing what is in effect international welfare.”⁶

Important variations

2.13 While there are some general characteristics common to many ‘complex’ emergencies, each is unique in both its manifestations and its underlying determinants. Assumptions based on experience elsewhere can be dangerous, and uncritical attempts to transpose particular intervention strategies and processes from one situation to another typically run into difficulties. But there is much that can be learned from experiences in other situations, provided that the differences as well as any similarities between the two contexts are carefully examined. The nature and motivations of the parties to the conflict are critical factors, described in section 4. Other key parameters that vary with significant implications for assistance operations include:

2.14 *The nature and level of the conflict/violence, and degree of fragmentation.* Some conflicts are extremely violent, with sustained fighting on a large scale. Examples include Bosnia in 1994-5, Liberia in 1996, Rwanda in 1994, Somalia in 1991-6, Sierra-Leone in 1998. Others are ‘low-level’ conflicts with fighting generally intermittent and localized, sometimes seasonal (e.g. Tajikistan 1993-8). In some cases there are fairly clear front-lines between a limited number of contestants. In others there are high levels of fragmentation with a multiplicity of distinct groups controlling different territories and shifting alliances between them (as in Somalia and Afghanistan). Elsewhere, as in Angola and southern Sudan, the government controls many towns while ‘rebels’ control the countryside. In some



cases there are multiple overlapping conflicts. Thus, in northern Uganda and southern Sudan, a multitude of long-standing local conflicts and patterns of cattle raiding have continued throughout the 1990s alongside the more general conflicts between pro- and anti-government forces. These realities have major implications for the planning and delivery of food and other humanitarian assistance as well as for the affected civilian populations who are under constant threat and pressure. People caught in the middle between different factions, and those who are displaced and lack representation and any traditional entitlement in the areas where they take refuge, are generally the worst affected, the most vulnerable.

2.15 *The level of vulnerability of the civilian population -- whether lives are at immediate risk or not.* In some cases, the lives of large numbers of civilians are at immediate risk -- their survival depends on the delivery and distribution of international humanitarian aid, notably food but also including assistance to ensure necessary shelter, water supplies, health services and, in some cases, the protection that comes from an international presence in the area. This has been the case, for example, in different parts of the Great Lakes region since 1994, Liberia in the mid-1990s, Somalia in 1993, and parts of southern Sudan in 1991 and 1998. In a number of other situations, and at other times in the areas cited, assistance operations have been more preventive in nature, meeting the needs of smaller numbers of people in acute need and helping to ensure that larger numbers continue to 'get by'. The level and immediacy of risk associated with food insecurity among civilians is relevant to decisions about the risks to staff and supplies which the humanitarian operation itself may take, and has influenced some decisions on whether to 'bend' principles and 'accept' high levels of losses or apparent misappropriations (see sections 9 and 13).

3 Role of Food and the Impact of Food Aid

Food as a weapon or a source of influence

3.1 Various warring parties in recent years (as throughout recorded history) have sought to deny food to 'enemies' through siege tactics (e.g. UNITA in Angola 1980s and 1993-9, all ethnic groups in Bosnia 1992-5, various militias in Afghanistan including the Taliban authorities controlling Kabul since 1996), by burning crops and looting food stocks (e.g. various militias in Somalia 1993-8, the LRA in northern Uganda since 1995), mining fields (e.g. Angola, Cambodia, Mozambique), and obstructing deliveries of aid, often in spite of agreements not to. Obstruction may take the form of deliberate attacks on and looting of convoys (e.g. Angola 1993-, Burundi, Rwanda, Somalia 1993-7) or the creation of 'administrative' obstacles (e.g. flight bans in Sudan and embargoes on internal movements within Liberia). In almost all situations, groups have attempted to manipulate allocation and distribution processes to favour 'their' areas or populations.

3.2 Food distributions, or the prospect of food distributions, have been used as 'bait' to draw people to specific locations where they can be protected (northern Uganda since 1995, Rwanda 1997), contained (Burundi 1998) or attacked (eastern Zaire 1997). So great was the fear of such 'baiting' that, on one occasion in 1997, UNHCR organized a quick assessment of the needs of a recently-located group of refugees in eastern Zaire specifically excluding food for fear of the population being fixed and rendered vulnerable to attack. The denial of food has been used by rebels as a means to push people to leave their land and take refuge in government-controlled cities in order to aggravate resource shortages and undermine the government's control (Angola 1980s, 1993-9). Government troops and a faction supporting the government in southern Sudan have similarly forced



people from the countryside into government-controlled towns in order to reduce the numbers of people under the control and influence of the anti-government factions. The giving and withholding of food assistance has been used by local political factions to try to influence voting in elections (Bosnia, 1996-98).

3.3 Food aid has also been used, or proposed, as a policy tool by the 'international community' (agencies and donors). Some donors have ear-marked contributions to WFP for specific projects in specified localities deliberately favouring some groups and excluding others (e.g. in Somalia, 1997-98). Contributions have been withheld --redirected to other agencies -- when the Programme has declined to organize distributions to localities proposed by a donor.⁷ Special representatives of the UN Secretary-General (SRSGs) charged with seeking to find political resolutions to crises have sometimes requested WFP or the humanitarian agencies in general to adjust their planned programmes to facilitate political negotiations -- see section 6. Food rations for refugees and IDPs have been reduced or terminated to encourage repatriation or resettlement (e.g. in Angola 1998, eastern Zaire and Kenya 1996).⁸

Food security as a casualty of conflict

3.4 Even where not deliberately undermined, food security has been an early casualty in most conflict situations. Civilians flee conflict in large numbers, the majority losing (at least temporarily) their means of livelihood. Planting and harvesting are interrupted. Access to land, water and other agricultural inputs, and to most normal forms of employment and non-agricultural sources of income, are all reduced. Markets and marketing systems are disrupted. Even among those who do not flee, a significant proportion of the population in areas affected by conflict have often been unable, without assistance, to meet their basic food needs. For example, the local price of rice in Monrovia trebled in a single week in June 1996 at a time of heavy fighting⁹ and some weeks earlier there had been no market at all so that even people who had money found that it was of no value.

3.5 However, in protracted conflicts people sometimes develop alternative food acquisition strategies and trade often takes place between populations under the control of opposing forces. As noted by the 1996 joint evaluation of the operations in Afghanistan, trade has often been more important than recognized by external assessments. Such trading has also been important in both Somalia and southern Sudan where, throughout much of the wars, goods have continued to be exchanged between areas under the control of opposing groups and with neighbouring countries. Trade also continued between otherwise hostile communities in Sarajevo (1993-95). Trade is clearly important for food security, but its extent and impact has been difficult to assess and take into account in most conflict situations. On the negative side, commercial interests have sometimes led to grain being hoarded and traded speculatively to the detriment of the majority of the civilian population (e.g. in Somalia and southern Sudan).

Unintended consequences of food (and other) aid

3.6 The effects of food assistance operations in areas of conflict are seldom if ever neutral. While relieving hunger and suffering to various degrees, depending on the situation, the delivery and distribution of food lends legitimacy to, and reinforces the authority of, the government or faction which controls the area or is able to effectively control distributions at local level. The logistic operation of delivering and distributing food also generates considerable economic activity and, at times, represents the principal source of employment and revenue in the affected areas.¹⁰



3.7 Food assistance operations, therefore, can be a source of revenue to parties to the conflict either directly, through contracting and misappropriation, or indirectly through taxation. 'Taxes' have been raised on the passage of food convoys (e.g. Bosnia 1992-6, Liberia 1990-5, Somalia 1991-6), the beneficiaries (Liberia 1990-95, southern Sudan 1990-98, eastern Zaire 1997) and local employees of the relief operation (eastern Zaire 1997). It has also been suggested that, by bringing into certain areas trucks which were then available for backloads, the use of commercial transport in Liberia facilitated exports of timber which, in turn, fed the fighting funds of particular factions.¹¹ The level and effects of such activities are difficult to quantify, and have certainly varied between the different situations referred to, but should not be ignored by assistance agencies.

3.8 Assistance operations sometimes have a direct effect on the conflict. In Angola 1993-9, Bosnia 1992-5 and southern Sudan 1989-99, the airlifting of food to besieged towns and cities effectively prevented the besiegers from accomplishing their tactical objectives -- and led to UN/UNHCR/WFP aircraft being shot at in Angola and Bosnia. In these situations, the objectives of humanitarian assistance were in direct opposition to those of certain of the warring parties.

3.9 Unintended support to military operations was provided in eastern Zaire in 1996/7 where the military in Kisangani regularly requisitioned trucks which had been mobilized by commercial transporters specifically to work for WFP -- trucks which would not have been available in the area but for the WFP contracts. The rates charged to WFP rose to cover the transporters' overall costs so that WFP was, effectively, subsidizing a part of the military's operations.

3.10 Agencies (including WFP and its partners, amongst others) have served as a source of four-wheel-drive vehicles for various warring parties. In Liberia (1996), some NGOs are reported to have come reluctantly to the realization that upsurges in fighting seemed to coincide with the fresh arrivals of new four-wheel drive vehicles and radio equipment, replacements for ones which had already been looted.¹² During the crisis in April 1996, WFP itself lost 7 vehicles while UN-OPS lost 6, of which 3 were on loan to WFP.¹³ Vehicles looted or requisitioned from agencies have also been used by armies (e.g. East Pakistan 1971), opposition groups (e.g. Angola, Huambo 1993) and/or militias (e.g. Somalia 1991-5).

3.11 In Burundi (1997/8), Rwanda (1994/8) and the northern sector of OLS Sudan (since 1989), authorities have adopted policies of forced population 'regroupements', relying on the international humanitarian community to provide food for the displaced people in those centres. In some cases the motives may have been humanitarian. In others, the regrouping may have facilitated military operations or the government's control over the groups concerned. Providing aid for these 'IDPs' facilitated, and could be construed as endorsing the implementation of, such policies. The review of OLS in 1996 noted that, at government insistence, assistance to displaced people in Khartoum and Wau was provided only to those in 'peace villages': those outside remained beyond the purview of OLS.¹⁴

3.12 On a different level, destitute population groups have been drawn to settle along major roads where they would have access to assistance but also at the same time, be exposed to increased risks of attack by militias and bandits (e.g. Liberia 1992-94).

Food aid sustaining and prolonging conflict?



3.13 In a number of cases (e.g. Bosnia 1992-5, Ethiopia 1980s, Nigeria/Biafra 1966-69, southern Sudan 1996-9), the providers of food aid have been accused of sustaining and prolonging the conflict. It has been asserted that aid to the government side prolonged the war in Ethiopia¹⁵, that it prolonged the war but not the suffering in Bosnia¹⁶, and that it prolonged both the war and the suffering in Nigeria/Biafra.

3.14 Opinions are sharply divided on this issue and whether such considerations should be taken into account when making decisions on the provision of humanitarian aid. One view is that aid permits war to continue but is rarely enough for people to survive anyway, so it is better to accept a few deaths now for peace later. Another is that it enables many people who might otherwise have died to survive until there is an opportunity for peace.

3.15 It has been argued that humanitarian aid may provide a cushion which enables armies to carry on fighting, and may enable losing sides to avoid admitting defeat since they are protected from the pain and loss of (civilian) life which might cause them to sue for peace.¹⁷ That, however, assumes that the party concerned has a popular base and a social conscience. It has also been noted that armies are the last groups to suffer starvation and that the importance of food aid seeping through to them is often marginal so that aid does not fundamentally affect the duration let alone the outcome of a war.¹⁸ However, the risks of civilians being attacked are increased if soldiers and militias are not able to obtain food by means other than forcible extraction from the population.

3.16 The 1998 joint UNHCR/WFP evaluation of emergency food assistance in Bosnia¹⁹ noted the 'fig leaf' argument -- that "by giving generous support to food aid, donors were able to defend themselves against the charge of inaction in Bosnia and by doing so they postponed the military intervention needed to end the conflict". This view was apparently held by some leaders in Sarajevo who were opposed to the introduction of food aid at the early stages of the war. It was and still is widely held among many agency staff and other observers.²⁰ One of the international negotiators declared publicly that there was no doubt that aid was prolonging the war.²¹ The evaluation suggested, however, that: "this is a criticism of the priorities and political will of the international community, rather than of food aid as such." On the other hand, it acknowledged that: "It was necessarily the case that humanitarian aid did support the military effort [in that it] allowed the diversion to the war effort of resources which would otherwise have been needed to sustain the non-combatant population." The same may be said in relation to other operations in situations of conflict.

Dilemmas

3.17 WFP and other agencies are thus confronted with difficult decisions on what aid to provide to whom, and whether/when to withdraw -- dilemmas discussed below in section 13. Staff on the ground often have to make rapid decisions on immediate responses. Subsequently, WFP generally informs the international community (donors) of its estimates of food aid requirements in areas to which it has access, and individual donor governments decide whether and to what extent to support particular operations. With an ever-increasing proportion of donor contributions being 'ear-marked', it is donors who decide on allocations and WFP has little discretion for the provision of assistance according to its own assessments of relative need between different countries, areas or population groups. The Programme is thereby exposed to accusations of (unwittingly) being a 'tool' for donor governments' foreign policies,²² especially if (when) appeals are influenced by expectations concerning donor responses.



3.18 Less dramatically, there are the usual questions related to the possible disincentive effects of food distributions (including food-for-work) on local production, and the possibly inadequate exploitation of opportunities for local purchases, where and when they exist. These questions arise particularly in relation to protracted assistance operations (such as Mozambique in the 1980s) and during post-conflict rehabilitation and recovery phases (as in Cambodia in the 1990s), but can also be relevant in some emergency phases. It is been suggested that the arrival and distribution of large quantities of food aid in Somalia in 1993 undermined a fragile, embryonic recovery,²³ and that badly timed and unpredictable food aid was a disincentive to local traders and created market instability in Rwanda (1995/96).

3.19 Food can also be an emotive, political issue, real or imagined. In Liberia in 1995 when, to reduce losses and misappropriation, rice was being substituted in the general ration by bulgur wheat, the government reacted negatively and the SRSG wrote to the Acting UNDP resident representative/ Humanitarian Coordinator stating that rice shortages could become an explosive political problem. The latter declared rice to be a security and humanitarian issue. An attack shortly afterwards on a UNHCR office in a refugee settlement was painted as the beginning of rice riots in which there would be popular unrest and generalized attacks on UN agencies. The incident in fact arose from a fight between competing political factions and was linked to delays in food distribution following an enumeration exercise and refugee demands for preferential treatment vis-a-vis the internally displaced.²⁴



Part II: Relationships

4 Access and Relations with Warring Parties

Access and safe passage

4.1 Problems associated with access were described by the UN Secretary-General in a recent report to the Security Council: “Humanitarian access has been hampered by general insecurity arising from the conflict, an inability or unwillingness on the part of State or non-State actors to allow such access and in some cases by deliberate attempts to obstruct humanitarian assistance. frequent interruptions of assistance to victims in Sudan and Afghanistan reflect the difficulties of maintaining humanitarian access even where the parties have agreed on the need for humanitarian assistance.”²⁵

4.2 In most conflict situations, access to some if not all of the affected civilian populations, and/or safe passage for relief supplies to reach them, has to be negotiated with the parties to the conflict. For many of those parties, political and military considerations and objectives rank higher, at least in the short term, than humanitarian ones. In some cases, access and safe passage have effectively been ‘purchased’ by the ‘international humanitarian community’ or by individual assistance agencies. WFP and other agencies have sometimes been constrained to include less needy people of concern to the government or other authorities concerned in order to gain acceptance for the provision of assistance to people in greater need. In some cases, negotiations for safe passage for deliveries have not assured effective access for staff to monitor the distribution and use of supplies delivered.

4.3 In Angola (1993), safe passage to deliver to government-controlled parts of Quito was obtained from UNITA by, in the words of one senior staff member, “giving in to blackmail” -- in return for a promise from WFP to provide equal quantities for UNITA-controlled areas. Overall, however, UNITA-controlled areas received very much less because UNITA shot at UN/WFP aircraft and, by refusing to provide security guarantees, generally denied access for WFP staff to assess needs and monitor assistance in areas under their control, and WFP generally stuck to the principle of ‘No-assistance-without-access’. In a few cases, UNITA yielded, after a time, and granted access. (Since the renewal of hostilities in 1998, WFP and other UN agencies have not provided assistance in UNITA-controlled areas.)

4.4 Other staff members have described as ‘shuttle diplomacy’ the continuous and time-consuming process of making contacts and negotiating with the numerous different clans and sub-clans through whose territory convoys in Somalia had to pass to reach their intended destinations in 1995-7. The process was all-the-more difficult on account of the precedents created during the earlier UNOSOM period (1992) when, in the absence of military protection, passage had effectively been purchased by international agencies providing food to all such groups not necessarily linked to assessments of need. Similar processes of negotiation have been required in Afghanistan (1991-8) where passage had to be negotiated with as many as ten different factions for a single route, and in Liberia (1991-7).

4.5 Notwithstanding such efforts and various agreements, access to specific areas has been regularly denied by governments and/or other local authorities. In Rwanda in 1997-98, the Government was willing to authorize deliveries to government-held areas only. It



insisted that there was none to officially receive deliveries in other areas and that it could not guarantee the security of personnel or trucks going into such areas. Earlier it had been reluctant to accept an international presence at all, and insisted that all food distributions be handled by local authorities as part of the process of gaining the confidence of the population.

4.6 In Sudan (1994-), the government has effectively denied access to various locations in areas served by OLS-south by the regular imposition of flight bans, often including locations far -- up to 900 kms -- from any current fighting, while also limiting access by international agencies/NGOs to many areas under its own control in the northern sector.²⁶ Access has also been denied, or obstructed, by authorities in Afghanistan (1993-8) and eastern Zaire/DR-Congo (1997).

4.7 In Afghanistan in 1988, general arrangements for access were negotiated through high-level international contacts led by the then UN Coordinator for Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan.²⁷ In Sudan in 1989, the special representative of the Secretary-General (the Executive Director of UNICEF) negotiated the agreement which established Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS). These high-level agreements provided frameworks for negotiation of access and safe passage with individual local commanders. In most other countries, negotiations for access and safe passage for food assistance have been conducted by the UN Humanitarian Coordinator, WFP and/or NGO implementing partner staff directly at various levels in country.

4.8 Since 1997, the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) and senior OCHA officials have taken an active role in advocating and negotiating for access on behalf of the UN agencies and NGOs. The ICRC, with its unique status and role, negotiates separately on its own behalf. For Sudan, OCHA's efforts resulted in a joint Government-SPLM-UN communiqué (Rome, November 1998) reaffirming "the fundamental right of access to all populations in need of humanitarian assistance" and the signature of specific protocols on security for OLS humanitarian workers and the use of rail and road corridors crossing from the territory of one party to that of the other.

4.9 However, experience in many countries in conflict has shown that local commanders and political leaders do not always respect agreements, signed by higher authorities, which they do not agree with, even when they are informed of them. In addition, local commanders change, and localities change hands. Therefore, general accords cannot be wholly relied on, careful security measures still need to be taken, and staff assigned in remote locations or travelling with convoys or separately to such locations often need to 'talk their way through'. They have to convince armed individuals manning road blocks, and those in *de facto* control of particular localities, not to obstruct but rather cooperate with the delivery and distribution of humanitarian food assistance. The challenge is even greater in countries/areas where it has not been possible to agree on the principle of humanitarian access even with the national or other high-level authorities, as has been the case in Rwanda, Burundi(?) and eastern DR-Congo.

4.10 Respect and trust are critical to negotiations for access. Experienced staff emphasize the absolute importance in all negotiations for access and safe passage of: patience and a tactful, culturally-appropriate approach; mutual respect and honest, straight-forward dealings; a record of consistency in the behaviour and actions of both the individual and the organization represented; clarity on objectives and essential principles, and being 'politely relentless' in seeking cooperation. Problems are greatly increased by the rapid turnover of staff typical of many operations, and by individuals who lack the required



maturity (not necessarily measured in years) or who fail to demonstrate sufficient cultural and political understanding and sensitivity. Local staff and local NGOs often have a key role in establishing contact and negotiating with warlords and their entourages.

Relationships with parties to the conflict

4.11 WFP, other operational agencies and implementing partners are obliged to deal with those who hold power locally: they can get food to the people who need it in insecure, conflict situations only with the consent of those who control the localities concerned. Superior force may, in theory, be able to ensure that food reaches an area despite the interference of armed groups who control or may attack supply routes, but the ability of beneficiaries to actually receive and retain food intended for them depends, in many situations, on the consent of the army, militias and/or local power-brokers in the areas where they reside. Attempts by the international community and peace-keeping forces to provide protection for civilians have not proven to be particularly effective until now. Agencies, therefore, have to negotiate while recognizing that the power-brokers may not necessarily represent the interests of all groups in the locality, and that many interlocutors (local militia commanders, for instance) are not accustomed to such responsibilities.

4.12 Thus, WFP and other humanitarian agencies have often negotiated with both the recognized government and opposition movements or local warlords, as described above, to be able to deliver assistance to populations on 'both sides'. However, as a UN agency, WFP generally has to act in line with the wishes of the recognized government (where there is one) or in the context of special arrangements established by the UN and agreed with the government (such as OLS in Sudan). Thus, in some situations, WFP has provided food only in government-controlled areas and has not sought, or not been able, to obtain access to areas and populations outside government control, sometimes for lack of a credible (or acceptable) interlocutor on the rebel side -- e.g. Mozambique in the 1980s and northern Uganda since 1995 (where WFP and most other agencies have not found it to be possible to deal with RENAMO and the LRA respectively), and at times in Liberia (1995-7) and Sierra-Leone (1997-8). However, during certain periods, WFP provided food to ICRC for distribution in RENAMO-held areas of Mozambique.

4.13 In Sudan, signed 'ground rules' agreements have defined the basic principles for international assistance through OLS in areas controlled by opposition movements, and the responsibilities of the humanitarian wings of those movements with which OLS cooperates. Notwithstanding some difficulties (discussed in section 13), the ground rules have facilitated liaison with the military factions and helped to reduce security risks for OLS personnel and collaborating NGOs. They may have encouraged the factions concerned to think about their social responsibilities although, as pointed out in the 1996 OLS Review, the movements have not committed any of their own resources even for the running costs of their own humanitarian wings.²⁸ However, these relationships have effectively legitimized these factions, and tempted some sub-groups to break away and seek recognition for themselves including the right to deal directly with WFP and other international organizations. Since 1996, such requests have been rejected, understandably -- to avoid having to deal with an ever-increasing multiplicity of competing factions -- but essentially arbitrarily. Meanwhile in the northern sector the Government of Sudan has asserted its sovereignty and effectively dictated where and with whom OLS will work. It has neither accepted nor respected the kind of principles defined in the OLS-south ground rules.

4.14 In Afghanistan, eastern DR-Congo, Liberia and Somalia, as well as southern Sudan, questions have recently been raised concerning the provision of capacity-building



assistance to 'counterparts'. The building of local capacity has been generally recognized as an important objective in all situations, and especially in complex emergencies where previous structures of governance and service provision have been disrupted and continued access by, and assistance from, external agencies cannot be assured. However, voices of caution have emphasized the need to examine carefully the legitimacy and bona fides of the entities concerned and, to the extent possible, to work with and enhance the capacity of genuine civil society organizations and established service-delivery systems (to the extent that there are any), and to refrain from supporting entities which may have objectives other than the well-being of the civilian population as a whole. The bona fides of certain groups is difficult to assess, particularly in the initial stages, but corrections later can be difficult. The staff of WFP and other agencies need to be aware of the potential pitfalls of turning to virtually any local capacity that is present as a quick and relatively easy way of extending its capacity and coverage.

Critical factors

4.15 Factors which emerge as being of critical importance in relation to arrangements for access and the kind of dealings which agencies may have with parties to a conflict include:

4.16 *The motivations of the different factions/parties to the conflict and their relationships with the civilian populations in the areas they control, or seek to control.* Groups that have a defined political agenda and a popular base among the population -- and/or which seek legitimacy in the eyes of the population and the international community -- can be negotiated with. Even if they have not articulated a social policy and programme of their own, they may be interested -- persuaded, if necessary -- to take and/or cooperate with measures to protect the interests of the civilian population. They may help resolve problems and correct any abuses in the delivery and distribution of assistance, especially when they are interested in gaining, or maintaining, international respectability. This has been the case, for example, in Afghanistan, Ethiopia and Guinea-Bissau, and with some groups in Liberia and southern Sudan. It is much more difficult -- it can be impossible -- to deal with groups whose sole aim is to disrupt the existing order and/or to secure economic benefits for themselves or for others outside the community/ies concerned. This has been the case with some groups in Burundi, Liberia, Sierra-Leone, Somalia and northern Uganda, and with bandits and criminal gangs in many countries.

4.17 *Levels of organization and discipline of military/armed groups.* Where both government and opposition armed forces are reasonably well organized and disciplined -- and have fairly reliable supply lines to feed their own troops/militias -- access to most needy populations, if not open, can often be negotiated and WFP, its partners and other agencies operate without being directly threatened. There may be a modicum of respect for human rights and international law in general. However, staff may still be at risk from landmines, random bombing or shelling, getting caught in cross-fire, or attack by bandits and criminal gangs. Where organization, discipline and/or communications between the headquarters and the field units of some of the warring parties is lacking, and especially when there are loose, and sometimes shifting, alliances among different groups, commanders or warlords, agreements negotiated with the headquarters may not necessarily be respected in all other locations. This has proved to be the case at various times in, for example, Angola, Bosnia, the Great Lakes region, Liberia, Somalia and southern Sudan. In these circumstances, operations can be risky and are frequently interrupted. The situation can be particularly difficult and dangerous where there are large numbers of child soldiers, and especially when they are drugged (as in Liberia 1990-96).



4.18 *Perceptions of international aid in general and WFP in particular.* In many situations, international humanitarian agencies including WFP have been accepted as being reasonably neutral and impartial in the conflict (even if the effects of the aid delivered are not, see section 3). However, in some cases WFP has been perceived as supporting one party rather than, or more than, another. In some such cases the aggrieved party has considered the operations of WFP and its partners to be supporting its enemies and therefore to be legitimate targets. This has been the case in Mozambique (in the 1980s), Sierra-Leone (1997-8) and northern Uganda (1996-8) where WFP, as most other international agencies, worked with the government and associated local authorities, but not with the rebels. It has also been the case to some degree in Angola (1993-8) where WFP (and others) have worked primarily in government-held areas while also trying -- or at least being willing -- to provide some assistance to areas under opposition control. On the other hand, government authorities in Burundi, DR-Congo and Rwanda have all accused WFP and/or other UN agencies of supporting the rebels with food, communications equipment, financing and information.²⁹

4.19 *Presence of international peace-keeping or enforcement initiatives.* Where the presence of UN peacekeeping forces or monitoring missions has been resented by certain local groups, the UN humanitarian agencies (including WFP) have been viewed and treated in a similar manner by people who have not recognized the difference between the two groups of UN actors. This has been the case in Somalia (1994-5), Tajikistan (1994-8), former Yugoslavia (1994-7). See section 6. At times, there may be an inherent conflict between political and humanitarian objectives -- see section 13.

4.20 The 1998 study of strategic coordination in the Great Lakes suggested ways of responding to four distinct types of authorities depending on their willingness and ability to provide consent and, therefore, access with a measure of security.³⁰ The report of a UNHCR study on negotiating humanitarian access expected to be published in 1999 may provide additional lessons of relevance to the international humanitarian community as a whole. WFP-SP is, in 1999, initiating a detailed review of WFP's experience in relation to access and a report is expected in 2000.

