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## **POLICY ISSUES**

### **Agenda item 5**

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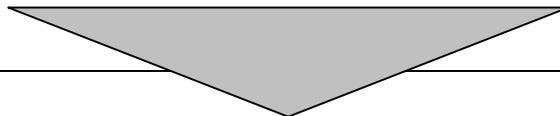
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## **FOOD AID AND LIVELIHOODS IN EMERGENCIES: STRATEGIES FOR WFP**

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# Note to the Executive Board



**This document is submitted for approval by the Executive Board.**

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

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# Executive Summary

Emergencies, whether caused by natural disaster, conflict, economic shock or disease, disrupt the normal means by which people have access to food. By distributing food aid to those who are unable to meet their current needs and are at risk of death in the short term, WFP saves lives. However, the experience of WFP and others has shown that the majority of people survive disasters at least partially on the basis of their own resources, strategies and networks, which can be complemented by well-timed food aid. Moreover, people will go to great lengths not just to protect their lives and those of their families, but also to protect their livelihoods. By making food aid available to those who are at risk of losing their livelihoods, WFP can reduce the consequences of negative coping strategies to their short-and longer-term health and well-being. Assistance aimed at preserving essential assets and supporting livelihoods during emergencies also quickens the recovery process and helps build resilience among people who face recurring crises.

Supporting livelihoods requires an understanding of, and support for, the assets, capabilities and activities that men and women use to ensure their means of living. In emergencies, it also includes analysing the impact of the crisis on these assets and on the institutions and processes that influence the ability of men and women to turn their assets into viable livelihood strategies that meet their families' minimum needs. Preserving assets and supporting livelihoods in emergencies require early intervention, based on strengthened assessments and analysis and effective targeting, so that food aid is made available on time to those who risk losing their livelihoods. Improved monitoring and strengthened partnerships are also needed.

Not all emergencies produce conditions conducive to preserving assets and supporting livelihoods. WFP should systematically assess and analyse the impact of crises on livelihoods and should strengthen its capacity to design, implement and monitor livelihood interventions when they are deemed appropriate.

## Draft Decision\*

The Board endorses the conclusions of document WFP/EB.A/2003/5-A. In accordance with decision 2002/EB.A/4, it asks that the Secretariat add the following language to the Consolidated Framework of WFP Policies: A Governance Tool (WFP/EB.A/2002/5-A/1):

“WFP will systematically assess and analyse livelihood-related issues in emergencies and will strengthen staff capacity to design, implement and monitor programmes that save lives and livelihoods. WFP will also build synergies between its emergency and longer-term interventions and will strengthen partnerships with community-based organizations.”

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



## INTRODUCTION

1. Humanitarian assistance has traditionally focused on saving lives and reducing suffering in the short term. However, experience has shown that the impact of recurring or protracted emergencies continues over time. Most people survive the immediate phase of a disaster, but with depleted assets and a diminished capacity to cope, risking destitution or even death in the future. Moreover, those who survive do so not on the basis of relief assistance alone, but also by using their own resources, networks and strategies. Understanding and supporting these strategies should thus form an important component of emergency response.
2. These experiences have prompted academics and practitioners to take a closer look at livelihoods and how they are affected by and mitigate the impact of crises. WFP launched a policy process to explore ways of using food aid to preserve assets and support livelihoods in emergencies, drawing where appropriate on its experience in supporting sustainable livelihoods in longer-term programmes. This policy process was grounded in existing policies, including Enabling Development, Disaster Mitigation and From Crisis to Recovery, which address related issues. A literature review of existing analytical and conceptual work highlighted the shortage of available case studies and evaluations related to preserving assets and supporting livelihoods in emergencies. However, many WFP emergency operations (EMOPs) and protracted relief and recovery operations (PRROs) have objectives and related activities that are aimed at supporting livelihoods and/or preserving assets, giving WFP its own repository of more operational information. Consequently, WFP launched field reviews in Angola, Guinea and the Republic of the Congo to capture the challenges and successes of some of its experiences.
3. This paper looks at why preserving assets and supporting livelihoods form essential components of efforts to save lives and promote recovery and at the role that food aid can play. Furthermore, it identifies challenges that WFP faces in using food aid to support livelihoods in emergencies and lays out practical measures for future action.

## KEY ELEMENTS OF SUPPORTING LIVELIHOODS

4. Livelihoods are the capabilities, assets and activities required for a means of living.<sup>1</sup> These assets are understood to comprise human (health, skills, education), natural (land, water, forests, minerals), social (kinship, networks, groups), physical (infrastructure, equipment) and financial (wages, savings, credit, debt) assets. The various analytical frameworks that underlie livelihood-support programmes identify women's and men's different resources or assets, the outcomes/goals that they are pursuing, the strategies that they adopt to pursue those outcomes, and the contextual factors (policies, institutions, processes) that both influence and are influenced by their efforts to transfer assets into outcomes.<sup>2</sup> The vulnerability of households and of their livelihoods is also taken into consideration: people in crisis-prone areas are considered vulnerable when their livelihoods are not resilient to hazards such as natural disasters, conflict, disease or economic shock.