Recommendation 4-1: *While continuing to work closely with and support the ERC/OCHA and Humanitarian Coordinators in each complex/conflict emergency situation in (i) negotiating access to all civilian populations for purposes of assessment and the delivery and monitoring of humanitarian assistance (including but not limited to food aid), and (ii) establishing clearly defined working relationships between all international humanitarian agencies and the warring parties, WFP should:*

(a) undertake a detailed review and analysis of the Programme's own experience in dealing with non-state entities and the outcomes for both food security and staff security. This might be done through a series of small workshops;

(b) ensure, through careful selection and training, that the Programme's own staff in the field have the capacity to negotiate with and persuade local commanders and local faction leaders to cooperate with the provision of humanitarian food assistance to those who need it most. Selection criteria should include inter-personal and negotiating skills, and training be provided to enhance those skills. All staff also need a basic understanding of international humanitarian law as well as of the local context (see also recommendations 12 and 13). Training should be graded for different levels of staff;

(c) seek to ensure a high degree of continuity of staff in field postings, given the importance of individual relationships in all negotiations and the implementation of agreements.



Recommendation 4-2: *WFP should encourage and assist the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) in using local news media to inform the population at large, including combatants, of the objectives of the humanitarian assistance programmes. WFP itself, in coordination with the HC, should ensure the dissemination of information concerning food assistance.*

5 Overall Planning and Management of International Assistance

Substituting for government

5.1 Where normal government structures and services have broken down and/or become fragmented, international aid agencies or *ad hoc* bodies representing the international community have had to take responsibility for many policy-making and coordination as well as operational aspects which, in a 'normal' emergency, would be the responsibility of the government.

5.2 In terms of operational responsibilities, agencies typically have to take direct responsibility for logistics and the management -- or at least the initial organization and ongoing supervision -- of programme implementation. WFP has typically had to take on direct responsibility for the organization and day-to-day management of air operations, ports, warehouses, commodity control systems and, sometimes, truck fleets (as discussed in section 11) for its own food assistance and, sometimes, that of other agencies also. In Pakistan (1988-89), a joint logistic operation with UNHCR was put in place. In the Great Lakes (1994-97) joint work plans were drawn up with UNHCR and joint logistics centres and movement control centres established (see section 11).³¹

5.3 Even more complex, and sensitive, have been issues relating to overall policy-making and coordination. Different planning and coordination structures and mechanisms have been established, or have emerged, in different situations and there has been much debate about the pros and cons of particular arrangements, the need for coordination and yet the importance for individual agencies and donors alike of retaining some independence of judgement and action as well as visibility.

5.4 *Policy-making and coordination:* For overall policy-making and coordination, a UN Lead Agency has been designated by the Secretary-General in a few cases. UNICEF and ICRC served as joint lead agencies for Cambodia/Kampuchea (1979-81), and UNICEF for OLS (since 1989). UNHCR was lead agency in northern Iraq (1991-92 before handing over to UNICEF), Bosnia (1993-7) and Kosovo (1999). WFP succeeded UNICEF as lead agency for ongoing assistance to populations on the Thai-Cambodia border in 1993. This has tended to work reasonably well during the initial stages of a complex emergency when both access and resources have been limited, but strains have emerged as individual agencies, including WFP, have become established with their own field presence and resources. The role and influence of the lead agency has then been diminished.

5.5 For some other complex-emergency affected countries where there has not been effective nation-wide governance, individual agencies (including WFP) and donors have *de facto* defined policies and priorities, at least for areas not under government control, through their own, independent programming decisions (e.g. in the early days of the operations in Liberia). In the mid-1990s, concerns among some NGOs and researchers about accountability led to the drawing up of codes of conduct and humanitarian principles (discussed in section 13) and, together with concerns about effectiveness and efficiency, to



the establishment of special mechanisms for Somalia and Afghanistan. For Somalia, since 1994, policy-making and coordination functions have been performed by the donor-dominated Somalia Aid Coordination Body (SACB) based in Nairobi. For Afghanistan, the Afghanistan Programming Body (APB) which met for the first time, in Islamabad in 1998, brings together donors, UN agencies, NGOs, ICRC and the World Bank.³²

5.6 Various initiatives are underway in 1999 to examine the effectiveness (and weaknesses) of the various arrangements. Also, in early 1999, consultations between IASC members and ECHO have focused on possibilities for enhanced coordination and cooperation at policy as well as operational levels in relation to Sierra Leone, Kosovo and humanitarian crises in general. These efforts seek to avoid the kind of situation that has sometimes arisen in other operations when UN agencies and ECHO have had different perspectives and their separate efforts have not always been in harmony.

5.7 *Coordination of programme plans:* From 1994, the consolidated appeal (CAP) process, managed by DHA, assured a degree of coordination -- at least between UN agencies -- in the planning of assistance activities. Since 1997/98, under OCHA, an attempt is being made to progressively achieve greater coherence (and rational prioritization?) by the definition as part of each CAP process of overall, inter-sectoral strategies agreed among the agencies, principal donors and, where they exist, local authorities. At the same time, more effort is being made to include NGOs and their programmes in the process. Until now, the assessment of food needs by WFP with its main partners and donors has effectively been undertaken separately and the conclusions inserted in the CAP. It remains to be seen whether and how truly integrated assistance plans, including food assistance -- based on agreed assessments and objectives -- can be developed.

5.8 In Afghanistan in 1996/97, an attempt was made by UNDP to coordinate the development of regional programme strategies and plans for international assistance to rehabilitation working with the *de facto* regional authorities that had emerged. The effort was in parallel with those in relation to continuing relief needs, and remained largely theoretical. Subsequently, enhanced coordination and coherence of UN and other internationally-supported assistance programmes has been sought through the assignment of UN regional coordinators recruited by UNOPS (funded by UNDP). While beneficial in some respects, difficulties have sometimes arisen when coordinators have made promises relating to the allocation and use of WFP resources.

5.9 In Somalia, agencies -- including WFP -- have worked with the unrecognized government of 'Somaliland' in the northwest since 1993 and, to a lesser extent, with that of 'Puntland' in the northeast since 1998. In DR-Congo in 1998, OCHA and ECHO began promoting the development of regional 'programming platforms' whereby one agency would be designated to act as lead agency/focal point for internationally-supported assistance programmes for each operational area.

5.10 *Coordinated contingency planning:* Contingency emergency planning is one area in which there has been successful coordination and collaboration among agencies, including WFP, in a few cases. In Liberia (1995/96), there was joint contingency planning among UN agencies, donors and NGOs. In some other countries, inter-agency contingency planning has been undertaken for specific localities where populations and agencies were concentrated. In Sierra-Leone (1996), there was collaboration on an emergency plan for Freetown together with the national relief commission. In Afghanistan (1995/96) the representatives of several agencies resident in Kabul jointly drew up plans to deal with the



annual winter emergencies there. Similar planning took place for Hazajat in 1997/98. The existence and effectiveness of such joint planning has depended largely on personal initiatives and the relationships between agency personnel on the spot.

Locus of international management and coordination

5.11 In several situations, the operational headquarters of UN entities have been established and maintained in a neighbouring country due to insecurity and/or a desire not to appear to be associated with one party to the conflict more than others. Assistance operations have then been run by 'remote control'. This has been the case for Afghanistan since 1994 (run from Islamabad) and Somalia since 1995 (run from Nairobi). In both cases, sub-offices have been maintained in a small number of key regional centres. When and where there have been reasonable levels of stability and security in the locality, international staff and/or UNVs have been assigned to these sub-offices, but most senior staff (as well as general management support functions) have been based outside the country making short visits intermittently. Such 'remoteness' has advantages in terms of staff security and access to normal living conditions and support services, but obvious disadvantages in terms of relationships with local authorities, the affected populations and with partners on the ground.

5.12 Operations in the southern sector of OLS (in Sudan) have also been run by remote control from Lokichoggio and Nairobi in Kenya but, since end-1989, have been under the overall coordination of the UN Resident Coordinator/UNDP resident representative in Khartoum, together with operations in the northern sector. The conflict of interests inherent in this arrangement reflects the difficulties for the UN system in attempting to deliver humanitarian assistance impartially in the midst of a civil war to which a recognized sovereign government is a party.³³ Also uniquely, OLS-south has operated since its inception (in 1989) without any suboffices inside the country or local Sudanese staff. Candidates for local staff positions were being interviewed in early 1999.

5.13 Within OLS-south, the separation between the 'headquarters' in Nairobi and the operational base in Lokichoggio has created its own set of problems with no individual in Lokichoggio having overall responsibility for coordinating all aspects of operations there including, in particular, programmes and security. As a result food delivery and distribution operations have, on occasions, proceeded according to previously-prepared plans when more recent information available to security officers would have suggested a change.

Recommendation 5-1: WFP should:

(a) review how the different models for policy-making, programme planning, resource management and coordination have affected the planning and provision of food assistance and its integration with other international assistance in protracted complex emergency and 'transitional' situations, and how support to recovery (including reintegration and demobilization) has been integrated alongside continuing food relief needs in planning reflected in consolidated appeals;

(b) ensure that that experience and the particular issues relating to food are taken fully into account in the various ongoing initiatives and discussions at the international level concerning frameworks for strategic planning and coordination, and that, as necessary, WFP's own procedures are adapted to fit in with such more integrated arrangements, and staff are trained accordingly;



(c) work within the framework of the IASC to promote the establishment of a suitable, broad-based consultative body to act on behalf of the international humanitarian community in each future complex emergency in which no national entity of governance can ensure effective policy-making and coordination for international humanitarian assistance throughout the country.

Recommendation 5-2: *In each complex emergency, WFP should contribute fully to the development of common programme approaches for UN and international assistance, providing leadership in relation to food and food security. WFP should work in close collaboration with other members of the IASC and NGO partners to jointly define appropriate strategies, priorities and criteria (where appropriate) for UN/international food and food-related assistance on the basis of joint or consolidated assessments (including security assessments), monitoring and evaluations.*

6 Relations with Peace-Keeping Forces and Political Initiatives

Collaboration with peace-keepers and UN monitors

6.1 The nature and extent of collaboration with peace-keeping missions have varied with the mandates of those forces and the resources at their disposal. Different peace-keeping missions have had very different mandates, and their mandates have sometimes changed radically over the course of their deployment (as in Somalia and former Yugoslavia). Within a mission, the capacity and level of engagement vis-a-vis humanitarian operations have varied from one national contingent to another depending on whether they have a civil liaison unit and on the equipment and funds at their disposal.

6.2 UNOSOM in Somalia (1992-5) and UNPROFOR in former-Yugoslavia under its extended mandate after 1992 had the protection of humanitarian aid as central elements of their mandates. In both cases a civilian-military operations centre, or group, (CMOC/G) was established within the central command of the force to coordinate with and facilitate support to the humanitarian agencies. These entities were fundamental to the success of coordination through which the UN humanitarian agencies received support from the forces. Support included information on roads and security conditions through daily briefings, the provision of escorts when required and direct assistance with logistics. In former-Yugoslavia there were weekly high-level meetings. The forces also assured the security of agency staff and premises. In Sarajevo they hosted the agencies' staff.

6.3 The mandate and means of the UN verification and monitoring mission in Angola (UNAVEM) were much more limited, as was their information on the situation in many up-country areas. Their support to the humanitarian operation focused on liaison with the army and arranging clearances for humanitarian convoys and flights while also making helicopters available from time to time. The small observer mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) provided information and some transport support (helicopters). There was little relationship with the monitoring mission (UNAMIR) in Rwanda. In Tajikistan (1994-7), there was contact but little direct collaboration with the observation mission (UNMOT) which operated in areas from which WFP and other UN agencies have been excluded by UN security restrictions. Cooperation increased, particularly in relation to support to demobilization, in 1998 (following the appointment of a new SRSG.)

6.4 In several of these situations, however, some parties to the conflict have not recognized the difference between the humanitarian and peace-keeping operations of the



UN. In Somalia, the close association with the peace-keeping forces and the presence of their escorts blurred the distinction between the peace-keeping mission and the operations of WFP as far as the militias were concerned, and the presence of escorts did not stop convoys from being attacked. In Tajikistan (1997), the presence of UNMOT was resented by the anti-government groups in the central range and others, and the inability of these groups to distinguish between the UN humanitarian agencies and UNMOT put the agencies at risk and led to security restrictions excluding them from those areas. In Angola (1996/97), WFP and the humanitarian agencies suffered from being perceived as associated with UNAVEM although it has also been reported that, earlier in that operation and in other operations, the relationships of peacekeeping missions (and SRSGs) with parties to the conflict have sometimes been complicated by the latter's perceptions of the humanitarian operations.

6.5 In Liberia, the regional ECOMOG force provided information on the security situation (although a force commander is also reported to have found agency meetings he attended interesting as agencies had information he did not have). ECOMOG helped with contacts with the military factions, and provided escorts and logistic support within their areas of operation as and when they had the time and resources available. They also protected the port in Monrovia and the supplies stored there, notably during the fighting in Monrovia in 1996. However, the force has been widely perceived as not being neutral and in 1993, supported by the SRSG, banned cross-border relief operations of NGOs coming from Côte d'Ivoire and at times fired on (strafed) relief convoys in the border areas.³⁴

Interaction with political initiatives

6.6 Since, as noted earlier, food can be a source of power and influence, and a weapon, decisions of agencies providing food assistance have political implications. That individual donors may have specific political interests has been referred to earlier. In some cases, an SRSG charged with seeking to find a political resolution to the crisis has requested WFP or the humanitarian agencies in general to adjust their programmes -- programmes planned on the basis of assessed needs -- in order to facilitate his/her political negotiations (e.g. in Afghanistan, Angola, Liberia, Somalia).

6.7 Such 'requests' have generally been politely resisted by WFP (e.g. in Somalia 1992 when a vessel proceeded with a planned delivery to Kismayo in spite of a suggestion from the SRSG that it should be delayed). But the situation was difficult in Afghanistan, 1992-94, when overall responsibilities for both political and humanitarian functions were vested in the same individual. In Tajikistan in 1997, WFP maintained its distribution programmes after the evacuation of international staff although the SRSG wished humanitarian programmes to be suspended.

6.8 On the other hand, at a critical moment in Liberia (April 1996) the WFP country director was able to assist the SRSG to meet with the principal faction leader to discuss a cease-fire. The faction leader had requested a meeting with WFP to expedite food assistance to IDPs in Monrovia in order to prevent violence and looting and the country director insisted that the SRSG be included. Up to that moment, the SRSG's own attempts to reach the faction leader had fallen in deaf ears.

6.9 At the level of UN headquarters, progress has been made in the last few years in coordination between DPKO, DPA and OCHA (previously DHA) through a 'Framework for Coordination' developed (in 1995) in the context of the Secretary-General's 'Agenda for Peace'. Since 1998 this is effected through the mechanism of the Executive Committee for



Humanitarian Affairs (ECHA) convened by the ERC/Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs. Also, the ERC briefs the Security Council on humanitarian aspects of crises in which peace-keeping forces are, or may become, involved. This is to try to ensure that humanitarian aspects are considered whenever the Security Council establishes mandates for peace-keeping or other international forces or initiates other action in relation to conflict situations.

6.10 Complementing this, a 'Framework Team' -- reconstituted in early 1999 to comprise senior representatives of DPKO, DPA, OCHA, OHCHR, UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF, WHO, FAO and WFP -- seeks to ensure that early warnings of potential complex emergencies, conflicts and other circumstances where there may be a *prima facie* case for UN preventive action or peace-keeping involvement receive appropriate interdepartmental consideration.³⁵ These new arrangements are intended to consolidate recent improvements in inter-departmental coordination during crises, and to improve information exchange and coordinated action prior to crises.

6.11 A guidance note agreed by the ECHA in April 1999 may help to avoid direct pressure on agencies in the future. It affirms that humanitarian coordinators (HCs) are responsible to the Emergency Relief Coordinator (the Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs, in New York) under the strategic leadership of the SRSG who has overall authority with regard to UN operations and direct responsibility for peace-keeping and political aspects.

Recommendation 6-1: *While coordinating (through the ERC and Humanitarian Coordinators) with United Nations political initiatives and cooperating with United Nations peace-keeping forces and benefiting from their protection where necessary, WFP should:*

- (a) seek, in each situation, to communicate to local authorities and the population in general the strictly humanitarian role and objectives of the Programme and its partners;*
- (b) continue to work through the IASC and closely with the ERC and OCHA to ensure that the rights of conflict victims to receive humanitarian food assistance are upheld and not subordinated to political considerations.*



Part III: Programme Issues

7 Assessment and Monitoring

Facing information gaps and manipulation

7.1 Serious information gaps, doubts about the reliability of many data and difficulties in verifying information are characteristic of complex emergencies. Apart from difficulties on access in many situations, problems arise from the general state of disruption and the absence of local institutions representing all sections of society (so that information often relates only to a particular population group) and also from the presence of groups intent on asserting their own interests and control (so that information may be biased and subject to manipulation). These difficulties are compounded by the pressure that translators and national staff are often subjected to by local interest groups.

7.2 The lack of reliable data is often particularly acute during the early stages of an emergency and immediately following the eruption of a new crisis (such as a major new movement of population) within an ongoing operation. Data and understanding gradually accumulate over time. But the reliability of data has sometimes declined and the problems of verification have increased as local leaders or controlling groups learn how the assessment and allocation systems work and how, through manipulation, they may secure more resources (e.g. Liberia 1995-7, Somalia 1993-, southern Sudan 1996-).

7.3 While not peculiar to 'complex' emergencies, these problems are particularly acute in situations where food is used as a weapon (see section 3) and parties to the conflict endeavour to get as many resources as possible for their own areas or groups and to further their own political objectives. This is often attempted by inflating population figures (virtually everywhere), claiming for fictitious groups of displaced people (e.g. in Angola 1993-6, southern Sudan 1991-8) or creating artificial displacements (e.g. eastern DR-Congo 1997). Direct demands may be backed up by threats or be presented as the 'price' for allowing access or passage to other needy areas and population groups.

7.4 In such situations, assessment missions themselves can be dangerous undertakings. A WFP assessment mission was ambushed in northern Somalia in 1996 by a group which did not want the population to benefit from assistance coming from the side of the government (of 'Somaliland'). It has been suggested that similar motives could have been responsible for the brutal killing of two WFP staff and a Red Cross worker on an assessment mission in Sudan (OLS-north) in 1998.³⁶ In the same two countries, the lives of staff have been threatened by local commanders or leaders dissatisfied with the level of assistance proposed or that received following previous assessment visits by WFP or other agencies.

Determining numbers

7.5 Establishing reasonable estimates for the numbers of people needing assistance and keeping up-to-date with frequent changes have been difficult in most complex emergencies. Distinguishing IDPs from other population groups, where appropriate³⁷, has been particularly problematical, e.g. in Liberia 1990-97 where IDPs and refugees integrated among the host population in local village communities. Numbers have been a frequent source of friction between agencies, representatives of the populations and those wielding power at different levels, sometimes resulting in threats against staff. It has often been



difficult even for WFP and UNHCR to agree on the numbers of refugees to be assisted. Various techniques have been developed for estimating numbers of refugees in defined areas³⁸, reasonable estimates have been developed over time for non-refugee populations in the more stable areas of Somalia and southern Sudan through repeated surveys and cross-checking. Possibilities of using remote-sensing data continue to be discussed in various fora. But making or obtaining reasonable estimates of the numbers of displaced and needy people in particular localities in situations such as Burundi (1996), Liberia (1992-6), Sierra Leone (1997-8) and Bahr-el-Ghazal (early 1998) remains a proverbial 'headache'. As commented in one recent analysis: "... [in conflict situations] inaccuracies in population estimates probably remains the single most important constraint in ration planning."³⁹

7.6 In many situations of civil conflict, census data and all population estimates are highly political and contentious (e.g. Somalia, northern Uganda), different figures are given by different 'authorities' at different levels. In localities where it has been possible to undertake thorough checks, figures -- especially figures for the numbers of displaced persons -- have often been substantially reduced (e.g. from 30,000 to 3,000 in Torit, southern Sudan, 1993). On the other hand, the scale of ongoing displacements has sometimes been seriously underestimated in the early stages (e.g. in Bahr-el-Ghazal, southern Sudan, in early 1998).

7.7 In almost all situations, considerable time and effort is spent trying to reconcile different figures and achieve some form of consensus or, more usually, compromise on the numbers of target beneficiaries. At the end of the day, numbers are 'negotiated' in most cases and continuous checking and up-dating needed. The independent review of OLS in 1996⁴⁰ noted that problems relating to numbers had been aggravated by the high turnover of staff and lack of institutional memory and information 'carry over'. Such problems are sometimes compounded by gaps in documentation regarding decisions and the reasons for decisions as staff have been too busy (and stressed) to give much attention to record keeping.⁴¹

7.8 In acute crises, empirical approaches have usually been the only feasible option. A 'best guess' has been made for the number of displaced people in a particular locality, food been delivered for that number and an initial distribution organized. Adjustments have then been made as found necessary for future distributions (e.g. in Bahr-el-Ghazal in 1998). In fact, in areas of high insecurity where access is unpredictable, deliveries erratic and the number of people constantly changing, detailed planning in terms of numbers and nutritional needs becomes virtually meaningless. Agencies have sometimes had to resort to delivering what they could, when and where they could.

Assessing 'needs'; using information

7.9 In many cases, information has also been lacking, or inadequate, on the extent to which different population groups have access to food and particular coping strategies. As a result, decisions on ration levels, assistance strategies and the phasing down/out of distributions have not always benefited from adequate information. The evaluation of the Liberia operation found that the gradual reduction of rations implemented in 1995 was based on a perception -- assumption -- of beneficiaries having access to other means of acquiring food but without sufficient socio-economic data to evaluate the likely effects of the ration reduction on different sub-groups.⁴² At the same time, the social and political factors which influence the control and distribution of resources -- including relief supplies -- within the community have often not been properly understood or taken into account when planning assistance interventions (see section 9 below).



7.10 In fact, information that is both comprehensive and reliable has always been elusive in complex emergencies, and decisions have always had to be made with deficient information. Experienced staff also emphasize that assessment is seldom purely a matter of data gathering and calculation, and extrapolating from incomplete data. There is necessarily an important element of judgement in relation to how food aid would in fact be used and distributed, who would actually be reached and who would benefit, and what unintended effects might be (see sections 3 and 13). They emphasize the importance of carefully monitoring the situation of the population groups most vulnerable to food insecurity (to the extent that they can be identified and reached) and of responding promptly and appropriately to observed changes in the situation. They also note that the reduction (and eventual phasing out) of rations has not infrequently had more to do with a lack of resources than a real change in the situation and needs of the population. The independent review of OLS in 1996 noted that reductions in assessed food aid requirements in 1995/96 arose from a change in the eligibility criteria used rather than a change in the actual situation.

7.11 There are also constraints moving from assessments to corresponding action. Even where more-or-less thorough assessments have been accomplished, translating the findings into appropriate interventions has sometimes been difficult on account of operational constraints. The 1996 joint WFP-NGO evaluation in Angola noted that the activities finally supported by WFP depended on the specific proposals submitted by individual NGOs on whom WFP depended as implementing partners, and these did not necessarily correspond to overall priorities defined by the joint assessments.⁴³

Sources of information

7.12 For all aspects of assessments in situations where government structures are not functional, WFP has often relied heavily on the information and judgements of local institutions -- e.g. churches in Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Rwanda, Zaire/DR-Congo, and local councils and national Red Cross societies in former-Yugoslavia -- as well as those of WFP local staff. Heavy reliance is placed on international NGOs, where they are present.

7.13 In Somalia and southern Sudan (OLS-south), and selected urban and rural areas in Afghanistan, area-based 'household food-economy/food security analyses' have been developed over time since 1995 and are up-dated and refined on an ongoing basis. In both cases, full-time food security assessment units have been established within the WFP offices. The food economy methodology, originally developed by SCF-UK, analyses how households of different wealth sub-groups in each distinct food economy zone acquire food -- their production, income, exchange and expenditure patterns. This has provided a basis for estimating the food gap (aggregate needs) and relative priorities of different localities, thus providing a basis for 'geographic targeting'. In Somalia the data have also been used to predict the likely impact of particular events or developments on different population sub-groups, and for dialogue with community leaders on needs. In Afghanistan, data have been used to define appropriate modalities for assistance not necessarily limited to the provision of food aid. The approach has not, however, resolved the problem of targeting needy households for food distributions, where needed -- see section 9 below.

7.14 In Burundi, SCF has undertaken similar analyses organized on a participatory basis with the communities themselves, but the findings have not always been accepted by the local authorities, resulting in frequent interruptions in distributions. (The findings of



equivalent analyses in some refugee camps, e.g. in Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda, have also been disputed when they have been in conflict with the 'accepted wisdom' of many agency personnel on the ground.)

7.15 Inter-agency teams have undertaken assessments in some cases. In Afghanistan in 1990-91, teams of UN and NGO personnel ('Salaam Mobile Units') spent time meeting with communities to design projects. At that time, the special UN entity, UNOCA, had privileged access to both the country and donor funds. (The focus was also on rehabilitation.) The system fell by the wayside as individual agencies acquired funds directly from donors, and conflict resumed between the various factions. In Angola since 1992, regular joint WFP-NGO-donor assessments/reviews of food needs at provincial level have been undertaken for a number of years involving, in each case, NGOs, church groups and academics who knew the areas concerned particularly well. In Bosnia (1996-7), joint WFP/UNHCR/USAID/ECHO/IFRC teams undertook assessments which, in that post-war context, radically reduced the number of beneficiaries. Previously, during the war, UNHCR had found it difficult to assess needs objectively, and almost impossible to persuade certain power brokers (who controlled access routes) to accept and cooperate with allocations based on needs rather than shares based on population numbers.

Recommendation 7-1: *WFP, in consultation with its major NGO partners, other IASC members and donors, should provide country offices and staff with practical methodologies and guidance for determining the numbers and needs of people in different population subgroups in conflict situations, and for assessing and analysing the political, social and economic context and the specific role of food. If not incorporated in the emergency food needs assessment guidelines now being developed (by ODT), separate, complementary guidelines must be developed. WFP should seek the widest possible consensus with donors and its major implementing partners on methodologies, and ensure relevant training and technical support for field staff.*

Recommendation 7-2: *The Programme's procedures as well as the assessment guidelines should recognize the need to initiate operations on the basis of initial rough estimates (blending local and external perspectives) followed by a systematic process of checking and refinement thereafter. The assessment/monitoring of household food security should be recognized as being a crucial, ongoing task in all protracted complex emergency situations, and be provided for in the staffing structures and budgets of all such operations.*

Monitoring

7.16 Monitoring is crucial but also difficult and sometimes dangerous in conflict situations. While "No-food-without-monitoring" has been a general principle, exceptions have been made and actual monitoring has often been limited to monitoring deliveries and some distributions. Post-distribution/beneficiary monitoring (or 'impact monitoring'), has been limited in most complex emergency operations in spite of the considerable efforts of many staff. Monitoring has been constrained by security risks, obstruction (by some governments, factions and local leaders) and/or inadequate resources, especially manpower. The quality and effectiveness of monitoring has sometimes been limited by the inexperience of the monitors and, in some cases by their educational and professional antecedents.



7.17 A staff member working in former-Yugoslavia in 1996 who had followed up closely on the use of food and acted to curtail local abuses tells of repeated incidents of intimidation and the looting of the WFP office: she was finally withdrawn. Another describes how he was beaten and had to be evacuated or transferred from a succession of different locations in Somalia for similar reasons in 1993/4. In southern Sudan, most actual distributions have been monitored but there, as in Liberia and other places, monitoring teams have often been 'discouraged' by local officials or commanders from later visiting communities who had benefited from distributions to follow up on the use made of the food. "It is too dangerous" has been a common reason given.

7.18 In Mozambique in the 1980s food was regularly delivered through the government to some areas which were not accessible to WFP. In Angola in the early 1990s, WFP found it necessary on occasions to deliver food to UNITA-controlled areas where it could not subsequently verify distribution and utilization. Greater insistence has been placed on monitoring since then, but circumstances still sometimes over-ride principle. In Guinea-Bissau (1998) development stocks in the City were released to the government there for distribution to IDPs after the evacuation of all UN personnel when WFP had no presence or other means of arranging the monitoring of its use. (Had the stocks not been released the authorities would have taken the supplies anyway.)

7.19 The evaluation of the rehabilitation programme in Cambodia⁴⁴ noted that staff were far too busy with implementation to give time to monitoring, and emphasized the need for specific resources for monitoring. Dedicated resources had been provided in OLS-south (southern Sudan) for several years, but, when the operation had to be radically expanded in 1998, demand for an additional 120 (non-national) monitors 'immediately' could be met only by recruiting largely inexperienced candidates on hand in the region. And the recruitment process itself could not be initiated before the food had been committed and the necessary funds therefore guaranteed. Such was the urgency of the need that the new monitors had to be 'thrown-in-the-deep-end' with minimal briefing and training. Systematic training was being organized several months later, when the height of the crisis had passed and the quantities being distributed were starting to decline. In some locations, NGOs have cooperated in monitoring the use of food distributed by WFP teams.

7.20 The 1997 evaluation of the operation in Bosnia, noting that monitoring was difficult and costly, emphasized the need for more technically skilled monitoring staff. An NGO programme manager in Sudan refers to a need for individuals who can look beyond the obvious and ask the right questions, which should include the impact and appropriateness of the food assistance. In practice, individuals recruited and assigned by WFP as monitors have come from varied backgrounds (including many from NGOs) and have often received little briefing. The monitoring function has often been seen, by both monitors and local authorities, as being inherently adversarial -- as being largely an audit exercise. Some experienced field staff stress the need for greater emphasis on joint problem solving with local entities to achieve agreed programme objectives. This, however, is difficult when there is, in fact, no agreement on objectives (see section 8).

7.21 Some managers suggest that, given the seemingly inevitable security constraints, local pressures, and the difficulty of fielding sufficient numbers of qualified and motivated monitors, the best approach is to form distribution committees of beneficiaries at the level of the smallest organizational unit in the society and to deliver to them, informing beneficiaries of their entitlements.

Recommendation 7-3: *WFP should:*



(a) review experience in the mobilization, training and effectiveness of food monitors (international and national) in complex/conflict emergencies;
(b) jointly with those NGOs with which it has signed global MOUs, develop approaches to monitoring in insecure areas and the monitoring of community-based distribution processes; and
(c) develop/enhance stand-by arrangements and other mechanisms with those NGOs and other entities to mobilize qualified personnel and institute effective monitoring from the onset of emergencies, especially complex/conflict emergencies.

8 Objectives and Programme Strategies

Objectives and actual impacts of food assistance

8.1 The principal objective of WFP in emergencies, according to the Programme's Mission Statement, is deceptively simple: it is "to save lives". The mission statement also emphasizes "social and humanitarian protection" and using food aid in a way that is "as developmental as possible, consistent with saving lives." The Programme gives priority to promoting 'recovery' from the earliest possible moment.⁴⁵

8.2 However, in conflict situations where contending parties have little or no respect for human life and seek to use humanitarian interventions and resources for their own ends, even 'saving lives' may not be as straightforward as it seems. Facilitating protection and promoting recovery is even less so. In such situations, the way in which aid is provided and the modalities of implementation can be critical in determining both the extent to which objectives are met and the nature and extent of unintended side effects. Even in relatively stable post-conflict situations it has proved difficult to provide food aid in a manner which promotes sustainable food security in which people take care of their own rehabilitation and recovery.

8.3 The 1996 WFP evaluation of the operations in Afghanistan noted that: "The assumption that relief assistance will necessarily enable a transition to development underestimates, to a certain extent, the 'permanence' of the complex emergency in Afghanistan which has created power structures that propagate and profit from conflict." It concluded that: "There is insufficient understanding of the kind of social or political structures that will mitigate violence; the selection of implementing partners and recipient communities demands a more thorough analysis of the dynamics of conflict."⁴⁶ The evaluation team recommended that WFP should develop a methodology for identifying the uses and abuses of food aid in protracted emergencies and in the political economy of war.

8.4 The issues are complex and, inevitably, context-specific. In each situation, all foreseeable effects -- indirect as well as direct -- of any particular type of intervention and modality of implementation need to be explicitly considered and taken into account. Political and economic aspects have to be considered in addition to social and cultural aspects, and food assistance must be clearly situated in the context of a coherent, overall, inter-sectoral framework of assistance.

8.5 Awareness of the possible unintended and undesirable side effects of aid in some conflict situations, as summarized in section 3, has increased in the last few years. While some writers and many WFP staff argue that the harm done by food aid is exaggerated and relatively slight in comparison with other factors of external origin,⁴⁷ there is general



agreement that humanitarian workers and agencies do have a responsibility to do all in their power to avoid fuelling the conflict and, on the contrary, to support processes of reconciliation, where feasible.⁴⁸ Some researchers and NGOs propose an explicit analysis of benefits and harm as a part of programme design.⁴⁹ Suggestions for practical harm-limiting strategies offered include: providing less attractive commodities; designing and scheduling delivery systems to make misappropriation and looting more difficult, and programming in ways which do not undermine local capacities but rather reinforce those mechanisms and capacities. This requires, amongst other things, a careful analysis of: the coping mechanisms, if any, of different population groups and how international aid interacts positively and negatively with them; the legitimacy of much of the 'local leadership' with which humanitarian agencies are forced to deal; the dynamics of the political economy, and the ways in which warring parties can turn aid to their benefit.

8.6 The bottom line is that aid is sometimes misused and, in some circumstances, *may* help to exacerbate conflict. It is therefore important to be aware of the risks and to seek approaches that may reduce possibilities for misuse and possible negative effects and, where possible, promote reconciliation. All feasible options for helping the most food insecure civilian populations to meet their food needs should therefore be considered, analysing the potential effects. The effects of *not* providing assistance should also be explicitly appraised.

Definition of objectives

8.7 In practice, it has proven difficult to define and keep a clear focus on specific objectives in situations of enormous and rapidly changing human needs. The 1996/97 evaluations of WFP operations in Afghanistan, Cambodia and the Caucasus all emphasized the need for greater clarity on objectives and for clear distinctions between activities to meet well-defined relief needs, those intended to promote rehabilitation, and inputs to contribute to stability and poverty reduction. (The Cambodia evaluation noted the implications this has for WFP staffing profiles.) The independent review of OLS in 1996 also noted that, in the northern sector: "Monitoring is ... hindered by unclear objectives: whether food aid is used to reduce hunger, prevent starvation, to support coping strategies or promote self-reliance."⁵⁰ The evaluation in Angola the same year found that objectives (and targeting criteria) were not clearly defined in agreements with implementing partners.

8.8 Meanwhile, various slogans have been invented by different agencies and researchers in recent years to emphasize particular concerns in relation to protracted assistance in complex emergencies, e.g.: 'developmental' relief, 'smart' relief, 'safe' relief, 'productive' relief. But, while the orientations they seek to promote have been tried in small-scale local operations, they have not -- yet -- been proven in any large-scale operation. Meanwhile, even some of the most ardent advocates of developmental and participatory approaches now acknowledge that such approaches may not always be appropriate in the particular circumstances of complex/conflict emergencies where 'community' cohesion and solidarity may be limited (especially in urban areas), predatory economic systems operate to the detriment of some or all of the civilian populations, or civilians are targeted and effectively held hostage as a deliberate political and military strategy by parties to the conflict.⁵¹

8.9 Anticipating and planning for phasing out is also difficult in complex/conflict emergencies. The evaluation of the Bosnia operation emphasized the importance of anticipating phasing out from the beginning while being sensitive to the risks of instability which may be provoked by the initiation -- even the discussion -- of measures intended to



lead to the phasing out of food assistance.⁵² This is echoed by experienced WFP staff some of whom emphasize the importance of transparency and of informing the population from the outset concerning plans for and the limits on assistance -- that resources are not unlimited and the international community's commitment not open-ended. However, a recent independent study has suggested that the "simplistic notion of exit strategies" does not acknowledge that complex/conflict emergencies are "characterized by uncertainty and changing tactics on the ground."⁵³

Promoting reconciliation

8.10 While some programmes have included activities supporting rehabilitation and recovery which may help, indirectly, to reduce tensions, there have been only a few (WFP-supported) food interventions specifically aimed at promoting reconciliation:

- In Afghanistan (1995-97), a HABITAT programme to assist the rehabilitation of local infrastructure, supported in part by WFP (FFW), succeeded in getting teams of men from rival ethnic groups to work together in some parts of Kabul where particular water channels benefited adjoining neighbourhoods.⁵⁴
- In Liberia (1991-96), a school-feeding programme had, as one of its benefits, providing an alternative for child soldiers, while specific FFW projects provided work opportunities for demobilized soldiers.
- In Angola (1991-2 and 1995/96), as in Mozambique and Tajikistan, food assistance has been provided for demobilization projects, but there were many problems as other (non-food) provisions were insufficient and the food commodities provided did not meet the beneficiaries expectations.
- In northwest Somalia (1997-), WFP food has supported demining and police training. (The latter has had side benefits for agency security.)
- In Rwanda, WFP provides food for 'solidarity camps' with reconciliation the prime objective.

Recommendation 8-1: *Building on existing published research and working with its partners and other concerned institutions, WFP should:*

- (a) *identify instances where food aid has had identifiable unintended and undesirable effects; review the effectiveness of measures taken by different agencies to avoid such effects; review existing tools and methodologies for analysing the actual and potential effects of interventions, and propose appropriate methods for use by WFP country offices, assessment and evaluation teams; and*
- (b) *review the effectiveness of food aid provided to date in support of activities aimed at promoting reconciliation, and explore additional possibilities to support reconciliation.*

Assistance strategies

8.11 Various combinations of 'general' dry-ration distributions, 'targeted' distributions or vulnerable group feeding, 'supplementary' feeding programmes and food-for-work have been used by WFP in almost all complex/conflict emergency situations. School feeding has been used in some instances (e.g. Liberia 1991-95). A component of institutional feeding -- or 'social support for institutions' (hospitals and other) -- has been included in several cases (e.g. Liberia 1996, Somalia 1993-9). Sometimes different combinations of these strategies have been used in different parts of the same country at the same time (e.g. Burundi 1997). Market interventions have been rare. Arrangements for implementation/distribution have



varied depending on the availability of implementing partners. In many cases, the Red Cross and some NGOs have provided similar assistance in parallel using resources received directly from international donors and other sources.

8.12 Typically, 'general' distributions have predominated during the early stages, accompanied by selective feeding for malnourished people, particularly children. Once the initial crisis passes and operations begin to stabilize, increased emphasis has been given to targeting, but targeting those in greatest need has proved to be extremely difficult in many complex/conflict emergency situations on account of cultural and political as well as operational constraints, as discussed in section 9.

8.13 'General' distributions of dry rations has been the principal strategy in all WFP operations, with various criteria and mechanisms being adopted to prioritize and select the target areas and beneficiaries. However, during periods of acute crisis and insecurity in Liberia (1995-6) and eastern Zaire (1997), problems during distributions and the risks to beneficiaries of having even small stocks in their possession (as well as limitations on cooking possibilities at household level), led to some NGOs organizing 'wet feeding' -- the provision of food to be eaten on-the-spot. The ICRC had used a similar approach in some parts of Somalia in 1993 (areas which, in the context of Somalia at the time, were relatively secure and accessible). Ready-to-eat food has been provided in the early stages of several crises and when large population groups have been on the move (e.g. in the Great Lakes region 1994-5).

8.14 'Supplementary' feeding programmes (SFPs) through NGOs have been supported in parallel with general distributions in many operations with the aim of reducing (and preventing) malnutrition amongst 'vulnerable groups'. However, in Somalia and southern Sudan (1996-98) it was found that many families deliberately kept one child malnourished in order to be entitled to supplementary rations.⁵⁵ On the other hand, the blended foods which have formed the major part of SFP rations have generally been less subject to misappropriation than some of the cereals provided for general distributions.

8.15 School feeding has been used in Liberia (since 1991), where cooked meals were provided at schools in Monrovia and nearby counties, and in Sierra Leone (since 1992) where refugee and IDP children were targeted. The aim was to get children off the streets, to bring back some normalcy to their lives and to help overcome previous traumatic experiences. The programmes are said to have also helped to reduce unacceptable behaviour by some children (including former child soldiers) through peer discipline. The Liberia regional evaluation (1996) noted that: "in both countries, school meals may have a potentially important role in encouraging child fighters away from their guns. The nutritional impact on individual school children is therefore less important than the effectiveness that food, provided through the school, has in acting as an income transfer to the families of children so facilitating a return to school."⁵⁶ The evaluation noted that, in such circumstances, dry ration distribution carried out late on the day may be as effective as providing cooked food.

8.16 Food-for-work (FFW) has been supported in all protracted situations in an attempt to promote rehabilitation and self-reliance, reduce dependence and gradually phase out general distributions (e.g. for 'old' groups IDPs in Burundi, 1995/96). Projects have generally focused on the repair and upgrading of community-level infrastructure. FFW was used to support street cleaning after heavy fighting in Liberia (1996) where innovative projects organized by local NGOs also included a national volunteer programme for former combatants. In Cambodia (early 1990s), employment was provided for significant numbers



of people in rural areas, but the expected 'self-targeting' was less effective than anticipated and many of the most needy households did not benefit. In Afghanistan (1993-95), where WFP directly supported a wide range of large and small-scale FFW projects, supervision proved to be difficult and the aims of FFW were sometimes subverted by local authorities or 'NGOs' which sold food and employed machinery instead of labour. As a result, WFP changed its strategy, reducing its direct support to small projects and providing support instead to 'umbrella' projects managed by international NGOs.

8.17 The provision of food as incentives for government relief officials (as in Mozambique in the 1980s), teachers (Liberia 1991-96, Somalia 1994-96) and health workers (Somalia 1993-6) has also been controversial. In Somalia in 1993 WFP food was provided for new police being trained under the auspices of UNOSOM. In situations where salaries are extremely low or not paid at all, it appears logical to provide some remuneration and to use food when cash is not available. However, in Somalia, numbers were inflated, the incentives helped to prop up health and school systems that were unsustainable, and the process of phasing out the incentives in 1996 proved to be difficult and dangerous. The Afghanistan evaluation specifically recommended that WFP avoid taking on responsibility for specific recurrent costs, such as hospital personnel. The remuneration of port workers with food in Monrovia 1990-95 is credited with having kept the port functioning during a critical period, but even there the evaluation (1996) suggested that the FFW could -- and should -- have been replaced by cash payments earlier than late 1995 as was the case.⁵⁷

8.18 Monetization and market interventions have been little used. WFP supported an exchange programme in Mozambique in the 1980s under which food was given to rural communities in exchange for cash crops (cashew nuts) which they had no means to market. The only example of market intervention as a major WFP strategy in a complex emergency was monetization in Somalia in 1993/94 when large quantities of wheat and some oil were sold to merchants. This succeeded in bringing local market prices down substantially and releasing the large quantities of food that had been hoarded by traders, but it has been suggested that the operation may have increased rather than decreased the levels of violence⁵⁸, and staff describe the management of the generated funds as having been a 'nightmare'. This illustrates both the potential of market interventions and the care needed in planning and managing them. A 1997 WFP policy paper⁵⁹ identified possibilities for monetization in specific circumstances, particularly in emergencies, but corresponding guidelines have yet to be issued.

8.19 In practice, especially in complex emergencies, food is an important economic resource, markets and trading are important elements of many people's food acquisition strategies even in conflict zones, notably in urban areas, and the resource transfer aspect of food aid can be as important as its direct nutritional value to the recipients. Many beneficiaries trade a part of whatever food aid they receive in order to obtain other locally available items and this reality cannot be ignored when designing food assistance interventions. In 1996, a management review in Rwanda calculated that if WFP were to distribute only sugar and vegetable oil instead of the prevailing predominantly maize ration it could, in theory, reduce WFP's costs by 60% while increasing the transfer value to beneficiaries by 40%. On the other hand, the higher-value items would probably be subject to much higher levels of looting and misappropriation (see section 9 below).

Recommendation 8-2: *WFP, in consultation with its major NGO partners, other IASC members, donors and relevant research institutions, should review the effectiveness of different programme intervention strategies in improving needy people's access to food in insecure, conflict-affected areas, draw lessons and, to the extent possible, develop*



guidelines. Costs, expected benefits, possible side effects and risks should be analysed explicitly. Possibilities and general criteria for market interventions should be included.

Recommendation 8-3: *Wherever possible, the objectives and strategies of assistance should be agreed in advance with representatives of the affected communities and faction leaders. Information on the objectives of the programme, any selection criteria and processes, and ration entitlements should be widely disseminated in all cases.*

Recommendation 8-4: *In future operations, a common inter-agency policy on the provision of any kind of incentives for government and other workers should be agreed among all concerned UN agencies and, to the extent possible, with donors and NGOs. The manner of eventual phasing out of such incentives must be envisaged and planned for from the outset.*

Recommendation 8.5: In relation to all the above, WFP should: develop concise 'lessons-learned' case studies; seek the widest possible consensus with major implementing partners and donors; provide country offices and staff with practical guidance, check-lists, other 'tools' and training, and ensure prompt technical support for country offices as and when needed.

Assisting IDPs

8.20 IDPs are generally recognized to be especially vulnerable and deserving of special attention. Concern for their plight led to the appointment by the UN Secretary-General of a special representative for IDPs and the drawing up and dissemination, in 1998, of a set of guiding principles.⁶⁰ IDPs have been a distinct target group for WFP assistance in almost all complex/conflict emergency operations although there have been practical difficulties in identifying and differentiating them from other, non-displaced, affected populations in some cases. In some cases (e.g. Liberia 1995-96, Somalia 1993-98) resident populations have not been much better off in terms of short-term food security and programme managers have felt that differentiation would be inappropriate (as well as being impractical).

8.21 Determining the appropriate level of assistance for IDPs has also been problematical. The evaluation of the Afghanistan operation noted that: "relief food should not be provided to such an extent that it discourages IDPs from moving on [home] as soon as conditions permit." It emphasized the need for proper study of the push and pull factors at work. In Somalia in 1996/97, deliberate efforts were made to provide food in areas from which IDPs were coming (Bay and Bakool) in order to reduce further displacements. A similar policy was envisaged in southern Sudan in 1998 but found to be not feasible because of lack of access to the areas concerned.

8.22 A thematic review of food aid practices and programmes for IDPs is being undertaken by WFP-SP in 1999. The report is expected early in 2000.

9 Targeting, Distribution and Misappropriation

Targeting

9.1 Targeting seeks, through the selection of intervention strategies and the design and implementation of allocation, selection and distribution procedures, to ensure that the food



reaches and benefits the priority groups identified during assessment. It seek to minimize 'exclusion errors' while keeping 'inclusion errors' within reasonable limits.⁶¹ Various approaches have been tried depending on, amongst other things, the extent and regularity of access, and strategies have been modified in several operations based on experience. But field staff in different operations describe targeting as one of their most intractable problems. The evaluation of the Liberia regional operation in 1996 found that: "Targeting relief food to the most needy among the afflicted populations has been one of the most difficult issues facing the operation ... targeting those truly in need has proved to be even more difficult than reaching the needy areas."⁶² That in Angola the same year found that: "targeting was difficult and not uniform," and that targeting criteria were not clearly defined in agreements with implementing partners.

9.2 In Cambodia (post-war, since 1994), Somalia (since 1996) and southern Sudan (since 1997) food-economy/food-security assessments and vulnerability analysis and mapping have enabled the most needy geographic areas to be identified and targeted, but targeting the most needy households has remained a problem.

9.3 Targeting has been particularly difficult where typical 'objective' aid criteria have been at variance with local resource-sharing traditions (as in Sudan 1989-98), where insecurity has been very high (as in Liberia 1991-6 and much of Somalia 1991-98), where food aid is being used by authorities for political or military objectives (e.g. Bosnia 1995-7), and as people gradually become more food secure (after the peace agreements in Cambodia and Angola, 1990-92). For a staff member in southern Sudan, the continuous effort to match food with needs had not, as of end-1998, resulted in a reliable system: "Whatever has been tried has been gradually undermined".

9.4 Following widely-publicized concern among some NGOs in relation to distributions in Bahr-el-Ghazal, south Sudan, in 1998, an SRRA-OLS joint task force⁶³ reported that little relief food was being distributed as intended on a prioritized needs basis. It found that malnutrition was widespread in spite of substantial food inputs and evidence of stocks in the area. The most vulnerable groups -- including displaced people without leaders, female-headed households and those at the lower end of the social hierarchy -- were found to be marginalized and unlikely to receive the relief food intended for them, or to keep what might be given to them at distributions. This was due largely to long-established social traditions regarding the sharing of 'communal' resources within the clan on the basis of family size and status -- and not sharing with outsiders such as IDPs. Local perspectives of vulnerability and entitlement differed radically from those of WFP and other humanitarian organizations.

9.5 In Liberia and Sierra Leone in 1995, an effort was made to target groups within the general population that had been identified as vulnerable or still in need. This included children, refugees who had arrived since 1994, and the war-affected populations 'up-country' as well as women-headed households, the sick, disabled and elderly. However, the 1996 evaluation found that the lack of detailed data on socio-economic status, coping mechanisms and local economic conditions meant that: "the policy of targeting was based on perceptions rather than reality."⁶⁴

9.6 In Rwanda in 1998 when, following a crop failure, local authorities were asked to identify the vulnerable population, everyone was included (as having no access to land, a handicapped family member or being a female- or child-headed household, etc.). In the end WFP shared the limited quantity of food that was available between the different local



populations who were then responsible to identify and serve the most vulnerable among them.

9.7 In Bosnia (1997-98) and the Caucasus (1994-97) targeting was initially based on earlier national social welfare categories of people considered to be socially vulnerable, such as single and disabled pensioners, pregnant and nursing women, social institution inmates, etc. These categories, however, did not necessarily correlate with food insecurity and poverty at the household level. Detailed surveys and studies by NGOs, including some house-to-house surveys, were later undertaken to improve targeting and reduce beneficiary lists.⁶⁵

9.8 Targeting the most needy (or 'vulnerable') according to externally-defined criteria, it seems, will always be especially difficult in conflict situations when food is a weapon or source of influence. It is further complicated when certain population groups are marginalized, the control of resources (including food aid) is important to the maintenance of traditional power structures, and there are no alternative existing, respected institutions able to assure distribution on the basis of need. This has led some experienced humanitarian workers argue, pragmatically, that in such situations it is counter-productive to try to work against established social traditions and practices, and better to work with them while at the same time trying to (gradually) influence them. Others insist that generally-accepted international humanitarian principles must always be applied -- see section 13. The bottom line is that, in each situation, it is necessary to carefully identify the practical possibilities and constraints and, on that basis, to make a judgement as to whether and how any effective targeting may actually be achieved.

9.9 Reflecting on various protracted situations, several staff members note that, when the initial crisis passes and relief provisions become regular, issues of targeting and preventing misuse become more acute and contentious, and may fuel increased tensions. Targeting is as much a political issue as it is technical, and the choices made by WFP and others can have an enormous impact on both the effectiveness of the assistance, its side effects and the security risks faced by beneficiaries and agency staff involved in organizing distributions.

9.10 Similar -- and related -- difficulties arise in relation to the choice of implementation mechanisms and partners. In practice, options have often been limited, and the rations and distribution criteria proposed by WFP have not always been respected by implementing partners who sometimes have different appreciations of the situation and, in many cases, parallel programmes -- and other resources -- of their own.

Distribution arrangements

9.11 For operations in government-controlled areas, WFP has cooperated with whatever government entities have been available, and such entities have served as partners for some aspects of implementation during the wars in Ethiopia, Mozambique and former-Yugoslavia, in the northern sector of OLS in Sudan, and in Rwanda (1995) in the face of government insistence on distributions only through local authorities.

9.12 In several operations, the bulk of WFP assistance has been distributed through NGO partners, particularly those international NGOs with which WFP has signed global memoranda of understanding and long-established local institutions (churches and Red Cross/Red Crescent societies). Collaboration has generally been good in spite of inevitable operational difficulties. But relations with NGO partners have occasionally come under



strain on account of broken promises in relation to deliveries and misunderstandings and perceived unevenness in the allocation/reimbursement of LTSH costs. The latter has given rise to questions as to whether WFP considered the NGOs as partners or contractors.⁶⁶ These difficulties appear to have their roots in high staff turnovers (within both WFP and the partner agencies), lack of clarity in some agreements, and inadequacies in some records and management systems as well as unforeseen logistical problems.

9.13 Traditional structures have sometimes been used at local level with deliveries being made to community leaders (early periods in Afghanistan, Liberia, Somalia, southern Sudan). In at least one area in Somalia in 1994, a deliberate effort was made by the WFP staff on the ground to give a prominent role to clan elders to bolster their authority vis-a-vis that of the militias. Destitute people were advised to contact their elders who, in response to specific requests, were then provided with food to distribute to such people. However, in Liberia and southern Sudan, traditional structures were not found to be effective in targeting food to the most needy.

9.14 The 1996 evaluation of the Liberia regional operation suggested that final distribution might be entrusted to representative organizations of the refugees or IDPs themselves, or to genuine community-based organizations (but did not provide specific suggestions). Special local-level relief committees have been formed at WFP's instigation to manage distributions in conjunction with WFP staff in OLS-south (since 1995) in a effort to circumvent traditional practices, and in Tajikistan (1994-98). While apparently successful in Tajikistan, opinions vary concerning the effectiveness of these committees in southern Sudan where, in many localities, the chiefs and traditional leaders continued to control the final outcome.

9.15 In some cases distributions have been made only to women. While in principle a good approach which has worked well in some settings, especially refugee camps, this was found in Liberia (1996), southern Sudan (1998) and Angola to expose the women to risks of attack.

9.16 'Family group' distribution mechanisms have been used successfully in some refugee camps in Ethiopia (1989), eastern Zaire (1994) and Tanzania (1995-99). Under these systems, groups of families of similar size are formed, elect their own groups leaders and receive a quantity of food (based on the total number of individuals and the approved ration) which they then divide up between themselves.⁶⁷ Although also applied in some areas of southern Sudan (1996), such arrangements have not yet been widely tested in unstable conflict situations.

Selecting (NGO) partners

9.17 In countries without a strong tradition of developmental NGOs it has proved particularly difficult to screen local NGO partners. In Afghanistan, Angola, Liberia, Somalia and southern Sudan, many 'NGOs' have in fact been business enterprises, sometimes clan based, created as service organizations for the international community and without any ethos of service to the community.⁶⁸

9.18 In Monrovia in 1993-95, however, WFP (at the initiative of the UN Resident Coordinator) worked successfully -- although not without difficulty -- with specially-formed local NGOs whose highly-motivated personnel managed to distribute food to needy populations under extremely difficult and dangerous circumstances. There, however, it initially amounted to a large number of loosely structured volunteers working for WFP and



depending directly and totally on the Programme for the salaries of their staff, operating costs, transport and equipment. This demanded considerable effort and flexibility on the part of WFP but enabled food to reach people who would otherwise have been unreachable, and Liberians to help their suffering compatriots. Gradually these 'NGOs' were encouraged, and helped, to establish themselves as organizations with their own identity with which WFP could deal on a more usual contractual ('per-ton') basis for distribution and monitoring.

9.19 Some WFP managers emphasize the desirability of having NGO partners who are engaged in several different humanitarian or developmental activities not limited to food distribution, and of them not becoming dependent on bulk food handling and associated LTSH funding for their continuing existence. Some advocate twinning/tutelage arrangements between international NGOs and inexperienced local NGOs, and such arrangements have been made in Afghanistan and Angola. NGO coordinating bodies have also cooperated in vetting local NGOs and their projects in Afghanistan. In Liberia (1996-97), as in other countries, WFP selected and contracted implementing partners from among reputable international NGOs (INGOs) wherever possible, taking account of their experience, neutrality, numbers of expatriate staff for supervision, involvement in other sectors and availability of basic funding. Several used local NGOs as front-line partners (sub-contractors) but remained responsible for overall management and accountability. In Liberia this was a condition of WFP's relationship with the INGOs concerned

9.20 The difficulty of selecting NGO partners with the right experience was commented on in the joint WFP-NGO evaluation in Angola (1996) where, as in a number of other countries, NGOs have been very unevenly distributed within the affected areas. The evaluation emphasized the need for pre-qualification criteria and check-lists including: logistics capacity; internal controls; willingness to go where needed, and expertise in rehabilitation and development. The importance of independent auditing of accounts was emphasized in the report of a joint WFP/IFRC review of collaboration with the Cambodian Red Cross in 1996.⁶⁹

9.21 These aspects are not unique to complex/conflict situations, but may be even more important in situations such as Afghanistan and Angola than in 'normal' emergencies. However, during acute crises, WFP and other agencies clearly have to adapt, within certain difficult-to-define limits, to work with groups that are motivated and not necessarily well-organized (as in Monrovia 1993-95).

9.22 In some cases, the national Red Cross/Red Crescent society has been identified as the most appropriate partner and, with support from WFP, UNHCR or the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), has built up a significant operational capacity. However, in Cambodia (early 1990s) and Malawi (late 1980s), such operations stretched the national societies which had difficulty in readapting to and resuming their traditional, voluntary-service based roles when the externally-funded relief operations scaled down. The IFRC, in 1998/99, is working to develop mechanisms to enable national societies to play an appropriate role in major emergencies without detriment to their long-term capacities.

Direct distributions by WFP

9.23 In other situations in recent years, international NGOs (where present) have been reluctant to take responsibility for handling large quantities of food in insecure areas, preferring to concentrate on selective feeding, where needed, and other relief and



rehabilitation activities. This has been the case for many in Somalia and southern Sudan since 1995, and in Rwanda since 1997. It coincided with an increasing desire within the Programme to retain greater control of, and receive more credit for, the programmes it supported.

9.24 Direct distributions by WFP in conflict situations have therefore been increasing. In OLS-southern sector, the distribution of over 90% of WFP food in 1998 was organized directly by teams recruited and employed by WFP. The remaining 10% has been provided through NGOs for supplementary and therapeutic feeding and food-for-work projects. WFP has directly organized almost all general relief distributions in Somalia (representing about 60% of WFP's total input) since 1997 and in Tajikistan since 1994 (where other agencies organize institutional feeding). In Armenia and Azerbaijan direct implementation by WFP also increased (1995-96) with benefits in terms of reduced costs, tighter control and improved reporting although the 1996 evaluation noted the possibility of cost control problems as the uncertain and irregular pipeline results in erratic hiring of personnel and leasing of equipment.⁷⁰ In northern Uganda, WFP started operations with direct distributions in 1994 in the absence of any potential partners. NGO partners were subsequently identified who took over distributions in some localities.

9.25 However, the boot is on the other foot when WFP is unable to operate in specific areas on account of UN security restrictions (e.g. Kabul 1998, Sierra-Leone outside Freetown 1995-96, central Tajikistan 1994-98) or leaves a country as a result of a UN decision to evacuate (e.g. Somalia 1995). In such cases, donors turn to the ICRC and/or NGOs who remain operational, and those organizations gain respect and credibility in the eyes of the local authorities and population. A few counter examples exist, however. In 1993, WFP took over distributions from ICRC when they withdrew (and until WFP itself withdrew a few months later). In April 1996, WFP remained in Monrovia when the ICRC and all INGOs left and was able to resume operations rapidly after the initial crisis.⁷¹

Misappropriation

9.26 There have been many reports of misappropriation of food supplies in conflict situations including the diversion of food to soldiers (most recently, in late 1998/early 1999, in Angola and southern Sudan), the large-scale sale of food aid commodities on local markets or in neighbouring areas (e.g. reports of truckloads being taken out of camps in the Great Lakes region, 1995-97), and the theft or withholding of certain quantities from beneficiaries (e.g. in southern Sudan in 1998). Widely varying figures have been quoted (by WFP staff and others) for the extent of losses and misappropriation in various operations, but hard data are rare except for those (relatively few) occasions when a large quantity 'disappeared' in a single incident. Press and other unofficial reports have quoted figures -- guesses -- of up to 30% for the proportion of food aid 'diverted' in Liberia (1995), and substantially higher figures in Ethiopia (1980's), Eritrea, southern Sudan (1998) and Somalia (1993-96). WFP has, in general, not produced, still less publicized, its own estimates.

9.27 Some investigations, such as that by the WFP Inspector-General in Rwanda, Burundi and Zaire in July 1996, have found particular allegations in relation to WFP-supplied commodities to be unfounded or exaggerated. In northern Uganda (1998), WFP food in the possession of the army was found to have been purchased by them on the market having been previously stolen by bandits from programme operations in another part of the country. And it is known, and accepted, that many beneficiaries systematically sell or exchange a portion of the food aid they receive in order to acquire other food items



available locally (to vary their diet) or other necessities including water and cooking fuel, thus putting certain quantities (in small lots) onto local markets.

9.28 It may also be normal for families to share food with their (usually male) members who may be fighting for their interests. This has almost certainly been the case not only with local militias (e.g. Bosnia 1992-95) but also with government troops in besieged cities (e.g. Malange, Angola 1993-4). It is debatable whether this represents 'misappropriation' even though WFP food was not intended for combatants.

9.29 But none doubts that significant quantities do go astray -- are misused -- in operations in conflict zones. Most practitioners believe that this is inevitable in such environments. In addition to the 'weapon' and 'influence' factors described in section 3 and, often, a general breakdown of law and order, it may be inevitable that militias and poorly-disciplined troops who do not receive regular, adequate supplies from their own channels will take what they need from the local population, using violence if necessary.

9.30 The difficult questions concern how to minimize diversions and misuse, what should be considered unacceptable, and what the consequences of remedial measures might be for the intended beneficiaries.

9.31 Apart from losses during transport and storage discussed in section 11, commodities have been misappropriated in various ways before, during and after distribution to beneficiaries:

Manipulation and demands

9.32 As noted in section 7, parties to conflicts often try to get as many resources as possible for their own populations. Thus numbers have frequently been inflated (almost everywhere) and claims have been made for fictitious groups of IDPs (e.g. Angola, Somalia, Sudan). In some cases, local leaders, commanders or warlords have simply made demands for food, sometimes backed up by threats. In some cases civilians have been blatantly held hostage. In Liberia in 1996 one group of faction fighters were reported to have held and starved a group of more than 300 civilians, mostly women and children, in order to force aid agencies to hand over food aid.⁷²

9.33 In Angola in 1993, the WFP base manager in Malange was threatened and had to be evacuated after resisting demands made by the governor. In Somalia (1993-8), many WFP and NGO staff have been threatened by a variety of individuals seeking to secure allocations for their projects or sub-clans. In southern Sudan (1998) a WFP team was briefly taken hostage by a community whose entitlement had been taken by a neighbouring community.

9.34 A 'street-wise' staff member describes his success in dealing with such attempts (in Somalia and elsewhere) in a patient, non-confrontational manner in line with local negotiating traditions, and emphasizes that all depends on the respect of the party concerned (which in turn depends on a local track record of consistent honest dealings and transparency). At the end of the day, however, a decision has to be made concerning what is negotiable and what is not and, in extreme cases, the negotiator's life may be on the line. The killing of two local staff in the Great Lakes region in 1996 may have been linked with their refusal to comply with the wishes of a local military commander concerning allocations of food.



Misappropriation during and after distribution

9.35 Distribution sites have been attacked by armed militias who seized supplies before distribution to the intended beneficiaries -- e.g. in Liberia (1996), Somalia (1993/94) and southern Sudan (Bahr-el-Ghazal, 1995-96). In southern Sudan (1998) there were also a few incidents when supplies 'disappeared' after WFP distribution teams were advised by local counterparts to evacuate a site after the delivery of the supplies but before distribution.

9.36 Misappropriation after distribution has taken several forms:

- Food has been forcibly taken from individual recipients by armed bands -- militia fighters or bandits -- in Liberia (1996), Somalia (1993/94?) and southern Sudan (1995-98). In some instances in Liberia where people were having their meagre food reserves, standing crops and personal belongings stolen by fighters, civilians asked relief workers not to bring them food, fearing that it would only attract further harassment and suffering.⁷³ In southern Somalia, food has sometimes been confiscated from the marginalized Bantus by militias of the stronger Samaale clans.
- Beneficiaries have been 'taxed' in eastern Zaire/DR-Congo (1995-98), southern Sudan (1998) -- coerced into contributing to the local administration or controlling politico-military faction a percentage of the relief they received. In Sudan, this constituted a modified version of 'tayeen', a traditional and socially-accepted practice by which a portion of any income or gift is set aside as a contribution to the 'government' of the area.
- Distributed rations have been collected up (after the formal, agency-monitored distribution) and then redistributed within the community by the local chiefs, according to local traditions, in southern Sudan and Somalia (1998).

9.37 Measures taken by WFP and/or NGOs in areas where militias and bandits have attacked distributions include:

- Frequent (weekly) distributions to minimize the quantities households would have on hand at any time (e.g. Angola 1994);
- Distributions at night (Kismayo, Somalia 1993).
- 'Wet' feeding in place of dry ration distributions in Somalia and eastern Zaire (as described earlier). In parts of Liberia (1996), cooked food was provided in fenced-off areas with frequent supervision by agency personnel and, sometimes, monitoring by ECOMOG troops.
- 'Hit-and-run' deliveries: In parts of Somalia (1993-5), exceptionally, food was 'dumped' unannounced in locations where people could be relied on to come to help themselves (no attempt to organize distributions). In parts of Liberia (1996) distributions were made in small quantities directly from trucks to anyone who presented themselves. In Bahr-el-Ghazal, southern Sudan (1995-7), WFP distribution ('drop-zone') teams were flown in, prepared for a distribution, received the airdrop, managed the distribution and got out within five days, so that the renegade commander operating in the area would not have time to organize an attack.

9.38 Where there has been widespread looting of deliveries as well as attacks on distributions and beneficiaries, less attractive commodities have been provided: sorghum in place of rice in Somalia (1995); bulgur wheat in place of rice in Liberia (1994). In both cases, looting was substantially reduced. In Liberia, bulgur wheat had already been used in school feeding and information concerning its use was provided through different communication channels when it was introduced in the general ration. Nevertheless, the 1996 evaluation noted that there were many reports of stomach problems and diarrhoea,



particularly among young children, due to the bulgur wheat and emphasized the importance of careful testing in advance of the mass introduction of any new commodity. It has also been noted that the substitution increased the cooking fuel needs of the beneficiaries.

9.39 Where beneficiaries have been 'taxed', protests have sometimes been made by WFP and its partners but it has been difficult to stop the practice. The joint OLS-SPLM task force (August 1998) recommended that the practice of 'tayeen' should not be applied to relief food⁷⁴ but, as of early 1999, no noticeable change had been registered. Staff of partner agencies have suggested that increased frequency of distributions makes 'taxation' more difficult to organize.

9.40 A general lesson for reducing problems during distribution, including misappropriation by distributors and local leaders, has been the importance of informing the population in advance concerning the timing of distributions, entitlements, the rationale and the reasons for any changes. But, in some cases, it has been necessary to avoid giving notice which would enable militias and bandits to organize themselves (as in the case of Bahr-el-Ghazal referred to above where the renegade faction had stolen UN radios and was listening in on OLS frequencies).

Response to malpractice

9.41 Responses to threats and incidents of misappropriation have generally been improvised. Tolerance has varied between and within operations.

9.42 In Liberia, after incidents of looting or interference, distributions to the locality concerned were often suspended until an assurance was obtained from the warlord(s) that there would be no repetition. Distributions were then resumed until the next incident. On one occasion in 1997, a formal warning was issued to the local faction leader in control of the area, distributions were stopped and a press release issued by the Humanitarian Coordinator. As a result, the overall faction leader issued a statement and distributions were able to be resumed with few incidents. Similar, but generally less high-profile, action has been taken in response to some incidents in other operations, but many incidents have effectively been tolerated.

9.43 In the case of Malange (1993) quoted above, the base manager was replaced: no formal, public protest was made. Also in Angola in 1993, assistance was resumed to UNITA-controlled areas some months after the misappropriation of stocks in Huambo at a time when UNITA was also visibly using misappropriated UN vehicles repainted green. No serious effort was made to recover these assets, nor any formal, public protest made. Similarly, no action was taken when, in 1998, UNITA took over and reportedly sold food sent in response to a report of a new refugee influx.

9.44 Such inconsistency has not only sent mixed messages to the perpetrators but also increased the risks to monitors who seek to combat practices to which weaker predecessors did not object (as indicated by examples quoted earlier). The difficult underlying moral and ethical -- and political -- issues are discussed in section 13.

Recommendation 9-1: *WFP, in collaboration with major implementing partners, should review experience and develop concise case studies, summarize lessons learned and develop check-lists for organizing distributions to IDPs and other (non-refugee) affected populations in conflict situations. This should include experience with direct distributions by WFP and of working with local NGOs and national Red*



Cross/Crescent societies (supported by the IFRC) in conflict situations, and take account of the refugee-related experience (and guidelines) of UNHCR⁷⁵.

Recommendation 9-2: *WFP should adopt a policy of openness in relation to the use and misuse of food aid to increase both the transparency and accountability of its own operations and the pressure on those responsible for abuses to mend their ways. Monitoring report forms should provide for the recording of all incidents and allegations of misappropriation to enable managers to keep the situation under review and decide on appropriate action. WFP should systematically inform beneficiaries, local authorities, faction leaders and donors of incidents and their consequences. It should compile and publish its own estimates of the levels of misuse/misappropriation and targeting errors, possibly in the context of existing reports on post-delivery losses.*

Recommendation 9-3: *Decisions on strategies for continuing assistance in ongoing complex/conflict emergency situations (including those resourced as PRROs) should take explicit account of the role, use and impact of food aid to date, including its unintended effects, as well as the food security and nutritional needs of the affected civilian populations. Evaluations of food assistance operations should examine all these aspects and, where needed, assess possibilities and formulate specific proposals for changes -- radical changes, where necessary -- in strategies in order to minimize any harmful effects, misuse and misappropriation while protecting the best interests of the most needy and vulnerable civilian population groups.*



Part IV: Security and Management Issues

10 Staff Safety and Security

10.1 The safety and security of UN personnel in any country is, in principle, the responsibility of the national government. In most conflict situations the government is hard-pressed to assure such security even within territory which is nominally under its control, and clearly unable to do so in areas controlled by other forces. In a few cases, agencies have been offered some protection, or security guidance, by peace-keeping or other international forces. In most situations, security has generally depended on agencies' own efforts and negotiations with the parties in control of particular areas.

10.2 In conflict situations, personal security, in the words of one senior WFP manager, is "a lottery". It can never be guaranteed although risks can be reduced through appropriate means based on a careful assessment of nature of the threats and the likelihood of their occurrence. Several staff note that both governments and UN decision-makers have used insecurity at various times as a reason (excuse) to control (restrict) humanitarian assistance operations.

Risks faced by staff

10.3 WFP staff and other humanitarian workers in complex emergencies have faced threats, intimidation, kidnapping, and risks of being killed or injured deliberately or, by mischance, by crossfire, bombing, shelling or landmines. These conflict-related risks come on top of those of accidents, robbery and medical emergencies that take their toll in all field operations. Sexual assaults are also known to have occurred although they are rarely reported. In the period from June 1997 to July 1998, ten WFP staff, mostly local staff, were killed (apparently deliberately) in complex emergency countries and another died in a road accident while fleeing from an ambush.⁷⁶ It is not known how many staff of WFP's contractors and NGO partners have been killed and injured.

10.4 Surprisingly, there has not yet been any systematic analysis within the UN of the number, nature and causes of security incidents affecting staff of UN and other humanitarian agencies in conflict situations. Indeed too few data have been compiled to make meaningful analysis possible. However, a recent independent study found no discernible global patterns in security incidents affecting relief workers, nor any evidence of a link between the number of field workers and the number of incidents.⁷⁷

10.5 While comparisons with other agencies are not possible, the heavy toll in 1997/98 shows that WFP staff -- particularly local staff -- have been at high risk of being killed in the last few years, with most of the deaths resulting from ambushes or robberies. A high proportion of other (non-fatal) life-threatening incidents have also arisen from criminality, according to a number of WFP managers. Their experience (perceptions) suggests that the major risk factors are:

- criminality/banditry -- in many situations, groups and individuals have been ready to kill for a vehicle or a relatively small amount of money (e.g. Burundi, former-Yugoslavia, Kenya, Liberia, Sierra-Leone, Somalia); and
- attacks on trucks and distribution operations by armed groups who do not seek any form of legitimacy, including organized renegade groups (e.g. southern Sudan) and militia



bands (e.g. Liberia, Somalia), especially when their commanders are unable to pay and feed them adequately.

10.6 Threats and intimidation have arisen in relation to assessment and monitoring activities and demands for food allocations, and managers report that tense situations on such occasions, and at road blocks, have sometimes been aggravated by the arrogant, confrontational behaviour of individual staff (national and international). In Somalia (1993-8), many incidents have been related to former employees, contractors or others seeking retribution for perceived individual grievances while numerous threats of physical violence (including death) have been made against humanitarian workers there in an attempt to secure aid commitments.⁷⁸ In many situations, incidents of threats and violence are reported to have increased when inputs were being reduced, and managers emphasize the importance of careful explanation and negotiations in advance of changes in assistance provisions.

10.7 In some situations (e.g. former Yugoslavia) the situation has been compounded by general resentment against foreigners and it has been noted that insensitive behaviour by staff (when off-duty as well as at work), and simply being in a hurry and too abrupt in dealings with local officials and military personnel, can increase such resentment. In Rwanda (1995), risks were heightened by media attacks directed specifically against WFP. Managers emphasize the need for staff at all levels, when making public statements, to reflect on the possible consequences for staff on the ground.

10.8 The respect accorded in the past to the UN humanitarian agencies has greatly diminished in the last decade and association with the UN -- and the UN symbol and flag -- can, in some circumstances, now be a liability rather than a protection (e.g. at times in Somalia, former-Yugoslavia and parts of Tajikistan). An assessment of security in WFP's operations in the Great Lakes region in 1998 noted that: "WFP is now often seen either in a partisan light in support of one party in a conflict, or as a legitimate (and easy) target -- as a source of food, cash, vehicles and communications equipment." The relative wealth of staff (national as well as international) of WFP and other international agencies, and their possession/control of vehicles and other resources in resource-scarce environments, has also made them targets for bandits and common criminals.

10.9 There have been several incidents of kidnapping of humanitarian workers in recent years in Somalia, Chechnya, the Caucasus and Tajikistan. A WFP staff member was the first international UN staff kidnapped in Somalia (1994). Since then, WFP staff have been taken along with others in some cases (e.g. Baidoa, Somalia 1995) and, in August 1998, a WFP distribution team in southern Sudan was held briefly by a community demanding the replacement of supplies intended for them which had been delivered to a nearby location and taken by the people there. (WFP acceded to this demand although assistance to locations under the control of the same faction was then temporarily suspended). But, in general, WFP staff do not appear to have been targeted any more, and perhaps less, than those of other organizations including the Red Cross Movement.

10.10 Poor planning of individual food distributions, or unexpected disruptions to plans, also create serious local incidents (riots) which may endanger staff and/or beneficiaries. For example, a riot broke out at a distribution in northern Uganda (1998) which started late because of the late arrival of the military escort for the convoy and the WFP team had to leave the site before the distribution was completed in order to be home before dark, as required by prevailing security procedures.



10.11 In almost all situations, local staff are more exposed than internationals because they more frequently accompany convoys, attend distributions, and carry out monitoring visits.

Transportation of cash

10.12 The transportation of cash has been a major concern in many insecure areas where banking infrastructure has been absent, or not functioning, but payments still need to be made regularly to contractors as well as to staff and to cover WFP's own operating expenses. In some cases, there have been alternatives. In Somalia, arrangements have been made with local businessmen who provide unofficial, but efficient, money transfer services. In Afghanistan, arrangements have been made with local currency dealers. In both cases, payments have been made by WFP into accounts outside the country -- in Nairobi and Islamabad respectively -- against cash released in-country. Similar possibilities were identified in Bukavu, eastern DR-Congo, but their use was not authorized by WFP and FAO financial controllers.

10.13 However, in many situations, WFP has had no choice but to move cash -- sometimes, as in the Great Lakes region (1995-8), in large quantities on a regular basis -- at least during the early phases. The risks are obvious and enormous. Fortunately, there have been few losses -- one dispatch was lost in Kisangani, DR-Congo in 1997.⁷⁹

10.14 Even where banking services have been available, problems have arisen when authorized signatories have left or moved to another location (which occurs quite frequently in emergency operations). Changing the official signatory has sometimes taken several months (e.g. for a sub-office in an insecure area of northern Uganda in 1997/8) and, in the meantime, cash has had to be moved by WFP in order to sustain ongoing operations.

10.15 On an individual level, managers note that several attacks on individual staff members have occurred just before they were due to go on leave and it might have been known, or suspected, that they had withdrawn cash in anticipation of their departure.

10.16 A special module on the movement of cash is included in the security awareness training programme initiated in 1999 (see 10.33 below). It is hoped that, as a result, future operations will benefit from more systematic and thorough assessment of payment and cash transfer possibilities, and corresponding planning of financial operations to minimize risks from the outset.

Global UN security measures

10.17 There has not been any global inter-agency approach to the specific problems of security within humanitarian assistance operations in conflict situations notwithstanding information exchange and discussions at headquarters level under the auspices of the UN Security Coordinator (UNSECOORD). UNSECOORD is the entity in New York responsible for security policy and procedures for the UN system, for coordinating, planning and implementing inter-agency security and safety programmes, and for acting as the focal point for inter-agency cooperation concerning security matters.⁸⁰

10.18 First among the UN agencies to recognize the need for security training of staff, UNHCR initiated such training and related guidelines for its staff in 1993. UNICEF followed in 1995. WFP, after hesitating in anticipation of an inter-agency programme, embarked on a global security awareness training programme for WFP staff in 1998, as described below,



beginning training in early 1999. UNSECOORD finally obtained funding and initiated more limited training for UN country teams in selected countries also in 1999.

Country-level UN security measures

10.19 At country level, a Designated Official for Security (normally the UN Resident Coordinator) is responsible for the security of UN personnel in the country and is supported by a Security Management Team (SMT) usually consisting of the heads of UN agencies, programmes and funds present in the country. Actual arrangements made have varied considerably between countries, and evolved over time, depending on the initiatives taken by individual Designated Officials and heads of agencies, and the resources they have mobilized for the purpose. In general, Designated Officials have lacked resources, as noted in the tripartite review of operations in the Great Lakes region. In 1994/95 a budget line for common security services was introduced into the CAP for Somalia. Since then security has been included on an *ad hoc* basis in other CAPs. From 2000, it is to be systematically reflected in all CAPs for conflict-affected countries.

10.20 UNHCR, UNICEF, UNDP, WHO and WFP have taken measures -- committed resources -- in individual countries to improve security and reduce risks for their field operations individually and/or collectively. Measures have included: the fielding of teams of professional security officers, some funded on an inter-agency basis and recruited by UNSECOORD or UNDP/UN-OPS, others funded and recruited by individual agencies; improved radio communications; some local training; and the provision of special vehicles and protective equipment for staff, as appropriate. Donor funding for such measures has been available since it became accepted in the mid-1990s that such measures are part of the 'cost of doing business' in any conflict environment. WFP initially funded such measures using extra-budgetary resources but costs are now budgetted, and funded by donors, as a part of direct support costs.

10.21 In Angola, Burundi and Bosnia, WFP and the other UN humanitarian agencies have resorted to the use of armoured vehicles, bullet-proof vests and ballistic blankets. In Bosnia (1993-95) and Somalia (1992-95), they have benefited from the security advice of UN peacekeeping forces (see section 6). In other countries they have depended largely on their own security officers.

10.22 'Quick-run' bags (small bush survival kits) have been, for several years, a standard requirement for all OLS personnel making field trips in southern Sudan. Similar kits already used by UNICEF in Somalia are also used there by WFP starting 1999. Safe havens have recently been established in locations where field staff are assigned in northern Uganda. Shared UN bunkers have existed in Afghanistan for several years. In line with standard UN security procedures, a staff member of one of the UN agencies (sometimes of WFP) has generally been designated as the UN focal point for security in operational locations remote from the capital where there has been no security officer.

10.23 In Somalia and Sudan (OLS-south), the assigned security officers have organized training sessions periodically for staff. Although many staff have taken advantage of these opportunities, others have not, being 'too busy' or feeling that they are sufficiently aware already.



Security systems in Somalia, southern Sudan and Afghanistan

10.24 The fact that there have been few casualties in recent years in the very difficult and potentially dangerous environments of Somalia and southern Sudan is certainly due in large part to the security systems which have been put in place there since the early 1990s. Both involve: teams of professional security officers contributed by the different operational agencies; clearly-defined security procedures which are strictly enforced by the SMT and all country-level agency heads individually; good radio communications with a 24-hour watch; aircraft on stand-by for emergency evacuations of personnel from individual locations if and when needed,⁸¹ and understandings (formal in OLS-south, informal in Somalia) with local officials/leaders.

10.25 Both are also situations in which outposted or travelling security officers often have to -- and do -- take immediate decisions without consultation with the Designated Official. In the particular case of OLS-south, the situation and possibilities for conflict of interests between programme operations and security considerations has been increased by the fact that the Designated Official has been in Nairobi while operations management is located in Lokichoggio.

10.26 In Somalia, most visits by UN agency staff to highly insecure areas since 1995 have been accompanied by a security officer. In southern Sudan, escape routes and evacuation plans have been defined for all operational locations, and the 'ground rules' drawn up and signed between OLS and the SRRA and RASS in 1995 have constituted important elements of the security arrangements, complemented by the security protocol signed in Rome in November 1998 between the government of Sudan, the SPLM and UN-OCHA.

10.27 Under the ground rules (discussed in section 13), the SRRA and RASS are, amongst other things, responsible to assure the security of OLS personnel and able to call for the evacuation of such personnel from any location where they believe their security is under threat. However, while acknowledging that security in any area depends in large part on relationships with groups in or contesting control, and on local information concerning the location and movement of armed groups and active fighting, many in OLS note that SRRA and RASS representatives are often not well-accepted by the local population and leaderships. In some cases they have not been well-informed about local conflicts which are distinct from the government-anti-government conflict. In most cases, counterpart staff have assured the security of agency supplies when staff were evacuated. But, in a few cases, there have been suspicions that local SRRA/RASS staff and/or local leaders used their ability to get OLS personnel evacuated from a locality as a means to facilitate the misappropriation of food delivered in readiness for a distribution or of other supplies and equipment of the agencies with operational bases in the locality.

10.28 Similar but less sophisticated and less-well-resourced arrangements have been put in place progressively in Rwanda and Burundi since 1994. A basic security agreement for Afghanistan was being negotiated by the UN/OCHA with the Taliban authorities in late 1998 as a condition for the resumption of UN assistance. There, it was proposed that security officers for each of the five operational regions be recruited by UNDP with costs shared among the operational UN agencies. (WFP, which has operations in all five areas would pay approximately 18% of the total cost.)



WFP security initiatives in the Great Lakes region

10.29 Within the Great Lakes region, a number of specific measures have been initiated within the framework of recommendations agreed between WFP, UNICEF and UNHCR in 1997⁸² and following the recommendations of an assessment of security in WFP's operations in region in early 1998. That assessment identified security weak points in many aspects of WFP's operations throughout the region and made specific recommendations for improvements in relation to, amongst other things: the condition of vehicles, and the need for appropriate tyres, jacks and spare tyres (and more adequate control of drivers); fire extinguishers and first aid supplies for vehicles and warehouses; better fencing of some warehouse compounds and a need for alarm systems; contracts for guard services including adequate liability insurance; identifying and closing loopholes in control systems for stocks and fuel supplies; and providing ballistic mats in vehicles operating in mine-risk areas.

10.30 These recommendations have been systematically followed up in 1998 through a regional field security improvement programme which is continuing in 1999. Every country office in the region now has a security officer and is developing a country-level action plan for internal WFP security and safety measures coordinated with any in-country UN-system improvements. Specific attention is being given to: first aid training; fire safety; security at all offices, warehouses and residences; vehicle operating safety; stress management and post-traumatic stress counselling; standardizing arrangements for guard services; and preparedness to organize or assist in air evacuations.

Training and other recent global WFP security measures

10.31 As from 1998, WFP country offices in all countries have been encouraged to undertake their own assessments of actual and potential risks and current security arrangements. Other global security measures initiated by WFP in 1998 include training, improved communications and the provision of post-exposure treatment kits (for staff victims of rape). Since mid-1999, security is a required component of all WFP EMOP and PRRO documents for complex/conflict situations.

10.32 An incident reporting system has been introduced based on that already used by UNICEF and UNHCR. A vehicle tracking system is being tested in Uganda. Arrangements for professional counselling for staff who have experienced traumatic incidents have been made on a regional basis in east Africa (Great Lakes and Horn of Africa combined).

- Security awareness training (SAT) for WFP staff started early in 1999, drawing on the experience and existing materials of UNHCR and UNICEF, and in coordination with UNSECOORD. It is compulsory for all international and most national staff worldwide and some 5,800 staff are expected to receive the basic training in 1999. Additional specialized training modules are being developed for managers and other staff who have special security-related responsibilities.
- The basic awareness training covers: UN security management system; personal and family security (including sexual assault and rape); office and facilities security; residential security; arrest, detention and hostage taking; fire safety; abuse of power and harassment (includes stalking and sexual harassment); coping with stress in emergency situations; driving (vehicle) security; basic communications (radios, satellite phones, etc.); first aid and medical issues; emergency preparedness, evacuation and survival.



- Specialized modules cover: crisis management; travel safety; landmines/military weaponry; convoy and air operations; cash movements; managing people who are exposed to traumatic stress; security responsibilities for managers.

10.33 The basic awareness training is delivered by specially-trained WFP staff who are not necessarily security professionals. It provides a basic foundation for inexperienced staff which is adapted to the particular context of each country, but field-based security officers emphasize the importance of maintaining regular briefings on the local security situation and related context-specific training.

Security of, and as seen by, NGO partners

10.34 NGOs often have a different perspective on risks, especially when they have long-established relationships with the local community, and the 'UN' is considered not to be impartial and is therefore targeted by one or more parties to a conflict. NGOs sometimes choose to stay and continue working when UN personnel are evacuated from a particular location. In Uganda in 1997, an NGO sent its coordinator into an area on the aircraft which went to evacuate UN staff. In Tajikistan in 1997, the ICRC went back in at about the same time that the UN left.

10.35 Few NGOs, therefore, are willing to sign up and subscribe -- contribute financially -- to UN security systems which would oblige them to comply with UN decisions on evacuation. Some make their own arrangements. In major operations (e.g. in southern Sudan) some have their own chartered aircraft. Nevertheless, in most situations there is good information exchange and informal cooperation on the ground, especially in isolated locations, and, when need arises, staff are usually evacuated on a 'seats-available' basis on each other's aircraft (most frequently, NGO staff on UN/WFP aircraft). In some instances in the Great Lakes and DR-Congo when WFP organized evacuation flights for the UN (8 in the period August 1995 to June 1997), larger aircraft than necessary were used so that places would be available for additional personnel, if required. In Somalia, ECHO, which funds many of the NGOs and provides air services for them, has established a security system for NGOs in parallel with that of the UN.

10.36 The sharing between agencies (UN and NGOs) of information relevant to security is emphasized as being crucial, but it is recognized that sensitive information is not always shared for fear that it will be misused.

10.37 OLS-south (in southern Sudan) is unique in that many NGOs work within the framework of, and sign an MOU with, OLS under which they agree to basic operational rules, have access to OLS facilities and services, and are included within the OLS security system (which they help to fund).⁸³ A few NGOs working in southern Sudan have chosen not to sign an MOU. Not officially a part of OLS, those NGOs are responsible for their own security although, not infrequently, OLS has included their staff in evacuations and some may indeed depend (albeit unofficially) on OLS to do so. In each location where OLS-collaborating NGOs maintain more-or-less permanent bases, a focal point for security has been designated from among the resident NGO personnel (usually the officer-in-charge of the agency with the most personnel based at the location concerned).

10.38 NGOs, including some of WFP's main implementing partners, have also been giving attention to security training needs. Most notable is an initiative taken by InterAction (a coalition of 150 US-based NGOs) in collaboration with some European partners and with funding from USAID-OFDA. Following extensive consultations, a working group established



to produce a training curriculum and materials departed from the “approaches used by diplomats, corporations and militaries [which] often stress the importance of personal security, standard operating procedures (SOPs) and technical approaches to improving security.”⁸⁴ Their proposed training package, produced in 1998, emphasizes:

- the inter-dependence of security and relationships both within the aid community (for sharing information and coordinating responses to threats) and with the local populations (to foster communication and prevent resentment and hostility);
- the importance of image -- how agency is perceived as a result of its behaviour and actions including its immediate response to crises;
- the need for thorough analysis of the specific context, threats and agency vulnerabilities in order to develop appropriate security strategies, and to evaluate and modify those strategies as the situation changes.

10.39 The training proposed for NGOs distinguishes three types of security strategy which should be mixed according to the particular circumstances: acceptance (building relationships), protection (procedural and technical measures to reduce exposure), deterrence (counter-threats, such as armed protection)⁸⁵. The package includes, amongst other topics, modules on: self management to reduce vulnerability; team management to reduce vulnerability; preventing and defusing anger and hostility.

10.40 Although this training is aimed at NGO teams interfacing directly with the community, and the role of WFP is somewhat different in most situations -- managing a major resource in bulk and not generally being resident in isolated locations -- there may be elements in the NGO approach and package from which WFP could learn and benefit.

10.41 The importance of relationships as a factor which can contribute to, or threaten, the security of staff in general or that of particular individuals, has been emphasized by WFP managers as well as in recent initiatives by ECHO. In the words of one senior WFP manager: "The best assurance of security is acceptance and ownership of the programme by the local population." For another: "The most important security measure relates to having good knowledge of the situation, common sense and good self-preservation instincts." Strained relationships have been a key factor on many occasions when evacuations from specific locations in southern Sudan have been called for by OLS personnel or by SRRA or RASS counterparts. While ‘protection’ and ‘deterrence’ measures may be indispensable in the face of threats posed by criminals and terrorist groups, the exposure of staff to these threats may possibly be reduced by information and support from the local population arising from good relationships and local ‘ownership’ of the programme.

Some outstanding security issues

10.42 While important progress is being made within WFP and the wider UN system, a number of ‘technical’ issues remain which concern the UN system as a whole, including but not limited to WFP. They relate particularly to the natural tension between wanting staff to be safe and staff wanting to do their job of providing assistance. They include:

10.43 *Relationships between field security officers (security officers) and programme operations.* Security officers recruited and assigned by operational agencies have a commitment to seeing that assistance programmes are implemented as successfully as reasonably possible while protecting staff (and, where possible, their partners) from undue risks. That orientation also facilitates their contacts with communities, local civil authorities and field-based NGOs which, in turn, enhances their own ‘intelligence’. It may also improve



the image of the agency at local level and the acceptance -- and therefore protection -- of its staff. It helps to 'mainstream' security as an essential, integral part of the agencies' programme operations and, in Somalia in particular, the security officers have been important members of the programme planning implementation teams in their respective agencies (much more than in OLS). Agency-linked security officers also facilitate agency-specific tasks such as obtaining security clearances (e.g. in Angola). In contrast, it is widely felt that many security officers assigned by UNSECOORD and UNDP to the offices of the Resident Coordinator/Designated Official have a narrower focus on ensuring the security of agency personnel, less motivation to facilitate and find ways of implementing programmes in spite of the risks, and may have a poorer appreciation of the actual situation. There is a need to achieve a balance between central control and sensitivity to agencies' operational needs. This is particularly important for WFP.

10.44 *The selection of security officers.* The majority of serving security officers have military backgrounds (some from military intelligence) with smaller numbers of police. Their experience and their contacts and interventions with the warring parties have helped to avoid or resolve many dangerous incidents. They have helped to save many lives, often putting their own at risk. But, in a few instances, it is believed (by WFP staff and others) that the attitude and insensitive approach of a security officer has actually aggravated a situation (e.g. in south Sudan on more than one occasion in 1998). As for all other staff in these situations, personality and sensitivity, as well as local knowledge and language skills, are as important as professional experience. Experience in security and practical experience in working with military personnel and hierarchies, police and militias is essential, but a background as a career military officer may not be. Continuity is also critical, since the effectiveness of an security officer depends on the breadth and depth of his relationships with all parties throughout the conflict area. In OLS-south, the turnover in a short period of all security officers, and the inadequacy of the hand over between some, resulted in the poor handling of some incidents and threatened to undermine confidence in the security system itself in late 1998.

10.45 *Numbers of staff on the ground:* In areas classified as UN security phase III, the total number of UN staff has usually been limited to that which could readily be evacuated by the means expected to be available -- e.g. twenty in Monrovia in 1996 corresponding to the capacity of two zodiac craft, and, in Somalia and Afghanistan, to the number of seats in the UN aircraft most likely to be used for an evacuation. Because of the general level of insecurity, the number of staff in the field in Bosnia was deliberately kept to a minimum.⁸⁶ However, a certain number of staff is needed in any location to ensure a network of contacts and varied sources of information as well as for mutual support in difficult, high-stress environments. The ICRC generally deploys personnel in teams of 6-8. It is not clear that WFP or UN agencies in general have a policy in this regard.

10.46 *Decisions on evacuations and which, if any, staff should remain.* In some instances (e.g. Kinshasa 1998), some people have felt that staff were put at risk by the Designated Official waiting too long before calling for an evacuation. In other cases (e.g. Tajikistan 1997) WFP staff and others considered that an evacuation was unnecessary -- too early -- and impeded the delivery of humanitarian assistance.⁸⁷ When 'non-essential' staff have been evacuated, there have sometimes been difficult discussions concerning how many should be allowed to stay from the different agencies (e.g. Monrovia, May 1996⁸⁸). In Tajikistan in 1997, a number of personnel from the UN political/observation mission (who were being targeted by the rebels) were allowed to stay, but WFP and other humanitarian agencies (who considered themselves to be at less risk) were instructed to evacuate. WFP staff and others emphasize that respect and credibility vis-a-vis local communities is lost



when an organization evacuates in circumstances that local people do not consider to justify such withdrawal.⁸⁹ WFP's respect and credit was enhanced by its continuation of operations in Liberia (1996) and northern Uganda (199?) when other agencies evacuated.⁹⁰

10.47 *Planning and organizing evacuations.* An informal evaluation by the Great Lakes regional office of their experience in relation to evacuations within the region (including DR-Congo) in 1997-8 highlighted the unreliability of lists of personnel in different locations as being a major problem. The same problem existed in OLS-south in late 1998. Mechanisms of keeping track of personnel movements and changes need to be improved. The Great Lakes evaluation also highlighted a lack of standard operating procedures for coordination between the offices of different concerned UN entities in different headquarters and other support locations.

10.48 *Arrangements for national staff.* While national staff who are from and normally live in the area where they are assigned are usually expected to look after themselves, arrangements need to be made to relocate local staff originating from other parts of the country, especially those from other ethnic groups, to their home or other safe areas. This has not always been explicitly planned and in a few cases (e.g. Sierra Leone 1998) local staff have not been provided with salary advances before international staff left. However, in Goma in 1996, WFP local staff were encouraged to develop their own security plan alongside that for international staff. When evacuation became necessary, everything went smoothly, local staff facilitated the departure of internationals, organized the removal or protection of all valuable equipment and then followed their own plan for themselves. All staff were safe and no equipment was lost (although some other organizations lost everything).

10.49 *Functioning of Security Management Teams (SMTs).* In some situations, security may not have received due attention when dealt with as one item on the agenda of the UN country team including heads of all agencies in the country (especially when, as in Uganda 1996-8), conflict affects only a part of the country while other parts -- and, therefore, UN programmes -- continue business 'as usual'. WFP managers emphasize the need, wherever there is conflict, for the rapid provision of professional security advice and the formation of a security management cell involving security professionals and the operational agencies to monitor the situation, take action at their own level and make recommendations to the Designated Official and SMT as needed. Such arrangements have worked well in Burundi and Rwanda (1994-98), for example.

10.50 *Use of armed guards and escorts.* Different policies and practices have been adopted in different countries, and even within countries, in relation to arrangements for guards. This has been highlighted in countries of the Great Lakes region where, in 1998, local police provided guards for WFP warehouses and offices in some locations (generally paid for by WFP) but WFP employed guards directly or through commercial security companies, in many other locations. In Somalia (1992-98), guard services have been provided as part of package deals with the owners of premises rented by WFP and have included the provision of 'technicals' to escort staff while moving in the locality. Their use has proved to be difficult to phase out. The use of armed escorts is discussed in section 11.

10.51 *Payment for government security services:* The government is, in principle, responsible for the security of UN personnel but, even where it is willing to provide guards and escorts, it may lack the resources to do so. In a number of countries (e.g. Uganda, 1998), WFP and other agencies have paid salaries or incentives for police or other



government-provided security personnel and/or paid for vehicle fuel or even the rental of vehicles for their use. In other places requests for such payments have been resisted. In Kenya, OLS has been stalling on a government request for funding for a new police post in Lokichoggio, which has become a much more important centre of population and economic activity as a direct result of the OLS base established there for its operations in southern Sudan. Elsewhere in Kenya, UNHCR has funded the expansion of a police presence in an area hosting refugees. In Zaire in 1994/95, UNHCR paid for the deployment of Zairian troops to ensure security in refugee camps in Goma, and engaged international military personnel to ensure liaison and provide supervision.

10.52 Fundamental questions concerning the levels of risk considered acceptable and when to pull out, or not go in, are discussed in section 13 below.

Recommendation 10-1: *Continuing the existing close collaboration with UNSECOORD, OCHA and the other operational UN agencies WFP should encourage and cooperate with UNSECOORD in systematically and continuously monitoring and analysing the precise nature and apparent causes of security incidents affecting the personnel and operations of the humanitarian agencies, based on standard inter-agency incident reporting arrangements.*

Recommendation 10-2: *WFP should work with UNSECOORD, OCHA and the other operational UN agencies at the international level to:*

(a) review experience and seek consensus on arrangements for the assignment of security officers at country level which satisfy the need for a unified system while meeting the specific programme and operational needs of the operational agencies. This might include an agreed general policy framework for establishing and managing security teams in future operations (including desired general profiles for different kinds of assignment), and arrangements to ensure reasonable continuity and adequate hand overs between security officers;

(b) review arrangements for the organization of evacuations and practices concerning the selection of essential staff to remain; and

(c) develop common guidelines for the payment of guard services.

Recommendation 10-3: *WFP, in consultation with UNSECOORD and in collaboration with OCHA, UNHCR and UNICEF, should:*

(a) continue and refine on an ongoing basis the security awareness training for WFP staff, learning from the experiences of training organized by NGOs as well as that of WFP itself, and develop and deliver the planned specialized modules as quickly as possible with particular emphasis on risk assessments and the selection of appropriate risk reduction strategies.

(b) organize consultations, internationally and at country level, with the Programme's main NGO partners to review each others' assessments of risks -- threats and vulnerabilities -- associated with the delivery of food assistance and the effectiveness of measures taken to reduce those risks, including staff training;

(c) work at country level with the Humanitarian Coordinator and NGO partners, in consultation with the Designated Official and other members of the SMT, to ensure maximum consistency and complementarity between NGO and UN approaches to security and responses to security incidents;



(d) continue to establish informal collaboration and working arrangements with NGO partners at country level in relation to security in, and eventual evacuations from, operational locations in conflict-affected areas (whether they have signed up to the UN security system or not);

(e) establish systems to ensure that staff lists for all locations are kept up-to-date including the movements of all staff in insecure areas in order to facilitate the planning and organization of evacuations if and when needed.

Telecommunications and information technology

10.53 Not many years ago, staff were sent into some isolated locations in countries such as Liberia and Somalia without radios or with poorly maintained communications systems. During the crisis in Monrovia in 1996, when all UN staff were concentrated in safe havens, WFP's radios quickly went out-of-service (being dependent on a battery-operated repeater located on a hill near the most insecure area). Even in 1998, when staff went back into northern Guinea-Bissau to start assistance operations, the team had only one radio between them.

10.54 However, WFP has made enormous strides in the last few years, particularly in the Great Lakes region, in establishing the reliable, secure telecommunications which are essential both for operations management and staff security. This has been done in partnership with UNICEF and has included some important technical innovations⁹¹ which are being shared progressively both with other WFP regions where systems are less developed and with other UN agencies and NGOs.

10.55 Most significant are: the establishment of minimum standards for communications for operations in insecure areas (developed jointly with UNICEF and subsequently adopted by the UN Inter-Agency Telecommunications Advisory Committee, ITAC); the 'deep-field mailing system' (DFMS) -- an email system that runs over HF or VHF radio -- developed by WFP-Kampala; formal agreement between WFP and UNICEF on collaboration and cost-sharing in telecommunications, and a high degree of integration between the systems of different agencies in the Great Lakes region using each others repeaters. The 'minimum standards' provide for communications (including base, mobile and individual units) independent of all external power and public telecommunications systems. Back-up satellite phones constitute important components of the security systems in the Great Lakes region, Somalia and other countries.

10.56 In addition, WFP, other UN agencies and NGOs provide communications backup to each other informally in all remote areas. In Somalia, use is made of the extensive privately owned HF communications services throughout the country to contact clan elders to clear flight arrivals.

10.57 A version of DFMS -- 'DFMS-LITE' -- is being developed in 1999 to provide email via a small hand-held computer linked to a VHF radio which, through an Automatic Position Reporting System, can also automatically report the position of the sender to the central control station. This is expected to contribute to convoy monitoring and security.

10.58 However, many operations do not yet benefit from these facilities and in many countries, including some in the Great Lakes region, there are still obstacles to the importation of equipment and other local problems including the allocation of adequate frequencies. Until recently there have been restrictions on UN and/or NGOs' communications in Afghanistan, Kenya and Sudan as well as some other emergency-prone



countries (e.g. Ethiopia), and there are still incompatibilities between the HF communications systems of WFP and other agencies in Somalia, for example.

10.59 To spread the technology, expertise and management procedures developed by WFP in the Great Lakes region, and to assist other WFP clusters in upgrading and supporting their telecommunications and information technology infrastructure, a 'Fast Information Technology and Telecommunications Emergency and Support Team' (FITTEST) was created in March 1999 for a six-months trial period, based in the WFP Regional Office in Kampala, Uganda. Working closely with the headquarters field support team, it aims to enhance preparedness and support emergency operations. The team has helped in the establishment of operations in Albania and in up-grading or making assessments of the communications and IT systems in Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Sudan (as well as a number of other, non-complex-emergency countries). Even before its formal establishment, staff from Kampala helped to set up systems in central America in the wake of hurricane Mitch (1998).

10.60 The possession of radio communications equipment, while essential, also brings certain risks and responsibilities particularly in conflict situations. Risks can be increased when radios are stolen by groups wishing to listen-in and disrupt assistance operations (as has been the case, for instance, in Uganda and southern Sudan). The security of HF and VHF communications has accordingly been enhanced by the development, by the Great Lakes regional office team, of a system of electronic identification codes for transceivers in small groups. In the event that any transceiver is lost or stolen, the corresponding code can be disabled and the other transceivers in the group be reprogrammed, thus preserving the security and integrity of the system.

10.61 Responsibilities relate to controlling the use made of the facilities. Use only for official business, not transmitting any information of potential military significance, and use of the official language are standard rules, and basic discipline can be imposed on staff through training and monitoring of traffic. But difficult questions can arise concerning any use by staff of collaborating authorities and counterpart organizations. In OLS-south/southern Sudan, the SRRA and RASS have key roles in the assistance operations and in ensuring the security of WFP and other OLS personnel in the field, but their own communications are often deficient and they sometimes ask/need to use OLS radios to communicate with their own colleagues in other locations. While such use may appear legitimate and even essential for OLS security, the counterparts represent parties to the conflict and are closely linked to the corresponding military command structures, so it can be difficult to be sure that communications are not used for military purposes. This has been a concern in OLS. The need for strict criteria and procedures is clear. The application and policing of such procedures is difficult.

10.62 At the international level, WFP has worked closely with OCHA and other members of ITAC to promote a broadening of international conventions related to the use of telecommunications by humanitarian agencies. Many parties to civil conflicts in particular do not respect international conventions, but the existence of such standards may provide a basis for future negotiations with the parties concerned, similar to those which, in late 1998, resulted in the security protocols for southern Sudan and which were being conducted with the authorities in Afghanistan.



Recommendation 10-4: *Following through on initiatives and decisions already taken, WFP should:*

(a) ensure in every conflict situation that communications facilities meet the defined minimum standards from the beginning of field operations. This would include contingency planning and the up-grading of communications in potential emergency countries;

(b) ensure that technical capacity is available and mobilized to install and support the necessary communications facilities and information systems such as DFMS and its derivatives;

(c) encourage field-based initiatives to promote the development of support systems designed to meet the needs of field operations, and inter-cluster cooperation and support teams (such as FITTEST) to disseminate experience and technologies in coordination with headquarters;

(d) continue to work with OCHA and through ITAC to consolidate and expand the existing close collaboration, global agreement and systems-integration between WFP and UNICEF to include other agencies.

11 Delivering Food, Preventing Losses

Delivering commodities

11.1 Getting large quantities of food into insecure/conflict-affected areas and delivering it to partners at agreed hand-over points or, increasingly frequently, directly to individual distribution sites, has presented enormous challenges. The achievements have been remarkable (e.g. 12,000 tons delivered by airdrops to some 70 locations in southern Sudan in a single month in 1998), but costs have been high and problems frequent. The LTSH rate for OLS-south (southern Sudan) amounted to \$911 per ton in 1998. In Somalia, total costs were estimated at close to \$1,000 per ton (of which \$286 LTSH and \$260 support costs) in 1998.

11.2 Commercial transporters have been relied on in Afghanistan, eastern DR-Congo, Liberia (prior to 1996), Rwanda (since 1996), Somalia, for deliveries into southern Sudan via Uganda, and in former-Yugoslavia since the ending of the war. It has been found necessary to operate primarily with WFP's (and/or partners') own trucks in Angola, Burundi, Ethiopia (during the war), northern Uganda and at times in Liberia (particularly since 1996) and the Great Lakes region where adequate commercial transport has not been available or transporters have been unwilling to operate. Convoy systems have been used in most cases for increased security while recognizing that there is also a cost in terms of performance.⁹² (A separate thematic study of the 'strategic fleet' option for road transport in major emergency situations is being undertaken by WFP-OEDE during 1999.)

11.3 Whether using commercial transport or WFP trucks, experience in the Great Lakes region has shown the importance of using local drivers who speak the local dialects and are sensitive to signs of trouble -- or of non-local drivers being accompanied by a local person. Ethiopian drivers of WFP trucks brought in from Ethiopia, and the Kenyan drivers of trucks contracted in Kenya, experienced problems and several were killed in insecure areas of Uganda and Rwanda in 1994-97.



11.4 Operations in southern Sudan (OLS southern sector) have depended, especially since 1993, largely on air-drops flying out of a base established in a remote part of northern Kenya. Major airlifts/air-bridges have been organized by WFP in Angola and UNHCR in former Yugoslavia. In all cases, commercially-chartered aircraft have carried the vast majority of the cargo. Military aircraft donated, often for short periods, by various governments have been used in various situations but their operations have sometimes been found to be more expensive and less flexible than using commercially-hired aircraft. Military procedures often limit the tonnage carried (less than on equivalent privately-operated aircraft).⁹³ Two small aircraft made available to OLS by the Government of Germany, for example, were accompanied by more than 40 support staff. Commercial transporters operate with a fraction of that number. And some commercial companies and pilots have apparently been more ready than their military counterparts to undertake rescue/evacuation flights.

11.5 Parts of southern Sudan have been served intermittently by barge convoys up the Nile and three other rivers and by train convoys, all of which cross from government-held territory to rebel-held areas, delivering aid on both sides. However, the use of train convoys had to be suspended in 1995 as the army was taking advantage of the passage of the relief train to also move its own supply trains. Following signature by the Government, SPLM and UN/OCHA of a protocol on rail and cross-line road corridors (Rome, November 1998), it is hoped to resume train and cross-line road convoys in 1999.

11.6 Chartered coastal vessels were a vital element of the regional logistics network in the Liberia region (1996), moving personnel as well as supplies, and contributing to staff security by providing a means of evacuation.

11.7 To speed deliveries, reduce the costs of delivering supplies and/or to assure the continuity of operations by preventing deterioration of key infrastructure, WFP has repaired roads and bridges (e.g. in Afghanistan, Liberia, Uganda); rehabilitated or provided additional equipment and arranged management assistance for ports (e.g. Mozambique 1980s, Monrovia 1993/95, Somalia); provided support for rail infrastructure (in Tanzania for the Great Lakes operation 1995-98), and limited inputs for airports (Afghanistan, Liberia 1996, Lokichoggio Kenya, for the south Sudan operation). In the Caucasus, WFP established and managed a coordinated inter-country logistics system to assure the delivery of essential (not-just-WFP) supplies.

11.8 However, in late 1998, a proposal to improve -- and thus enhance the capacity of -- the road into the western part of southern Sudan from Uganda remained without funding. Donors were apparently unwilling to fund the proposed Special Operation although some indicated that they would be prepared to have some of the cost charged to their LTSH contributions. This may indicate a possible need to review funding strategies in the light of the new full-cost-recovery modality. At the same time, some observers, while acknowledging the benefits to the assistance operation of such infrastructure improvement, have cautioned that account needs to be taken of possible unintended side effects -- such as facilitating illegal exports by warring parties.

11.9 Deliveries have also been influenced by international politics and sanctions. For eastern DR-Congo, WFP's LTSH rates were increased by \$700/ton in 1998 following the refusal of the government to accept deliveries passing through Uganda, Rwanda or Burundi, forcing WFP to fly supplies from Mwanza in Tanzania. Deliveries to Burundi were slowed for some months and delivery costs increased after the imposition in 1996(?) of an embargo by countries of the region. As a result of a similar embargo on Sierra-Leone, little



food entered that country between May 1997 and January 1998 and it was fortuitous that WFP had significant stocks in the country on which it was able to draw to keep priority humanitarian programmes going.

Collaboration in logistics

11.10 The need for inter-agency collaboration in the planning and use of logistics resources in emergencies, and particularly in complex/conflict emergencies, is evident. But so also is the need of each agency to be assured of the ability to support and sustain its own priority programme activities. In general, there has been informal coordination and collaboration between the main, operational agencies but there have also been some formal arrangements. For example, a joint WFP-UNHCR logistics operation was set up in Pakistan for assistance to Afghan refugees in the late 1980s. In the Great Lakes in 1996/97 a regional UN Joint (DHA-UNHCR-UNICEF-WFP) Logistics Centre (UNJLC) was established in Kampala and UNHCR-WFP Movement Control Centres in certain field locations each structured to address the particular logistics needs and problems in the area concerned.

11.11 The tripartite (WFP-UNHCR-UNICEF) evaluation of the Great Lakes emergency operation recommended that the procedures document for the establishment of UNJLCs in future operations, agreed in draft form in February 1997 by the logistics sections of UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP, should be incorporated into the global MOUs between them and into their internal logistics manuals in order to expedite similar cooperation in the future.⁹⁴

Losses during delivery operations

11.12 Despite extensive and repetitive negotiations to ensure safe passage, trucks and escort vehicles have occasionally hit mines (e.g. in Angola, Rwanda, Uganda 1994) and been caught in local fighting (Angola and Liberia), and local commanders have demanded 'taxes' in many places. But the major problems -- causes of losses -- in the delivery chain have been ambushes of convoys and the looting of warehouses. In some incidents, large quantities have been lost, notably when warehouses and road convoys were looted in Somalia (1993-6), road convoys in Rwanda (1994), and barge convoys in southern Sudan (1992/93), and when staff have been evacuated leaving behind large stocks (e.g. northern Afghanistan 1997). Food stocks have been seized -- misappropriated -- by warring parties for their own use (as, for example, in Angola when UNITA appropriated stocks in Huambo in 1993⁹⁵) and/or to cause disruption (as in southern Sudan when a renegade faction seized stocks in Bahr-el-Ghazal in 1995).

11.13 There have been repeated smaller, but still significant, incidents in all operations, many perpetrated by small militia groups and bandits. In some cases trucks and their loads have been hijacked (e.g. Burundi 1994/96, Liberia 1992-5, Somalia 1993-6), in others they have been burned (e.g. northern Uganda 1994). On occasions they have been attacked while returning empty from a delivery (e.g. northern Uganda 1994, 1998). Motivations for attacks clearly vary. Apart from the food itself, the trucks (and the radios and other equipment they might be carrying) are potentially valuable for both warring parties and bandits. But some attacks, such as those by the Lords Resistance Army in northern Uganda (1994-98), appear to have been aimed more at general disruption and embarrassing the government by discouraging transporters from operating in the area while not being seen to directly harm the local population. In some cases relief vehicles have been deliberately targeted, in others they may have been chance victims of an ambush.



11.14 Problems of looting have been particularly acute in clan-based societies where raiding is traditional and there is little respect for property which does not belong to the clan or to another clan sufficiently strong to protect it (eastern Kenya, northern Uganda, Somalia, southern Sudan). In Somalia, the UN has been characterized as being a 'weak clan'. Pilferage and attempted fraud by contractors, port and warehouse personnel have been common in all operations, perhaps inevitably so in situations characterized by extreme resource scarcity and, often, breakdowns of law and order, social and moral values.

11.15 In former-Yugoslavia, convoys transiting the territory of one ethnic group to reach that of another were subject to 'tit-for-tat' obstruction and taxing by the different parties who closely monitored how much was being delivered to the different areas and retaliated whenever any delivery to one of 'their' areas was impeded.

Measures to reduce cargo losses

11.16 Measures to reduce losses of food during transport and storage have included:

- improved physical security of warehouses and improved commodity control systems;
- convoys, sometimes with armed escorts; and
- the provision of less attractive commodities.

In Somalia, special contract arrangements have been made with transporters under which risk has effectively been 'privatized'/contracted out.

11.17 *Warehouse security and control systems:* Improved stock control systems have reduced losses through theft during movement and storage (e.g. in Rwanda and Uganda, 1994/95). Following a systematic assessment of security risks in the Great Lakes region in 1998, measures are underway to improve the physical security of all WFP warehouses there (including perimeter fences, secure doors and locks, lighting, etc.). In the same region, standardized forms and procedures are being introduced for commodity control, and investigative facilities being established. These improvements have been facilitated by the establishment of a region-wide cargo loss reduction programme and regular meetings of WFP logistics officers.

11.18 Under the auspices of the headquarters Field Security Task Force (FSTF), initiatives are now being taken to promote similar measures in other regions. But, too often, the necessary personnel and other resources have not been available to establish adequate controls at the beginning of an operation, and it has proven difficult, and dangerous, to get on top of problems later. In Uganda, an expatriate brought in to tackle the problem in 1993 was threatened and had to leave after only a short time. His replacement narrowly escaped an attempt to kill him.

11.19 *Convoys, convoy clearance systems:* Road convoys have been the most dangerous WFP activity and the importance of clear, unambiguous clearance procedures and strict adherence to convoy movement procedures is illustrated by two incidents in Angola in 1992/93. A \$1 million claim by a contractor who lost trucks in an ambush at that time is still outstanding against WFP: there is a dispute as to whether formal clearance had been given or not. In the same period, two trucks which broke down and, after being repaired, did not await new clearance before trying to follow the convoy, were attacked. In general, however, there were few incidents in Angola when clearances had been secured and convoy procedures followed. Nonetheless, a staff member noted that, in 1993: "There was



always fear of being targeted in spite of official, high-level clearances since local commanders did not always follow orders when they disapproved of them."

11.20 Such fears have frequently been well-founded in situations where bandits and irregular armed groups operate. In northern Uganda in 1998, an NGO convoy was attacked on a road which had been declared 'safe' by the military authorities, illustrating the need for multiple sources of information and constant vigilance, and the fact that, in such unpredictable situations, security can never be guaranteed.

11.21 The importance of ensuring clearances at all levels -- and ensuring that clearances from headquarters have indeed been passed on to troops on the ground up-country -- is illustrated by an incident in Uige, Angola in 1993 when a transport aircraft and its crew were lost. The clearance obtained from Luanda had apparently not been communicated to the troops guarding the airport in Uige.

11.22 *Less attractive commodities:* In Liberia 1995 and Somalia 1994, losses were reduced when rice was replaced by a less attractive cereal. It was also noted in the Great Lakes region in 1995 that there were no major diversions of low-value commodities (although they were subject to petty pilferage). In Somalia and southern Sudan in 1998, no stocks were kept in field locations. In Liberia, only minimal buffer stocks have been held to cover rainy season needs. This reduces risks of stocks being lost, but increases the risks for the beneficiaries of any interruption in the local supply pipeline.

11.23 The close relationship between commodity choice and security, and the impact that the actions of one aid organization can have on the operations of others, was clearly demonstrated in Somalia in 1992. WFP had been able to reopen the port of Mogadishu in May 1992, discharge maize there and, with careful security arrangements, transport it across faction lines and distribute it without difficulty, until August that year. Then, against the advice of WFP, a donor supplied a small quantity of family food packages including high-value items (rice, wheat flour, vegetable oil, sugar, DSM) -- 4,000 cartons. Armed men from both sides of the factionally-divided city invaded the port (in south Mogadishu) and appropriated part of the consignment. Some cartons ended up on the local market. Planned allocations could not be supplied and vehicles coming from north Mogadishu were looted. Aggrieved beneficiaries turned on WFP and its implementing partner. The use of the port and the painstakingly-established security arrangements for food distributions were compromised.

11.24 *Privatized-risk in Somalia:* In Somalia, after years of suffering high losses despite negotiations for safe passage and the employment of armed guards and escorts, a system was instituted in 1997 whereby local transporters deposit a bond for the full value of the cargo at the delivery point where WFP staff monitor the delivery and distribution.⁹⁶ Under this 'privatized-risk' system, losses have been negligible (occasionally, contractors have replaced lost commodities) and risks to WFP staff have been greatly reduced. Transport rates have necessarily increased, reflecting the additional risks borne by the contractors and the costs of the dispositions they take to get the food through and protect their investment (and lives are known to have been lost in the process), but the overall cost-effectiveness of the WFP operation has increased. This arrangement builds on the demonstrated ability of local traders to cross lines of conflict. It benefits from the particularities of the clan and entrepreneurial systems in Somalia. However, the long-term implications of reliance on -- and consolidating the influence of -- a small number of big contractors and their associated militias, remains to be evaluated and the applicability of



such arrangements in other conflict situations has yet to be tested. In other countries, reliance is still placed on UN/WFP-organised convoys and, in some cases, armed escorts.

Armed escorts

11.25 The use of armed escorts to protect convoys and personnel is controversial within WFP and the humanitarian community in general although all agencies, including the ICRC, have found it necessary to resort to their use in certain exceptional situations.

11.26 WFP has used various types of armed escorts to protect convoys: UN forces in Somalia (1993-4); militias in Somalia (1992, 1995-7); the national army in northern Uganda (1994-98); police in the northern sector of OLS, Sudan (1994-98); WFP-employed armed guards within port and besieged cities in Angola (1993-8)⁹⁷; ECOMOG forces at times in Liberia (1995-96). However, it was found preferable to operate on the basis of carefully-negotiated clearances but without armed escorts in Angola (outside the port and besieged cities) and in Ethiopia (during the war) although, in Angola, the army would check roads for mines before convoys passed.

11.27 It is generally recognized that an armed escort associated with any particular party to a conflict is likely to attract attack by its enemies, and that any escort that is used must be sufficient to deter attack and be ready to use its firepower if attacked. In Uganda, an army-escorted NGO convoy was attacked in 1998 a week after the NGO had been warned that it would be attacked if escorted. There, and in OLS-north, escorts have not always provided an effective response in case of attack.

11.28 In Ethiopia in the 1980s, WFP's truck fleet operated on the principle, reluctantly recognised by the Government, that no army escorts were permitted. This enabled WFP to deliver food from certain government-held areas to destinations in rebel-held Eritrea and Tigray along roads that were *de facto* controlled by the rebel forces. These forces occasionally stopped the convoys, but then let them proceed without hindrance to their destinations.⁹⁸ They made it clear that the convoys would have been attacked had they been accompanied by an army escort. One reported problem was that Ethiopian army vehicles would try to attach themselves to the WFP convoys in order to benefit from their protection! This cross-line operation was possible because all the military forces, including the rebels, were reasonably well-disciplined, which has not been the case in all conflict situations.

11.29 The Red Cross Movement has a strict policy of using armed escorts only in exceptional circumstances and then only to provide protection against bandits and common criminals in a situation of general law-and-order breakdown and with the approval of the party or authority 'controlling' the territory through which the convoy will pass and in which the humanitarian assistance will be delivered. The Movement does not avail itself of armed protection offered by UN troops during an enforcement action under Chapter VII or when it is possible that the UN will sooner or later be considered as a party to the conflict by the local population or the belligerents.⁹⁹

11.30 Many NGOs follow similar general policies although there are some divisions of opinion which were clearly evident in the discussions that led to the code of conduct for humanitarian agencies in Sierra-Leone (November 1998). Many NGO personnel consider the use of armed escorts to be contrary to the humanitarian ethic, and even to implicitly condone the use of armed force in general,¹⁰⁰ but some maintain the imperative to deliver



assistance to the needy using any means necessary. Among WFP staff opinions are similarly divided but with less reluctance to using armed escorts.

11.31 The key factor in these decisions has to be the level of organization and discipline of military/armed groups, and the extent of banditry (see section 4). Where there is no discipline and widespread banditry, the choice is effectively between using armed escorts or not operating. However, it has also been suggested that, in Somalia (early 1990s): "The relief agencies -- the UN, the ICRC and the NGOs -- increased the market for weapons and ammunitions because they hired large private armies to protect their convoys and distribution sites."¹⁰¹

11.32 A recent Canadian study addressed to NGOs has proposed that, in the absence of publicly-funded security, and given the evident reluctance of the major powers to commit troops to provide security in countries in which they have no vital national interests, serious consideration should be given to engaging private security forces to protect humanitarian operations.¹⁰² Earlier proposals of a UN Humanitarian Police Force, or 'white helmets', did not find much support.¹⁰³

Recommendation 11-1: *WFP, together with UNHCR, should document the lessons learned in the operation of the UN joint logistics centre and movement control centres in the Great Lakes region (1994-97), including the procedures for establishing and operating the movement control centres, so that they will be readily available to those who may need to establish similar operations in the future. (This would complement the already-recorded procedures for UNJLCs.) WFP should promote the establishment of -- and ensure its capacity to take the lead in establishing -- similar UN joint logistics operations in future situations where logistics are particularly difficult and the consolidation of effort and resources critical.*

Recommendation 11-2: *WFP should:*

(a) establish guidelines on the use of armed guards and escorts in WFP/UN humanitarian operations in agreement with other UN agencies and in consultation with major donors;¹⁰⁴

(b) ensure that adequate control systems are established from the outset of all future transport and warehousing operations, including visible levels of expatriate supervision;

(c) capture the experience of its logistic staff and make the context-specific lessons-learned available to other staff through a combination of concise case studies, general guidelines, regular meetings/workshops of logistics personnel (as already instituted in the Great Lakes region), and the inclusion of a module on logistic aspects in the training of other programme staff;

(d) review policy and practice, and consult with donors, with regard to the funding of logistic improvement activities as special operations or through LTSH.

12 Mobilizing Staff and Resources

Mobilizing personnel

12.1 Finding staff with the right experience and skills for work in a conflict environment has been a problem for all humanitarian agencies, including WFP. The joint UNHCR/WFP evaluation of emergency food assistance in Bosnia noted the problems of finding the right



skills for working in a conflict environment: “Agencies must select staff in terms of their capability to engage continually in stressful negotiations with difficult interlocutors, and to remain firm even under threat without jeopardizing the continuity of the operationrecruitment of a sufficient number of field-office-level managers with previous experience in emergency operations and knowledge of both agencies’ principles and objectives is an important priority.”

12.2 Experienced field staff in many complex emergency operations echo these concerns while field managers lament the time it takes to mobilize additional staff, the heavy reliance on personnel with little or no previous WFP experience, and the inability of WFP, due to funding considerations, to offer contracts of more than a few months at-a-time in many situations, which makes it difficult to attract and keep good professional staff. They note that some individuals recruited for conflict operations have been found -- or have found themselves -- to be unsuited to work in such environments: several (including an individual with previous military background) have quit OLS-south after only 15 days in the field, for example.

12.3 WFP field managers also emphasize the importance of patience and good interpersonal skills, and of all staff understanding --and demonstrating sensitivity to -- the underlying social, political and economic issues. However, in practice, the majority of WFP staff working in conflict situations have received little or no organized briefing on the history and social context of the situations they were being ‘parachuted’ into. Only in OLS-south have such briefings been organized systematically (by UNICEF as lead agency), and even there staff have sometimes been too busy to attend. Some elements of inter-personal skills relating specifically to security are included in the global WFP security awareness training programme which started in early 1999 but more may need to be done in this regard.

12.4 Some managers emphasize the need to build teams within the country-level operation with the possibility to rotate individuals at regular intervals between functions and/or locations. But the total numbers of staff have generally not been sufficient for such a ‘luxury’ although systematic rotation of staff between Monrovia and Freetown was managed during a critical period in 1996.

12.5 Staff also draw attention to the prejudices and special risks that individuals of certain origins can face in tense and insecure situations, and, notwithstanding the principles of internationalism, the need to be cautious about -- and perhaps to avoid - - selecting and assigning individuals whose nationality, ethnic origin (or that of their spouses) or antecedents, would be perceived as associating them with a particular party to the conflict.

12.6 There has also been widespread concern, during 1998/99, that the Programme risked losing many good people -- especially logistics staff engaged in complex emergencies -- on account of the 4-year limit on project (non-core) contracts. Field managers have also expressed concern about constraints on the local hiring of staff suitable for emergency environments arising from insistence on gender balance and the use of the roster. A management review of WFP in OLS-south also drew attention to the need for timely action to up-grade the levels of key field posts as well as the total number of staff when a situation ‘explodes’ (as in southern Sudan in 1998).

12.7 The knowledge and abilities of local staff have been of crucial importance in almost all operations, with the notable exception of OLS-south¹⁰⁵, but both WFP managers and senior local staff recognize the pressures that local staff can be subjected to. They emphasize that, in conflict situations, it can be inadvisable -- even irresponsible -- to put



local staff in positions where they have, or are perceived to have, responsibility for the control and disposition of resources. In Somalia in 1998, whenever possible the country director accompanies local staff and is seen to be the decision-maker when important issues are to be decided or decisions announced.

12.8 It has also been suggested that the current UN Common System on Contracts, Benefits and Allowances is not geared towards quick response in emergency situations.¹⁰⁶

Recommendation 12-1: *In relation to recruitment and training, WFP should*

- (a) develop standby arrangements with its major implementing partners, improve its existing arrangements with UNV and enhance its own systems to rapidly screen candidates and mobilize staff with the necessary personal qualities and experience for complex/conflict operations; and*
- (b) initiate a review and modification, as necessary, of relevant UN common system regulations with a view to facilitating the rapid mobilization of additional staff;*
- (c) include inter-personal and negotiating skills as an element in routine personal appraisals and when selecting individuals for work in conflict situations; review the inter-personal and negotiating skills component of the security awareness training and ensure that adequate training in these aspects is provided for all staff in, or being sent into, conflict emergency situations.*

Recommendation 12-2: *In each complex/conflict emergency operation, WFP should:*

- (a) provide all newly-arriving staff, national and international, with a detailed briefing on the social and political background to the situation, the policy of the UN, the Programme's specific mission and objectives, and personal conduct (avoiding attitudes and behaviour which could put themselves and others at risk);*
- (b) ensure that, in each conflict situation, management and control procedures are in place to protect local staff from unreasonable pressures and risks;*
- (c) provide professional personnel management staff to support local recruitment and personnel administration functions, and organize on-the-job training, in any major operation and especially when extensive local recruitment is to be undertaken; and*
- (d) include provision for the above, and the organization of inter-personal skills training for staff, in the plans and budgets for all EMOPs and PRROs, linked to the existing provisions for security (referred to in section 10).*

Mobilizing food commodities and managing the pipeline

12.9 Notwithstanding the obvious achievements in mobilizing and delivering massive quantities of food in recent years (e.g. in the Great Lakes region, 1994-98), problems remain in keeping the pipeline flowing for protracted operations and, sometimes, in responding rapidly to increases in needs. The evaluation of operations in Angola noted, in 1996, that the uncertain pipeline generally limited planning to a 3-month time horizon. In the Great Lakes in 1994-7, WFP was sometimes unable to fulfil its delivery promises to NGO partners -- failings which, in a volatile situation, have exposed the staff of partners to threats and violence from aggrieved beneficiaries.¹⁰⁷ The crisis in southern Sudan was foreseen several months ahead and the subject of an appeal in November 1997. Effective response in terms of increased food availability began in May 1998.



12.10 Field staff express concern about delays in approval of some EMOPS and procedural obstacles to borrowing. Problems arise in relation to: (i) the lack of confirmed pledges to guarantee replacement, and (ii) the often-extended delays in the availability of LTSH funds -- commodities may be available to be borrowed but LTSH funding only becomes available when the replacement commodities are loaded and Bills of Lading established. Staff sometimes manage to circumvent such obstacles by breaking rules but delays can occur: in one case a contract was lost and delivery delayed until the next harvest. These problems are not specific to 'complex' emergencies, but are acutely felt in such operations where rapid response and reliable pipelines are critical.

12.11 The regional management of resources in Liberia and neighbouring countries (1991-99) and in the Great Lakes region (1994-98), and the computerized pipeline management system developed for the purpose, greatly facilitated both the maintenance of pipelines to the priority areas in the various countries concerned and response to changing needs as refugees and IDPs shifted within and between the four countries (Liberia, Sierra-Leone, Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire). The single overall budget enabled WFP to flexibly allocate and reallocate commodity and ITSH resources in application of the principle that 'food-follows-the-affected-beneficiaries' according to the pace and extent of population movements.¹⁰⁸ But, more recently, the flexibility of regional resource management has been reduced by increased ear-marking by donors and WFP, which has to refer back to the donor for permission to redirect or reschedule an ear-marked contribution, has had difficulty in maintaining supplies to certain areas/programmes in both these regions. Increased ear-marking is also reported to have constrained some of ICRC's operations.¹⁰⁹

12.12 However, while beneficial in terms of pipeline management, the regional management of resources can have some drawbacks. The evaluation of the Liberia regional operation found that the regional approach as implemented had led to over-simplified categorizations and an inappropriate standardization of rations throughout the region with inadequate recognition of differences between the different groups of refugees in different countries. There is, therefore, a need for imaginative planning and for management procedures to facilitate local variations within a regional programme.

Recommendation 12-3: *WFP should review internally and with donors the performance and constraints in resourcing complex emergency operations including problems arising from earmarking and in relation to borrowing, and seek to remove procedural obstacles to borrowing .*

Recommendation 12-4: *WFP should propose, and donors support, regional programmes where the management of resources on a regional basis can improve responsiveness to the needs of beneficiaries in a changing situation. WFP should review the experience of planning and managing resources on a regional basis in the Liberia and Great Lakes regions and develop procedures to allow for differential rations for different groups.*



Part V: Underlying Issues

13 Ground Rules, Principles and Ethical Dilemmas

Ethical dilemmas

13.1 All organizations providing assistance in areas affected by conflict, particularly civil conflict, are confronted by a number of dilemmas. They are particularly acute for WFP and its partners given the importance of food for the health and survival of people in many cases, the considerations discussed in section 3 above, and the scale (and costs) of food assistance operations. Dilemmas include: What risks should staff be expected to take? Where should the balance lie between staff security and the needs of -- and agencies' responsibility towards -- beneficiaries? What levels of losses and misappropriation can be accepted? What, if any, principles should govern the provision of humanitarian assistance and what should be done if they are not respected? Should conditions ever be attached to the provision of humanitarian assistance? Is it possible to be neutral and impartial in the face of gross violations of human rights? Should humanitarian agencies and staff report on human rights abuses (before or during a complex emergency)? Should they adjust their programmes in response to such abuses or other political considerations? What kind of relationships should WFP have with non-State parties to a conflict? To what extent, if at all, should the risk of undesirable side effects influence decisions on the provision of humanitarian assistance? When, if ever, should assistance be suspended, or not given?

13.2 There has been little formal discussion of these issues within WFP and staff who are regularly confronted with them in the field have received little guidance. The general ethos has been to deliver food wherever people are believed to be in need of it and the Programme can mobilize the resources and find the means to deliver. This has been tempered only by considerations relating to the risks to staff and the levels of losses and misappropriation. What may be 'unacceptable' in these respects has been left to the discretion of the individuals on the spot and, inevitably, different individuals have different perspectives -- value judgements -- as to what is acceptable in terms of risks to themselves and their collaborators, and of losses to the Programme and the intended beneficiaries. The 'right to assistance' and the 'right to food' have been, implicitly, overriding considerations. There has been little explicit, systematic consideration within WFP of the possible side effects of either the food aid itself or the manner in which its delivery and distribution is organized.

13.3 More explicit attention to ethical as well as legal issues surrounding humanitarian aid has been given by UNHCR and ICRC (which have dual assistance and protection mandates), by UNICEF (notably in the context of its lead agency role in OLS and concern for child rights) and by some NGOs (e.g. MSF, ACF). Recently, some important initiatives have been taken by DHA/OCHA including the promotion of the 'strategic framework' concept and approach (endorsed by the ACC and being piloted in Afghanistan since 1997), the inclusion of a chapter on 'principles' in all consolidated appeals (started end-1998), and the preparation and circulation to all members of the IASC of a discussion paper on "Common UN Ground Rules based on Agreed Principles"¹¹⁰ (November 1998).

13.4 The issue has been summarized in the report of the Secretary-General on Strengthening the Coordination of Emergency Humanitarian Assistance of the United Nations, 1998, as follows: "... the whole concept of 'humanitarianism' is under scrutiny. There have been suggestions that, in some situations, humanitarian aid may do harm as well as good. This is a healthy debate, which I encourage. If it leads to the adoption of



agreed principles and ground rules, accepted by all parties concerned, for the delivery of humanitarian assistance, which reduce or eliminate the risk of 'collateral damage' during humanitarian operations, then it will have served an important purpose it should help the international community to focus on the development of a fully-coordinated approach to countries in crisis, in which key aspects of a recovery and peace-building programme are included."¹¹¹

13.5 Similar sentiments have been expressed by some WFP staff and other concerned individuals. The editor of a recent book on the moral dilemmas of humanitarian intervention emphasizes the need to: "... heighten the understanding of [humanitarian intervention] by considering moral questions and implications so that we might be more competent than confounded as we pursue difficult choices."¹¹²

13.6 Donors have also been showing increasing concern and interest. DAC-OECD published guidelines in 1997 clearly placing humanitarian relief in the broader context of peace and development.¹¹³ ECHO joined with OCHA is proposing principles for the operation in eastern DR-Congo in 1998, and ECHO and ODI convened a conference in London in April 1998 on "Principled Aid in an Unprincipled World: Relief, War and Humanitarian Principles". However, as noted in one presentation at that conference: "... the real debate about the principles of humanitarian action should be around their implementation rather than their development. In a similar way to [international humanitarian law], they may not be perfect but they do provide a useful framework for many situations What has been lacking is not so much what the principles are, rather how to apply them."¹¹⁴

13.7 Individual WFP staff in a few countries have been involved in local discussions concerning the definition and implementation of principles, and many of the Programme's major implementing partners have signed up to the various codes and ground rules discussed below. At headquarters level, a small Humanitarian Cluster has been established within the Strategy and Policy Division (SP), and staff from there or ODT's Humanitarian Liaison Unit represent the Programme in related discussions at the level of the IASC Working Group. But little has yet been done to think through, still less work out, the implications for WFP policy and practice. Indeed, many staff consider talk of 'principles' as an irrelevance that gets in the way of the business of 'saving lives'.

13.8 Staff in the field, however, are increasingly confronted with these issues as WFP has progressively taken more direct responsibility for delivering food supplies to multiple extended delivery points within conflict-affected areas and, in some cases, for selecting and distributing to beneficiaries. Previously, most of the 'front-line' problems were faced by implementing partners. Increasingly, WFP staff are having to face up to them, and the associated difficult decisions, as well as to international demands for accountability -- accountability not only for the resources themselves but also for the impact of interventions.

13.9 A workshop of WFP staff and government officials from a number of African countries in 1995 called for the development of a 'code of conduct' to serve as a guide for WFP operations as well as those of its implementing partners as a means to ensuring impartiality, particularly in dealing with armed 'victims' of crisis.¹¹⁵ Not followed up within WFP at the time, this recommendation now has to be seen in the context of the broader inter-agency initiatives mentioned above, amongst others.



Ground rules, principles and codes of conduct

13.10 The operations in the southern sector of OLS in Sudan have been unique in that formal agreements were signed between OLS (UNICEF as lead agency) and the humanitarian wings of the principal opposition movements in 1995/6. These 'ground rules' define the basic principles of humanitarian action on which the international assistance operation is based -- neutrality, impartiality, accountability and transparency -- and commit the UN agencies and collaborating NGOs on the one side, and the humanitarian wings of the rebel movements on the other, to mutual respect, respect for basic human rights and specific procedures for dealing with violations. The ground rules also cover, amongst other things: assistance for civilians only; provision of aid on the basis of need alone with priority to women, children and other vulnerable groups; information sharing and reporting; the ownership and use of assets; the privacy of agency/NGO compounds; the employment of staff and management of seconded personnel; rents and taxes.

13.11 Most significantly: 'local authorities', through the humanitarian wings, assume full responsibility for the safety and protection of relief workers in areas under their control; UN agencies and NGOs must ensure that all their staff living, working or visiting Sudan have valid entry passes from the 'respective political authorities'; each externally-supported programme and project must be approved in writing by the humanitarian wing of the movement in control of the area and be the subject of a tripartite letter of understanding (agency/OLS/humanitarian wing). The 'ground rules' thus confer quasi-governmental status on the opposition movements concerned.¹¹⁶ They have provided a fairly clear framework for all UN and UN-associated assistance operations (including but not limited to food assistance) and basis for dealing with violations in localities under the control of those factions. But they had no meaning for the renegade faction which effectively terrorized Bahr-el-Ghazal (1995-98) and their application has not been without difficulties. Difficulties have arisen notably because the principles have not been understood and accepted by all local leaders, and the officials of the humanitarian wings, who are designated by the opposition movements -- not nominated or elected (nor always respected) by the local communities and chiefs -- have not always fulfilled their responsibilities.

13.12 Amongst humanitarian workers, perceptions of the utility and effectiveness of the 'ground rules' in 1998/99 vary, but the ongoing experience is one, amongst others, which needs to be learned from. The findings of an independent study in 1998 of the use and effectiveness of humanitarian principles in several countries may provide useful lessons. The report is expected late-1999.¹¹⁷

13.13 Other documents have been drawn up by NGOs and UN agencies in Liberia (in 1996)¹¹⁸ and by NGOs in Sierra-Leone (in 1998)¹¹⁹ which constitute codes of conduct for agencies. They build on the 1994 global Red Cross/NGO Code of Conduct¹²⁰ adapting and expanding it to meet the perceived needs of the local situation. They were not negotiated and signed with the warring parties although the government and opposition groups were informed and cooperated with efforts to disseminate the principles as widely as possible. The process of drawing up the codes brought agencies together, increased mutual understanding and cooperation, and demonstrated to the warring parties a concerted position among the humanitarian agencies. Both define general principles (such as impartiality, neutrality, independence), specific principles related to not paying for access, and strict limitations on the use of armed escorts while explicitly recognizing that the safety of humanitarian workers depends, amongst other things, on the consent of the armed groups to allow access and assistance. Both call for solidarity amongst the humanitarian community and establish mechanisms (committees) for monitoring implementation. A



broadly similar set of Principles of Engagement for Emergency Humanitarian Assistance has been promoted by ECHO for DR-Congo (1998).

13.14 All these initiatives build on a core of international conventions which constitute 'International Humanitarian Law'. These have also been synthesized into a 'Humanitarian Charter' (1998) by the Sphere Project which involved a large number of agencies, institutions and individuals, and also defined 'minimum standards for disaster response'.¹²¹

13.15 Senior WFP staff involved in the negotiations in Liberia emphasize the importance of publicizing all violations, the possibility of influencing the larger among the warring parties, and the difficulty of dialoguing with and influencing the smaller factions.

13.16 An agreement being negotiated by the UN with the Taliban authorities in Afghanistan in late 1998, asserts similar basic principles (emphasizing non-discrimination) while defining minimum essential security requirements. It refers to international assistance being provided as part of an overall effort to achieve peace and stipulates that rehabilitation assistance will only be provided where it can be reasonably determined that no direct political or military advantage will accrue to the warring parties.

Recommendation 13-1: *WFP should:*

- (a) undertake an in-depth review of how existing ground rules and codes of conduct (both international and country-specific) have been applied in relation to food assistance in complex/conflict emergencies; and*
- (b) define and provide guidance and training to all WFP staff concerning the general principles of WFP's humanitarian action, and develop a code of conduct for WFP staff in conflict situations. This must be done in close consultation and coordination with OCHA and other IASC members;*

Political and human rights concerns

13.17 Human rights, protection and peace-building are central to the 'principles' debate. Field staff in WFP, as those of other organizations supporting and implementing humanitarian assistance operations, have been confronted with the question of whether they should, at the same time, be monitoring and reporting on human rights abuses, and using the leverage that their aid might offer to secure respect for the human rights of victimised population groups and to support reconciliation and conflict-resolution efforts. Agencies and individual staff face stark choice whether to speak out and leave, or stay silent and remain to continue providing assistance. Opinions within the international humanitarian community are sharply divided on this. Although brought together in the OLS ground rules, other codes of conduct avoid the human rights issue.

13.18 Some agencies and writers argue for an explicit linking of humanitarian action with political action for peace and respect for human rights -- emphasizing the needs, and the right, of victimised populations for protection as well as assistance. Others, including ICRC (and, probably, most WFP staff), insist on separation from political action. Some argue that separation is impossible in situations where civilians are being deliberately targeted, but all agree that aid cannot be a substitute for political action. Most conclude that aid must be 'politically informed, but not politically directed'. Some add that political negotiators should also appraise themselves of the information and perspectives of humanitarian agencies and personnel in the field.



13.19 The dilemma is illustrated by the difficulty experienced within the IASC and ECHA in trying (1998/99) to define the respective roles of Special Representatives of the Secretary General (SRSGs) and UN Humanitarian Coordinators (HCs) in complex emergencies where the UN is seeking political solutions and/or to maintain or enforce peace while also seeking to promote respect for human rights and providing humanitarian assistance. The guidance note approved in April 1999¹²² calls on HCs -- and, by implication, humanitarian agencies such as WFP, to: "...[recognize] that achieving a sustainable peace settlement, which will minimise political violence and thereby ameliorate the humanitarian situation, is in line with the overarching objectives of UN humanitarian mandates -- and, therefore.... in setting assistance objectives, [to] seek to support peacemaking and peacebuilding objectives and to ensure that these are not undermined by decisions relating to humanitarian assistance [and to] ensure that [negotiations for humanitarian access] do not inadvertently convey recognition or legitimacy on local parties."

13.20 The DAC guidelines referred to above call for "close cooperation among security policy, diplomacy, humanitarian and development cooperation organizations" to ensure that opportunities for moderating conflict, ending hostilities and starting peace negotiations". While emphasizing that promoting peace is not a primary responsibility of relief workers, the guidelines emphasize that they "need to be alert to the risk that their support for particular social institutions and authorities can be misrepresented and misunderstood."

13.21 For Afghanistan, a 'strategic framework' has been developed -- and endorsed by the ACC in September 1998 -- as a basis for an integrated plan (yet to be developed) to cover humanitarian, development, political and human rights concerns and activities, based on shared assessments and on goals and principles to which the whole assistance community subscribes.¹²³ This is intended to be developed as a model for UN/international assistance to countries recovering from crisis. At the same time, a new form of policy coordination body has been established for a 'fragmented state' -- the Afghanistan Programming Body, drawn from members of the donor, UN and NGO communities as well as the ICRC, World Bank and IOM. (There is no Afghan representation.)

13.22 At the international level, and specifically in relation to human rights, OCHA is participating along with OHCHR, UNDP, DPKO and DPA in the Task Force on the Integration of Human Rights into Peacemaking, Peace-Keeping and Peace-Building, which is considering the importance of institutional protections for human rights to a development plan which will ensure the long-term efficacy of humanitarian relief efforts. This approach is in line with the mainstreaming of human rights in the activities of the UN which is central to the Secretary-General's Reform Programme. ECHO is also engaged in a process of integrating human rights into its activities.

Recommendation 13-2: *WFP should: (a) review with other members of the IASC the implications for humanitarian agencies of the 'mainstreaming' of human rights within the work of the UN; (b) provide information and guidance to all WFP staff on the issues and on organizational policy in this connection.*

Conditionality? What may justify withholding or suspending assistance?

13.23 Most people reject the idea of 'conditionality' in the provision of humanitarian assistance, and it has been argued that (even) the OLS 'ground rules' do not impose any conditionality on the provision of assistance which, it is specified, should be given 'on the basis of need alone'. However, assistance has been suspended by WFP and other agencies, at least temporarily, in many locations in complex emergency countries (including



southern Sudan) in response to security incidents and/or misappropriations, as described in previous sections. All UN assistance to Afghanistan was suspended in 1998 after incidents following the bombing of sites in Afghanistan by the USA and the resumption of assistance has explicitly been conditional on the signing by the Taliban authorities of a security agreement.

13.24 Deciding how to respond to incidents of serious looting and misappropriation is itself a major problem, and a heavy responsibility. In most situations, there is no functioning or effective judicial system, and the only real sanction that can be applied is the suspension of assistance. But such action may punish the intended beneficiary population rather than the perpetrators (beyond denying them further resources to loot).

13.25 In practice, responses have varied between and within operations: there are been little consistency of approach. In some instances in southern Sudan, Afghanistan, Angola, former-Yugoslavia, Liberia, Somalia and elsewhere a stand has been taken on principle and operations in the area, or in favour of the group concerned, have been suspended temporarily. Staff may have been withdrawn. In some cases, negotiations with parties to the conflict -- coupled with threats to suspend assistance to the group concerned -- have reduced the incidence of looting and misappropriation (at least temporarily) and, in some cases, resulted in looted supplies being returned (e.g. in Afghanistan 1997, Liberia 1996, OLS-south 1997-98). In other cases there has been little or no reaction, nor even a public protest. When assistance has been suspended, the suspension has in some cases been maintained until there was some restitution or concrete action by the party responsible. In other cases assistance has been simply been resumed after a short interval, until the next incident.

13.26 In Liberia in May 1996, however, in view of the overall situation and the blatant disregard for human rights and misappropriation of humanitarian assistance by many of the factions, all agencies and donors agreed on a 'minimalist' approach under which assistance would be strictly limited to specific, targeted life-saving relief efforts to the exclusion of all other forms of assistance. Inevitably, however, there were different perspectives as to what was essential, life-saving and what was not.¹²⁴ WFP's emergency school feeding programme was a case in point. Later the same year, all agencies suspended assistance to Cape Mount county in view of the unacceptable security situation there.

13.27 The effectiveness of any reaction to such incidents is to a large extent dependent on a coordinated, unified approach by the whole (international) humanitarian community, or at least among those organizations who are involved, or could become involved, in the provision of food assistance. Such coordinated action has been agreed in some instances, but even then has not always been maintained (e.g. in Angola in 1993, when one organization 'broke ranks' and returned to an area which everyone else had agreed to boycott).

13.28 In practice, suspension is always a judgement call. Deliveries are stopped when the Humanitarian Coordinator, WFP Country Director or staff member or implementing partner on the spot judges that the risks for staff are unacceptable or that losses and misappropriation are unacceptable. A recent study has suggested that the criterion should be a judgement that suspension would be the course of action that would cause the least harm.¹²⁵ Another has indicated that threats of withdrawal and suspension of assistance are rarely effective, and then only at a local level.¹²⁶ Again, it would be necessary to analyse potential positive and negative effects. The vulnerability of the civilian population to any



interruption in food supplies -- taking account of what they would actually receive of what might be delivered -- would be a key determinant.

Recommendation 13-3: *WFP should:*

- (a) work with its partners and other concerned institutions to try to assess the effects and effectiveness of suspensions of assistance in particular circumstances;*
- (b) work with the ERC and OCHA and, at country level, the Humanitarian Coordinator, to agree a concerted response to incidents which might justify consideration of withdrawal (and conditions for resumption subsequently).*

14 Epilogue

14.1 The issues discussed in this report are fundamental to a large part of the Programme's operations today as well as to the lives and well-being of many people in conflict-affected areas. They need to be considered, analysed and acted on systematically, on an inter-divisional basis, within WFP, and to be kept under constant review, recognizing:

- the essentially political nature of complex emergencies, the difficulties arising from WFP's inevitable association with the political activities of the United Nations and its own donors, and the political, military and economic significance of food;
- the impact of these factors and the day-to-day actions of the Programme and its staff on the achievement of humanitarian objectives and on staff security; and
- the potential for enhanced complementary working relationships with agencies (including ICRC and UNICEF as well as UNHCR and UNHCHR) which have protection mandates.

14.2 The wealth of experience within WFP relating to the provision of food in complex emergencies needs to be captured on a continuous basis. Individual staff as well as the Programme as an institution must also be enabled to benefit from the ideas and experience of other institutions and organizations.

14.3 Within WFP headquarters, initiatives are already being taken in relation to some of the issues. OEDE, SP and OD are all sponsoring studies of particular aspects. SP and/or ODT represent in inter-agency fora on several topics. But there is not yet a concerted, overall strategy and, on occasions, coordination and information-exchange between divisions have been less than ideal.

14.4 Within WFP as a whole, there is a wealth of experience relating to the provision of food in complex (conflict) emergencies. Ideas and experience are continually accumulating but, in common with a number of other organizations, the 'institutional memory' leaves much to be desired. There is no mechanism to systematically record, analyse, summarize and share that experience either within the Programme or with others concerned, notably the Programme's major implementing partners and donors. Similarly, there is no mechanism by which staff (in headquarters and field offices) can benefit from the ideas and experience of other institutions and organizations.



Recommendation 14-1: *To ensure the thorough and systematic examination and follow up on the issues and recommendations presented in this report, OD should establish an inter-divisional taskforce and an associated consultative group of field-based staff, and develop a specific workplan. The workplan should include joint action with other agencies and arrangements to benefit from the experience of other internationally-recognized groups and individual researchers, as appropriate. It might include workshops at regional level and in Rome focusing on specific topics or groups of topics.*

Recommendation 14-2: *To facilitate organizational learning and the coordination of action within WFP in relation to complex emergencies, WFP should:*

- (a) establish an inter-divisional mechanism to serve as a focal point for the exchange of information and experience and the coordination of efforts in relation to complex emergency issues. (The informal information service presently provided by ODT could be further developed, and institutionalized, as a network of concerned staff to share and comment on experiences and the findings of studies and evaluations relating to emergencies, particularly complex/conflict emergencies); and*
- (b) institute a system for the systematic debriefing of staff -- using a checklist of issues drawn from the present study -- at the end of assignments in conflict situations.*



Consolidated list of Recommendations

Part II: Relationships

4 Access and Relations with Warring Parties

Recommendation 4-1: *While continuing to work closely with and support the ERC/OCHA and Humanitarian Coordinators in each complex/conflict emergency situation in (i) negotiating access to all civilian populations for purposes of assessment and the delivery and monitoring of humanitarian assistance (including but not limited to food aid), and (ii) establishing clearly defined working relationships between all international humanitarian agencies and the warring parties, WFP should:*

(a) undertake a detailed review and analysis of the Programme's own experience in dealing with non-state entities and the outcomes for both food security and staff security. This might be done through a series of small workshops;

(b) ensure, through careful selection and training, that the Programme's own staff in the field have the capacity to negotiate with and persuade local commanders and local faction leaders to cooperate with the provision of humanitarian food assistance to those who need it most. Selection criteria should include and training focus on inter-personal and negotiating skills. All staff also need a basic understanding of international humanitarian law as well as of the local context (see also recommendations 12 and 13). Training should be graded for different levels of staff;

(c) seek to ensure a high degree of continuity of staff in field postings, given the importance of individual relationships in all negotiations and the implementation of agreements.

Recommendation 4-2: *WFP should encourage and assist the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) in using local news media to inform the population at large, including combatants, of the objectives of the humanitarian assistance programmes. WFP itself, in coordination with the HC, should ensure the dissemination of information concerning food assistance.*

5 Overall Planning and Management of International Assistance

Recommendation 5-1: *WFP should:*

(a) review how the different models for policy-making, programme planning, resource management and coordination have affected the planning and provision of food assistance and its integration with other international assistance in protracted complex emergency and 'transitional' situations, and how support to recovery (including reintegration and demobilization) has been integrated alongside continuing food relief needs in planning reflected in consolidated appeals;

(b) ensure that that experience and the particular issues relating to food are taken fully into account in the various ongoing initiatives and discussions at the international level concerning frameworks for strategic planning and coordination, and that, as necessary, WFP's own procedures are adapted to fit in with such more integrated arrangements, and staff are trained accordingly;



(c) work within the framework of the IASC to promote the establishment of a suitable, broad-based consultative body to act on behalf of the international humanitarian community in each future complex emergency in which no national entity of governance can ensure effective policy-making and coordination for international humanitarian assistance throughout the country.

Recommendation 5-2: *In each complex emergency, WFP should contribute fully to the development of common programme approaches for UN and international assistance, providing leadership in relation to food and food security. WFP should work in close collaboration with other members of the IASC and NGO partners to jointly define appropriate strategies, priorities and criteria (where appropriate) for UN/international food and food-related assistance on the basis of joint or consolidated assessments (including security assessments), monitoring and evaluations.*

6 Relations with Peace-Keeping Forces and Political Initiatives

Recommendation 6-1: *While coordinating (through the ERC and Humanitarian Coordinators) with United Nations political initiatives and cooperating with United Nations peace-keeping forces and benefiting from their protection where necessary, WFP should:*

(a) seek, in each situation, to communicate to local authorities and the population in general the strictly humanitarian role and objectives of the Programme and its partners;
(b) continue to work through the IASC and closely with the ERC and OCHA to ensure that the rights of conflict victims to receive humanitarian food assistance are upheld and not subordinated to political considerations.

Part III: Programme Issues

7 Assessment and Monitoring

Recommendation 7-1: *WFP, in consultation with its major NGO partners, other IASC members and donors, should provide country offices and staff with practical methodologies and guidance for determining the numbers and needs of people in different population subgroups in conflict situations, and for assessing and analysing the political, social and economic context and the specific role of food. If not incorporated in the emergency food needs assessment guidelines now being developed (by ODT), separate, complementary guidelines must be developed. WFP should seek the widest possible consensus with donors and its major implementing partners on methodologies, and ensure relevant training and technical support for field staff.*

Recommendation 7-2: *The Programme's procedures as well as the assessment guidelines should recognize the need to initiate operations on the basis of initial rough estimates (blending local and external perspectives) followed by a systematic process of checking and refinement thereafter. The assessment/monitoring of household food security should be recognized as being a crucial, ongoing task in all protracted complex emergency situations, and be provided for in the staffing structures and budgets of all such operations.*



Recommendation 7-3: WFP should:

- (a) review experience in the mobilization, training and effectiveness of food monitors (international and national) in complex/conflict emergencies;
- (b) jointly with those NGOs with which it has signed global MOUs, develop approaches to monitoring in insecure areas and the monitoring of community-based distribution processes; and
- (c) develop/enhance stand-by arrangements and other mechanisms with those NGOs and other entities to mobilize qualified personnel and institute effective monitoring from the onset of emergencies, especially complex/conflict emergencies.

8 Objectives and Programme Strategies

Recommendation 8-1: Building on existing published research and working with its partners and other concerned institutions, WFP should:

- (a) identify instances where food aid has had identifiable unintended and undesirable effects; review the effectiveness of measures taken by different agencies to avoid such effects; review existing tools and methodologies for analysing the actual and potential effects of interventions, and propose appropriate methods for use by WFP country offices, assessment and evaluation teams; and
- (b) review the effectiveness of food aid provided to date in support of activities aimed at promoting reconciliation, and explore additional possibilities to support reconciliation.

Recommendation 8-2: WFP, in consultation with its major NGO partners, other IASC members, donors and relevant research institutions, should review the effectiveness of different programme intervention strategies in improving needy people's access to food in insecure, conflict-affected areas, draw lessons and, to the extent possible, develop guidelines. Costs, expected benefits, possible side effects and risks should be analysed explicitly. Possibilities and general criteria for market interventions should be included.

Recommendation 8-3: Wherever possible, the objectives and strategies of assistance should be agreed in advance with representatives of the affected communities and faction leaders. Information on the objectives of the programme, any selection criteria and processes, and ration entitlements should be widely disseminated in all cases.

Recommendation 8-4: In future operations, a common inter-agency policy on the provision of any kind of incentives for government and other workers should be agreed among all concerned UN agencies and, to the extent possible, with donors and NGOs. The manner of eventual phasing out of such incentives must be envisaged and planned for from the outset.

9 Targeting, Distribution and Misappropriation

Recommendation 9-1: WFP, in collaboration with major implementing partners, should review experience and develop concise case studies, summarize lessons learned and develop check-lists for organizing distributions to IDPs and other (non-refugee) affected populations in conflict situations. This should include experience with direct distributions by WFP and of working with local NGOs and national Red Cross/Crescent societies (supported by the IFRC) in conflict situations, and take account of the refugee-related experience (and guidelines) of UNHCR¹²⁷.



Recommendation 9-2: *WFP should adopt a policy of openness in relation to the use and misuse of food aid to increase both the transparency and accountability of its own operations and the pressure on those responsible for abuses to mend their ways. Monitoring report forms should provide for the recording of all incidents and allegations of misappropriation to enable managers to keep the situation under review and decide on appropriate action. WFP should systematically inform beneficiaries, local authorities, faction leaders and donors of incidents and their consequences. It should compile and publish its own estimates of the levels of misuse/misappropriation and targeting errors, possibly in the context of existing reports on post-delivery losses.*

Recommendation 9-3: *Decisions on strategies for continuing assistance in ongoing complex/conflict emergency situations (including those resourced as PRROs) should take explicit account of the role, use and impact of food aid to date, including its unintended effects, as well as the food security and nutritional needs of the affected civilian populations. Evaluations of food assistance operations should examine all these aspects and, where needed, assess possibilities and formulate specific proposals for changes -- radical changes, where necessary -- in strategies in order to minimize any harmful effects, misuse and misappropriation while protecting the best interests of the most needy and vulnerable civilian population groups.*

Part IV: Security and Management Issues

10 Staff Safety and Security

Recommendation 10-1: *Continuing the existing close collaboration with UNSECOORD, OCHA and the other operational UN agencies WFP should encourage and cooperate with UNSECOORD in systematically and continuously monitoring and analysing the precise nature and apparent causes of security incidents affecting the personnel and operations of the humanitarian agencies, based on standard inter-agency incident reporting arrangements.*

Recommendation 10-2: *WFP should work with UNSECOORD, OCHA and the other operational UN agencies at the international level to:*

- (a) review experience and seek consensus on arrangements for the assignment of security officers at country level which satisfy the need for a unified system while meeting the specific programme and operational needs of the operational agencies. This might include an agreed general policy framework for establishing and managing security teams in future operations (including desired general profiles for different kinds of assignment), and arrangements to ensure reasonable continuity and adequate hand overs between security officers;*
- (b) review arrangements for the organization of evacuations and practices concerning the selection of essential staff to remain; and*
- (c) develop common guidelines for the payment of guard services.*

Recommendation 10-3: *WFP, in consultation with UNSECOORD and in collaboration with OCHA, UNHCR and UNICEF, should:*

- (a) continue and refine on an ongoing basis the security awareness training for WFP staff, learning from the experiences of training organized by NGOs as well as that of WFP itself, and develop and deliver the planned specialized modules as quickly as possible*



- with particular emphasis on risk assessments and the selection of appropriate risk reduction strategies.*
- (b) organize consultations, internationally and at country level, with the Programme's main NGO partners to review each others' assessments of risks -- threats and vulnerabilities -- associated with the delivery of food assistance and the effectiveness of measures taken to reduce those risks, including staff training;*
 - (c) work at country level with the Humanitarian Coordinator and NGO partners, in consultation with the Designated Official and other members of the SMT, to ensure maximum consistency and complementarity between NGO and UN approaches to security and responses to security incidents;*
 - (d) continue to establish informal collaboration and working arrangements with NGO partners at country level in relation to security in, and eventual evacuations from, operational locations in conflict-affected areas (whether they have signed up to the UN security system or not);*
 - (e) establish systems to ensure that staff lists for all locations are kept up-to-date including the movements of all staff in insecure areas in order to facilitate the planning and organization of evacuations if and when needed.*

Recommendation 10-3: *Following through on initiatives and decisions already taken, WFP should:*

- (a) ensure in every conflict situation that communications facilities meet the defined minimum standards from the beginning of field operations. This would include contingency planning and the up-grading of communications in potential emergency countries;*
- (b) ensure that technical capacity is available and mobilized to install and support the necessary communications facilities and information systems such as DFMS and its derivatives;*
- (c) encourage field-based initiatives to promote the development of support systems designed to meet the needs of field operations, and inter-cluster cooperation and support teams (such as FITTEST) to disseminate experience and technologies in coordination with headquarters;*
- (d) continue to work with OCHA and through ITAC to consolidate and expand the existing close collaboration, global agreement and systems-integration between WFP and UNICEF to include other agencies.*

11 Delivering Food, Preventing Losses

Recommendation 11-1: *WFP, together with UNHCR, should document the lessons learned in the operation of the UN joint logistics centre and movement control centres in the Great Lakes region (1994-97), including the procedures for establishing and operating the movement control centres, so that they will be readily available to those who may need to establish similar operations in the future. (This would complement the already-recorded procedures for UNJLCs.) WFP should promote the establishment of -- and ensure its capacity to take the lead in establishing -- similar UN joint logistics operations in future situations where logistics are particularly difficult and the consolidation of effort and resources critical.*

Recommendation 11-2: *WFP should:*



- (a) *establish guidelines on the use of armed guards and escorts in WFP/UN humanitarian operations in agreement with other UN agencies and in consultation with major donors;*¹²⁸
- (b) *ensure that adequate control systems are established from the outset of all future transport and warehousing operations, including visible levels of expatriate supervision;*
- (c) *capture the experience of its logistic staff and make the context-specific lessons-learned available to other staff through a combination of concise case studies, general guidelines, regular meetings/workshops of logistics personnel (as already instituted in the Great Lakes region), and the inclusion of a module on logistic aspects in the training of other programme staff;*
- (d) *review policy and practice, and consult with donors, with regard to the funding of logistic improvement activities as special operations or through LTSH.*

12 Mobilizing Staff and Resources

Recommendation 12-1: *In relation to recruitment and training, WFP should:*

- (a) *develop standby arrangements with its major implementing partners, improve its existing arrangements with UNV and enhance its own systems to rapidly screen candidates and mobilize staff with the necessary personal qualities and experience for complex/conflict operations; and*
- (b) *initiate a review and modification, as necessary, of relevant UN common system regulations with a view to facilitating the rapid mobilization of additional staff;*
- (c) *include inter-personal and negotiating skills as an element in routine personal appraisals an when selecting individuals for work in conflict situations; review the inter-personal and negotiating skills component of the security awareness training and ensure that adequate training in these aspects is provided for all staff in, or being sent into, conflict emergency situations.*

Recommendation 12-2: *In each complex/conflict emergency operation, WFP should:*

- (a) *provide all newly-arriving staff, national and international, with a detailed briefing on the social and political background to the situation, the policy of the UN, the Programme's specific mission and objectives, and personal conduct (avoiding attitudes and behaviour which could put themselves and others at risk);*
- (b) *ensure that, in each conflict situation, management and control procedures are in place to protect local staff from unreasonable pressures and risks;*
- (c) *provide professional personnel management staff to support local recruitment and personnel administration functions, and organize on-the-job training, in any major operation and especially when extensive local recruitment is to be undertaken; and*
- (d) *include provision for the above, and the organization of inter-personal skills training for staff, in the plans and budgets for all EMOPs and PRROs, linked to the existing provisions for security (referred to in section 10).*

Recommendation 12-3: *WFP should review internally and with donors the performance and constraints in resourcing complex emergency operations including problems arising from earmarking and in relation to borrowing, and seek to remove procedural obstacles to borrowing .*

Recommendation 12-4: *WFP should propose, and donors support, regional programmes where the management of resources on a regional basis can improve*



responsiveness to the needs of beneficiaries in a changing situation. WFP should review the experience of planning and managing resources on a regional basis in the Liberia and Great Lakes regions and develop procedures to allow for differential rations for different groups.

Part V: Underlying Issues

13 Ground Rules, Principles and Ethical Dilemmas

Recommendation 13-1: *WFP should:*

- (a) undertake an in-depth review of how existing ground rules and codes of conduct (both international and country-specific) have been applied in relation to food assistance in complex/conflict emergencies; and*
- (b) define and provide guidance and training to all WFP staff concerning the general principles of WFP's humanitarian action, and develop a code of conduct for WFP staff in conflict situations. This must be done in close consultation and coordination with OCHA and other IASC members;*

Recommendation 13-2: *WFP should:*

- (a) review with other members of the IASC the implications for humanitarian agencies of the 'mainstreaming' of human rights within the work of the UN;*
- (b) provide information and guidance to all WFP staff on the issues and on organizational policy in this connection.*

Recommendation 13-3: *WFP should:*

- (a) work with its partners and other concerned institutions to try to assess the effects and effectiveness of suspensions of assistance in particular circumstances;*
- (b) work with the ERC and OCHA and, at country level, the Humanitarian Coordinator, to agree a concerted response to incidents which might justify consideration of withdrawal (and conditions for resumption subsequently).*

14 Epilogue

Recommendation 14-1: *To ensure the thorough and systematic examination and follow up on the issues and recommendations presented in this report, OD should establish an inter-divisional taskforce and an associated consultative group of field-based staff, and develop a specific workplan. The workplan should include joint action with other agencies and arrangements to benefit from the experience of other internationally-recognized groups and individual researchers, as appropriate. It might include workshops at regional level and in Rome focusing on specific topics or groups of topics.*

Recommendation 14-2: *To facilitate organizational learning and the coordination of action within WFP in relation to complex emergencies, WFP should:*

- (a) establish an inter-divisional mechanism to serve as a focal point for the exchange of information and experience and the coordination of efforts in relation to complex emergency issues. (The informal information service presently provided by ODT could*



be further developed, and institutionalized, as a network of concerned staff to share and comment on experiences and the findings of studies and evaluations relating to emergencies, particularly complex/conflict emergencies); and

(b) institute a system for the systematic debriefing of staff -- using a checklist of issues drawn from the present study -- at the end of assignments in conflict situations.



NOTES

- ¹ The enquiries on which this report is based were undertaken in the latter part of 1998. A few aspects were up-dated in early 1999. The report does not include consideration of response to the Kosovo crisis in 1999.
- ² This is most evident in Angola and Sierra-Leone (diamonds) and the Great Lakes region including DR-Congo (external intervention). A number of published works have highlighted the importance of external interests in relation to Liberia (timber), Somalia (bananas) and southern Sudan (oil exploration).
- ³ Seasonal variations are typically linked to dry-season offensives but, in northeast Uganda, they are linked to the increased need of the Karamajong for cash at certain festive seasons, particularly Christmas.
- ⁴ This is particularly the case in situations where alliances between different groups/clans/tribes shift frequently (as in Somalia and Afghanistan) and/or where infiltrators from the government are believed to be operating within certain other factions (as in southern Sudan).
- ⁵ See, for example, *Looking Forward: A Common UN Position for Future Activities in Liberia*, UN Country Team Liberia, June 1996
- ⁶ *Entrenched Positions: Why this Polarization between 'New' and 'Back-to-Basics' Relief*, Stephen Jackson and Peter Walker, in *Disasters*, vol.23, No. 2, 1999 (p.14): p.107
- ⁷ In 1997-98, USAID requested that food they had donated be delivered to specific groups in Bay and Bakool regions (central Somalia) which WFP declined to do for security reasons. As a result, WFP lost certain USAID food donations.
- ⁸ When, in 1996, refugees in eastern Zaire and Kenya did not repatriate and malnutrition in the camps increased as a result of the reduced rations, WFP was blamed for not managing the pipeline properly.
- ⁹ *WFP Liberia Up-Date*, WFP Monrovia, 19 June 1996
- ¹⁰ "At the height of the emergency assistance in Somalia, upwards of US\$15-20 million were being spent monthly inside Somalia by the humanitarian agencies. Most of this expenditure was on logistic-related costs -- personnel, transport, (un)loading, warehousing, security, distribution and fuel." Geoff Loan in *Logistics: More than pizza delivery*, in *Field Exchange*, Issue 4, June 1998.
- ¹¹ Information provided by members of the Humanitarian Policy Group of the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) London, December 1998.
- ¹² *Entrenched Positions: Why this Polarization between 'New' and 'Back-to-Basics' Relief*, Stephen Jackson and Peter Walker in *Disasters*, vol.23, No.2, 1999, p.108, referring to Yarsiah (1998) and Bryer (1996)
- ¹³ Fax from WFP Country Director to Rome headquarters, 11 July 1996
- ¹⁴ *OLS- Operation Lifeline Sudan -- A Review*, A Karim et al, 1996, p.10
- ¹⁵ Africa Rights quoted by Adam Roberts in *Humanitarian Action in War: aid, protection and impartiality in a policy vacuum* Adelphi Paper 35, International Institute of Strategic Studies, 1996.
- ¹⁶ Adam Roberts, *loc cit*, and joint WFP/HCR evaluation of the Bosnia operation
- ¹⁷ Argument presented by Adam Roberts, *loc cit*, also by a senior Red Cross official in an interview with the present writer
- ¹⁸ Adam Roberts, *loc cit*, p.59
- ¹⁹ *UNHCR/WFP Joint Evaluation of Emergency Food Assistance to Returnees, Refugees and Displaced Persons and Other War-Affected Populations in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, WFP/EB.2/98/3/1, 1998
- ²⁰ See, for example, *Humanitarian Action in the Former Yugoslavia: the UN's role 1991-93*, Minear et al, occasional paper #18, Watson Institute for International Studies, 1994.
- ²¹ Lord Owen, chief European negotiator speaking on Sky TV, as reported by the WFP country director for the Former Yugoslavia at the time.
- ²² See, for example, *Humanitarian Crisis and Conflict: Food Assistance and Nutritional Security Issues*, J Shoham, F O'Reilly and J Wallace, in *Food and Human Security*, E Clay & O Stokke (eds), London: F Cass for EADI, forthcoming (publication expected early 2000).
- ²³ See, for example, *Food and Power*, A de Waal, African Rights, 1994, p.157.
- ²⁴ Fax from WFP Officer-in-Charge dated 20 April 1995 and fax from OD to UNSECOORD dated 27 April 1995. The incident occurred in the VOA-1 displaced persons centre on 6 April 1995.
- ²⁵ *Report of the Secretary-General on the Protection of Humanitarian Assistance to Refugees and Others in Conflict Situations*, report to the Security Council, S/1998/883, 22 Sept 1998
- ²⁶ *OLS - Operational Lifeline Sudan - A Review*, A Karim et al, DHA, 1996, pp.96, 116.
- ²⁷ The UN coordinator, Sadruddin Aga Khan, conducted negotiations for access at the international level on the basis of the concepts of 'humanitarian consensus' and 'humanitarian encirclement'. See, for example, *Afghanistan -- Coordination in a Fragmented State*, DHA, December 1996.
- ²⁸ *OLS - Operation Lifeline Sudan -- A Review*, A Karim et al, 1996, p.4.
- ²⁹ *Regional Security Assessment for the Great Lakes Region of Africa*, A Marley, WFP security consultant, 1998
- /...



- ³⁰ *Strategic Coordination in the Great Lakes*, S Lautze, et al, DHA, 1998
- ³¹ See *Summary Report on the Tripartite (UNICEF/UNHCR/WFP) Study of the Great Lakes Emergency Operation*, Sept 1996 - Sept 1997", WFP/EB.3/98/5/3, 1998
- ³² Previously there had been a donor support group for Afghanistan which met periodically outside the region complemented by informal meetings among embassy staffs in Islamabad.
- ³³ For some discussion of the sovereignty issue and the conflict of interests for a UNDP official in particular, see *OLS - Operation Lifeline Sudan - A Review*, A Karim, et al, July 1996, p.31
- ³⁴ See, *The War Economy in Liberia: a Political Analysis*, Philippa Atkinson, RRN Network Paper, ODI London, May 1997, p.21. Strafing also affected WFP/UNICEF-supported relief operations.
- ³⁵ Memorandum from Framework Team members to their heads of department, September 1998.
- ³⁶ An official WFP enquiry into the killing, in Kadugli, was unable to determine either who was responsible or the motive, but it has been suggested by well-connected staff in southern Sudan that it may have been the work of the SPLA which wished to prevent aid from the government side going into the West Nile region.
- ³⁷ The relevance or usefulness of distinguishing IDPs from other *in situ* population groups has been questioned in a number of cases where local populations are considered to be equally affected.
- ³⁸ See, for example: *Registration Guidelines*, UNHCR, 1997; and *Counting and Identification of Beneficiary Populations in Emergencies: Registration and its Alternatives*, J Telford, Good Practice Review #5, ODI, London, 1998
- ³⁹ *Humanitarian Crisis and Conflict: Food Assistance and Nutritional Security Issues*, J Shoham, F O'Reilly and J Wallace, in *Food and Human Security*, E Clay & O Stokke (eds), London: F Cass for EADI, forthcoming (publication expected early 2000).
- ⁴⁰ *OLS - Operation Lifeline Sudan - A Review*, A Karim et al, DHA, 1996.
- ⁴¹ For example, in Afghanistan, staff were unable to determine *post facto*, from local records, the basis on which ration levels for victims of the 1998 earthquake had been established.
- ⁴² *Project Liberia Regional 4604 -- Programme Policy Evaluation of the 1990-95 period of the WFP-assisted refugee and displaced persons operations in Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Sierra Leone*, WFP/EB.3/96/5-A/Add.3, 1996.
- ⁴³ *Project Angola 5602: Relief and post-emergency operations in Angola: A joint WFP/NGO/IFRC evaluation*, WFP/EB.3/97/5/Add.5, 1997.
- ⁴⁴ *PRO Cambodia 5483: Programme for rehabilitation*, WFP/EB.3/97/5/Add.3, 1997
- ⁴⁵ *Food Aid in Emergencies*, Book A, *Policies and Principles*, chapter A3, WFP 1991, and *From Crisis to Recovery*, WFP/EB.A/98/4-A, April 1998.
- ⁴⁶ *Relief and Rehabilitation in Afghanistan - Protracted Refugee and Displaced Persons Project: Afghanistan 5086 (exp.2)*, WFP/EB.3/96/5-A Add.1
- ⁴⁷ See, for example, *The State of the International Humanitarian System*, ODI Briefing Paper 1998.
- ⁴⁸ For example, Mary Anderson in *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace or War*, Lynne Rienner, London, 1999; and Stephen Jackson and Peter Walker, in *Entrenched Positions: Why this Polarization between 'New' and 'Back-to-Basics' Relief in Disasters*, vol.23, No.2, 1999. p.106.
- ⁴⁹ CARE is one such agency.
- ⁵⁰ *OLS, Operation Lifeline Sudan -- A Review*, A Karim, et al, 1996, p.7.
- ⁵¹ An example of the change of perspective is provided by Mary Anderson, co-author of *Rising from the Ashes* (1991) and *Do No Harm: Supporting Local Capacities for Peace through Aid*, Collaborative for Development Action Local Capacities for Peace Project, 1996. Other researchers have suggested that an undue early emphasis on a 'development orientation' can result in cuts in sustainable services and entitlements for the most vulnerable population groups -- see, for example, Mark Bradbury in *Normalizing the Crisis in Africa*, in *Journal of Humanitarian Assistance*, <http://www-jha.sps.cam.ac.uk> posted 19 March 1999
- ⁵² *UNHCR/WFP Joint Evaluation of Emergency Food Assistance to Returnees, Refugees and Displaced Persons and Other War-Affected Populations in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, WFP/EB.2/98/3/1, 1998, P.12
- ⁵³ Thomas Weiss, *Military-Civilian Interaction: Intervening in Humanitarian Crises*, Rowman & Littlefield, 1999.
- ⁵⁴ *Afghanistan: Coordination in a Fragmented State*, A Donini, E Dudley & R Ockwell, a lessons-learned report, DHA, December 1996, p.49.
- ⁵⁵ Expert opinion within WFP, UNICEF and most of the other experienced agencies now holds that the emphasis should be on assuring the fair distribution of adequate general rations rather than supplementary feeding, but this has not yet been fully accepted and acted on in all field programmes.
- ⁵⁶ *Protracted Emergency Humanitarian Relief Food Aid: Toward "Productive Relief"*, Programme Policy Evaluations of the 1990-95 period of WFP-assisted refugee and displaced persons operations in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire, Mission Report, WFP Rome, October 1996, p.40.
- ⁵⁷ Liberia evaluation mission report, *Project Liberia Regional 4604 -- Programme Policy Evaluation of the 1990-95 period of the WFP-assisted refugee and displaced persons operations in Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Sierra Leone*, WFP/EB.3/96/5-A/Add.3, 1996, p.41.
- ⁵⁸ A Natsios, *Humanitarian Relief Intervention in Somalia: The Economics of Chaos*, in *Learning from Somalia*, /...



Westview Press

⁵⁹ *Policies on the Use of WFP Food Aid in Relief and Development Activities: Monetization*, WFP/EB.A/97/5-A, April 1997. A first draft of corresponding guidelines was prepared in October 1997 but never finalized or issued.

⁶⁰ *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*, Addendum to the report of the Representative of the Secretary-General submitted to the Commission on Human Rights, E/CN.4/1998/53/Add.2 incorporated in WFP/EB.A/98/INF/5, May 1998

⁶¹ An "exclusion error" is the proportion of intended beneficiaries who do not receive benefits. An "inclusion error" is the proportion of the resources which end up going to and benefiting people other than the intended beneficiaries.

⁶² *Project Liberia Regional 4604 -- Programme Policy Evaluation of the 1990-95 period of the WFP-assisted Refugee and Displaced Persons Operations in Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Sierra Leone*, WFP/EB.3/96/5-A/Add.3, 1996.

⁶³ SPLM/SRRA-OLS Joint Targeting and Vulnerabilities Task Force report, August 1998

⁶⁴ Liberia region evaluation mission report, *Project Liberia Regional 4604 -- Programme Policy Evaluation of the 1990-95 period of the WFP-assisted refugee and displaced persons operations in Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Sierra Leone*, WFP/EB.3/96/5-A/Add.3, 1996, p.44-45.

⁶⁵ In Armenia a computerized data base and associated vulnerability model was developed by the Government to register and assess the vulnerability of families. This system, called PAROS, was developed with funding from USAID and support from WFP. Vulnerability was scored in relation to the family's social group, size, income, housing condition and place of residence. See footnote 1 in *Summary Evaluation report on WFP-Assisted Emergency Relief Operations in the Caucasus*, WFP/EB.2/97/5/Add.4, February 1997

⁶⁶ See joint WFP/NGO evaluation report on the Angola operation, *Project Angola 5602: Relief and post-emergency operations in Angola: A joint WFP/NGO/IFRC evaluation*, WFP/EB.3/97/5/Add.5, 1997.

⁶⁷ The family group distribution system is described in *The Role of Women in Food Management*, Zhara Mirghani in Field Exchange, January 1998, and in *Commodity Distribution*, UNHCR, 1997.

⁶⁸ See Afghanistan evaluation report, *Relief and Rehabilitation in Afghanistan - Protracted Refugee and Displaced Persons Project: Afghanistan 5086 (exp,2)*, WFP/EB.3/96/5-A Add.1, p.8.

⁶⁹ Report of the WFP Inspector General on the joint WFP/IFRC review of collaboration with the Cambodian Red Cross, June 1996. The report recommended and arrangements were made for an international firm of auditors to audit the accounts of the Cambodian Red Cross, and for the IFRC to provide an accounting advisor to the national society.

⁷⁰ *Summary Evaluation report on WFP-Assisted Emergency Relief Operations in the Caucasus*, WFP/EB.2/97/5/Add.4, February 1997, p.10.

⁷¹ The fact that a WFP staff member was acting Humanitarian Coordinator and Designated Official at the time of the crisis may have had something to do with the fact that WFP and a few other personnel of the operational UN agencies remained in Monrovia.

⁷² Incident in Suehn, north of Monrovia, reported by Reuters 10 July 1996 quoting a statement by ACF.

⁷³ *Twentieth Progress Report of the Secretary-General on the UN Observer Mission in Liberia*, S/1996/962, UN Security Council, 19 Nov 1996, paragraph 22.

⁷⁴ *SPLM/SRRA-OLS Joint Targeting and Vulnerabilities Task Force: Final Report*, August 1998.

⁷⁵ UNHCR is responsible for organizing/coordinating distributions in refugee camps and has already published guidelines -- *Commodity Distribution*, UNHCR, 1997.

⁷⁶ This figure is from records in WFP headquarters. It does not include staff killed in work-related accidents (as distinct from 'killings'). It is limited to WFP 'staff' and does not include, for instance, the pilots killed when aircraft on contract to WFP have been shot down in Angola.

⁷⁷ *Where There is No Data - Patterns, Trends and Unanswered Questions concerning Relief Worker Security Problems*, draft, J Dworken, 27 October 1998. The study examined information available from UNSECOORD, OCHA, ICRC, the International Committee for the Protection of Aid Workers (ICPAW), and an earlier study of NGO security problems [George, 1997]

⁷⁸ Security plan for Somalia, 1998

⁷⁹ WFP has arranged special insurance to cover such operations, as reported by the Office of the Inspector General, WFP/EB.3/98/4-B, Sept. 1998

⁸⁰ United Nations Field Security Handbook, UN New York, 1995, pp.5-6

⁸¹ In the period December 1997 to October 1998, OLS-south organized a total of 87 security evacuation/relocations: 69 by air; 1 by boat; 17 by road during the dry season. In Somalia, relocations were organized from 6 different locations in the period April to September 1998.

⁸² *Summary Report on the Tripartite (UNICEF/UNHCR/WFP) Study of the Great Lakes Emergency Operation*, Sept 1996 - Sept 1997", WFP/EB.3/98/5/3, 1998

⁸³ Similar arrangements were made in Albania in 1999, but without any financial contribution.

⁸⁴ *NGO Security Training*, Report of the Working Group on NGO Security Training Curriculum 1998-99, InterAction, November 1998 (<http://www.ourdays.com/security/>)

/...



⁸⁵ These three security strategies are introduced in, and the acceptance one elaborated in: *Cool Ground for Aid Workers*, K van Brabant, in *Disasters*, Vol. 22(2), pp 109-125.

⁸⁶ See Bosnia evaluation report, *UNHCR/WFP Joint Evaluation of Emergency Food Assistance to Returnees, Refugees and Displaced Persons and Other War-Affected Populations in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, WFP/EB.2/98/3/1, 1998

⁸⁷ In Iraq in February 1998, when the Government refused UN weapons inspectors access to certain sites and Baghdad was threatened with bombing, the UN Humanitarian Coordinator initiated action to relocate staff from Baghdad to Amman, Jordan. This order was reversed a few days later by the Secretary-General and the UN maintained a presence (heads of agencies and key international staff) in Iraq even during the actual bombing in December 1998.

⁸⁸ Out of 41 UN personnel in Monrovia on 2 May 1996, 25 were from UNOMIL and 16 from UN humanitarian agencies including 6 DHA, 5 WFP, 2 UNDP, 1 UNHCR. The numbers needed to be further reduced to 20 -- the capacity of the boats available for an eventual final evacuation -- but there was disagreement on who should leave and who remain. Questions were raised about the necessity of so many UNOMIL and DHA personnel. DHA claimed that they were involved in operational activities carrying out assessments and helping in the distribution of relief items including food. [Fax from WFP New York Office to Rome headquarters, 02 May 1996]

⁸⁹ In the particular case of Tajikistan 1997, food distributions were in fact continued through WFP's local staff directed from the town on the Uzbekistan border to which the WFP international staff relocated.

⁹⁰ In Liberia, WFP assisted some of the INGOs which had evacuated by making payments to their local staff in Monrovia against reimbursement by the agencies concerned.

⁹¹ Advances made in telecommunications (and other aspects) in the Great Lakes region were outlined in *Summary Report on the Tripartite (UNICEF/UNHCR/WFP) Study of the Great Lakes Emergency Operation*, WFP/EB.3/98/5/3, 1998

⁹² An NGO representative has noted that adherence to the common clearance system in Angola (1993) resulted in a 50% drop in their through-put.

⁹³ See, for example, *Humanitarian Relief Intervention in Somalia: The Economics of Chaos*, A Natsios, in *Learning from Somalia*, Westview Press, p.84. He reports that the US military airlift in Somalia (1993) which replaced the previous airlifts run by WFP and ICRC, "did not carry the tonnage that the private flights did, and so although the number of planes in use increased, the tonnage they moved did not."

⁹⁴ Summary report on the Tripartite (UNICEF/UNHCR/WFP) Study of the Great Lakes Emergency Operation, WFP/EB.3/98/5/3, September 1998.

⁹⁵ It has been suggested that the food stocks were a primary target of UNITA which needed supplies for what it anticipated to be a long campaign.

⁹⁶ The value of any short deliveries is deducted from the contractor's invoices and/or bond. There is no 'force majeure' clause in the contracts.

⁹⁷ Although contrary to UNSECOORD directives, the direct employment of armed guards was an effective and economic way of protecting food stocks and their movement in Luanda and besieged cities in Angola. Had WFP engaged local security companies to provide the more than 200 guards needed, the cost would have been some \$300,000 per month compared with the \$70,000 per month actually paid (and the individual guards received more than they would have received from local companies).

⁹⁸ The WFP Country Director at the time reported that, on one occasion, an unescorted convoy of 16 WFP and 3 CRS trucks was attacked in Eritrea, but that it was believed that this was an error of rebel intelligence-gathering or communication, particularly as the CRS trucks were also hit.

⁹⁹ *Armed Protection of Humanitarian Assistance*, IFRC Handbook, IFRC Geneva 1998

¹⁰⁰ Mary Anderson in *Do no Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace or War*, Lynne Rienner, London, 1999, refers to "implicit ethical messages" which agencies convey, usually unconsciously, by their own actions including the use of armed escorts.

¹⁰¹ *Humanitarian Relief Intervention in Somalia: The Economics of Chaos*, A Natsios, in *Learning from Somalia*, Westview Press, p.84.

¹⁰² *Mean Times -- humanitarian action in complex political emergencies -- stark choices, cruel dilemmas*, M Bryans, B D Jones & J G Stein, University of Toronto, 1999, in association with CARE-Canada

¹⁰³ These proposals are described in *Humanitarian Action in War*, A Roberts, Adelphi Paper 305, International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1996 (p.67).

¹⁰⁴ USAID, ECHO and DFID (UK) have all taken initiatives in relation to security, particularly for NGOs. A good practice review on *Operational Security Management in Violent Environments*, including a chapter on armed protection, is expected to be published by ODI, London, late-1999.

¹⁰⁵ OLS-south has operated since its inception without any local WFP staff on the ground inside Sudan. The screening of candidates for national staff positions started in September 1998.

¹⁰⁶ Concern expressed by the Chief of Recruitment in the Human Resources Division, WFP Rome.

¹⁰⁷ NGO representatives have expressed these concerns in personal communications. The *Interim Study on WFP's New Capacities in Responding to the Great Lakes Crisis* (WFP/EB.3/97/5/Add.2, October 1997) also noted that, in March 1995, rations in the refugee camps in Tanzania and much of eastern Zaire had to be /...



reduced and security incidents were reported in the affected camps.

¹⁰⁸ *Revised Country Strategy*, WFP Liberia, 1995

¹⁰⁹ J Shoham, F O'Reilly & J Wallace in *Humanitarian Crisis and Conflict: Food Assistance and Nutritional Security Issues*, forthcoming, report that due to donor ear-marking the ICRC programme in Chechnya had to be stopped in early 1998.

¹¹⁰ *Protecting Principles Under Stress -- Guidance for the Development of Common UN Ground Rules Based on Agreed Principles*, discussion draft, OCHA, November 1998.

¹¹¹ Report of the Secretary-General, 9 June 1998

¹¹² Jonathan Moore in his editorial introduction to *Hard Choices - Moral Dilemmas and Humanitarian Intervention*, 1998

¹¹³ *Guidelines on Conflict, Peace and Development Cooperation*, DAC, OECD, 1997

¹¹⁴ *Proliferating Principles*, Nicholas Leader, paper prepared for the ECHO/ODI Conference on "Principled Aid in an Unprincipled World: Relief, War and Humanitarian Principles", London, April 1998

¹¹⁵ *Food Aid for Humanitarian Assistance*, proceedings of the UN-WFP Africa Regional Seminar, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, February 1995, p.65.

¹¹⁶ Some NGOs, including some who operate under the OLS umbrella as well as other who do not, express concern about the status given to, and the dependence of the OLS operation on, the humanitarian wings of the opposition movements. A similar concern has been expressed by a WFP consultant engaged to study and advise on targeting, end-1998.

¹¹⁷ Study by ODI, London.

¹¹⁸ *Principles and Protocols for Humanitarian Operations in Liberia*, 1996 (reproduced in the UN consolidated appeal).

¹¹⁹ *Code of Conduct for Humanitarian Agencies in Sierra Leone*, revised November 1998.

¹²⁰ *Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief*, Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response together with the ICRC, 1994.

¹²¹ The Sphere Project was initiated and managed by the (Geneva-based) Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response and InterAction (a coalition of US NGOs). A number of UN agencies as well as many NGOs and individuals contributed. The Humanitarian Charter is complemented by standards for humanitarian assistance in the traditional main sectors including nutrition and food aid.

¹²² *Relations between Humanitarian Coordinators and Special Representatives of the Secretary-General*, Note for Guidance approved by the ECHA, April 1999

¹²³ Report of the Secretary-General on *Strengthening the Coordination of Emergency Humanitarian Assistance of the United Nations*, June 1998, and UN Consolidated Appeal for Afghanistan, OCHA, December 1998. The operationalization of the framework concept was delayed by the evacuation of all UN personnel from Afghanistan in 1998.

¹²⁴ The initiative came from ECHO and a group of international NGOs but was later endorsed by the UN agencies through the IASC.

¹²⁵ *Mean Times: Humanitarian Action in Complex Political Emergencies -- Stark Choices, Cruel Dilemmas*, Michael Bryans, Bruce Jones and Janice Gross Stein, University of Toronto in collaboration with CARE-Canada, January 1999.

¹²⁶ Study by ODI London expected to be published late 1999.

¹²⁷ UNHCR is responsible for organizing/coordinating distributions in refugee camps and has already published guidelines -- *Commodity Distribution*, UNHCR, 1997.

¹²⁸ USAID, ECHO and DFID (UK) have all taken initiatives in relation to security, particularly for NGOs. A good practice review on *Operational Security Management in Violent Environments*, including a chapter on armed protection, is expected to be published by ODI, London, late-1999.