<sup>1</sup> R. Chambers & G. Conway. 1992. *Sustainable rural livelihoods: practical concepts for the 21st century*. IDS Discussion Paper No. 296. Brighton, UK, Institute of Development Studies (IDS).

<sup>2</sup> The United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) Sustainable Livelihoods Framework is arguably the most widely used and conceptually sophisticated of these analytical frameworks.



Those whose livelihoods are less vulnerable can confront the same hazard without facing death or destitution as a result.

### **Why Livelihoods in Emergencies?**

5. Traditionally, humanitarian agencies have focused on providing basic relief to those who are unable to meet their current needs and are thus at risk of death in the short term. Closer reviews of how people survive crises has resulted in a growing recognition that the people affected by crisis are not passive victims and recipients of aid, but rely primarily on their own capabilities, resources and networks in order to survive and recover. People cope—by moving in with family members or sending their children to do so, by drawing down on savings or taking loans, by moving their herd to an area where there is adequate grazing land, by switching to drought-resistant crops or by sending a breadwinner to find work elsewhere. Men and women recover from crises by using the assets that they retain as a base to build on.
6. However, many of the strategies that people employ in order to meet their current food needs undermine their health and well-being, along with their ability to meet future food needs and cope with further crises. Crisis-affected people often eat fewer, smaller and less nutritious meals in order to make what they have last longer without depleting their assets. When drought forces pastoralists to sell their livestock in distress, they lose access to milk and meat, receive a low price on the market from livestock sales and are gouged once again when they try to replenish their herds in a sellers' market after the drought has subsided. Similarly, families may mortgage their land or otherwise enter into prohibitive debt in order to meet the short-term needs of their families. Worse still, they may turn to illegal forms of income generation, such as prostitution, theft or trafficking, or they migrate from their homes to survive, losing access to their primary means of living and the communities and networks on which they would normally rely in times of stress.
7. Women and woman-headed households face particular risk from negative coping strategies. Women are most likely to bear the brunt of food shortages, affecting their health as well as the health and long-term potential of their unborn or young children. They often assume new responsibilities for their families' safety and economic well-being and security, as their husbands seek employment elsewhere or are conscripted into armed forces. Girls are the first to be pulled out of school or face early marriage when household livelihoods are at risk, and women may even risk sexual abuse or enter into prostitution to protect their families' lives and livelihoods.

### **How Can Food Aid Save Lives and Livelihoods?**

8. Saving lives in emergencies entails, first and foremost, directing food aid to the most vulnerable people, normally those who have already depleted all of their assets and are destitute. People in this group will always remain the first priority for WFP's interventions because, without food aid, they may perish. Woman-headed households form a large part of this group because of their already disadvantaged status within society before the crisis.
9. Food aid can save more lives in the long term if it is also provided to those whose livelihoods are at risk of failure, particularly those who are already undertaking negative coping strategies in order to meet their families' food needs and/or to preserve their livelihoods. By directing food aid to those at risk of losing their livelihoods, along with those who have already lost them, WFP can help to preserve assets that the entire community will rely on to survive and recover. Food aid also counterbalances the negative coping mechanisms that will have an impact on people's health and nutritional status. By channelling food through women, WFP can best ensure that consumption needs are met



and that those assets that are most essential to preserving a household's ability to meet its food needs are preserved.

10. Food aid is not, however, always the most appropriate resource when seeking to preserve assets or support livelihoods. Livelihood interventions must be based on careful analysis of the current availability and accessibility of food for crisis-affected people, the impact that the crisis has had on men's and women's assets and livelihood strategies, and the role that food aid could play in both preserving assets and meeting household consumption needs. WFP must also take into account the impact that food aid would have on the policies, institutions and processes that influence livelihood strategies, particularly markets. Where food is available on the market, and people simply do not have the means to gain access to it without depleting essential assets, cash interventions may be a preferred mode of response.

### **CHALLENGES FACED BY WFP IN PRESERVING ASSETS AND SUPPORTING LIVELIHOODS IN EMERGENCIES**

11. WFP's recent review of EMOPs and PRROs highlighted that about one-third of EMOPs and two-thirds of PRROs include objectives related to the preservation of assets and the restoration of livelihoods of people affected by natural and human-induced crises.<sup>3</sup> The full range of WFP activities were used to support these objectives, including free food distributions, food for work and food for training. For instance:
- WFP's Afghanistan emergency operation strived to improve self-sufficiency by using food to help create urban and rural productive assets and by supporting school feeding, women's literacy programmes and urban bakeries.
  - In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, WFP used food aid to rehabilitate rural and social infrastructure (feeder roads, health and sanitation infrastructure), support agricultural production (by distributing food in conjunction with agricultural inputs) and encourage food-insecure displaced or resettled women to attend vocational training (such as to establish bakeries or to produce soap).
  - As part of the flood response in Bolivia, food aid was used to recover flood-damaged assets, such as small irrigation systems and agricultural land. In Colombia, WFP used food to support the construction of small roads and water and sewage channels, as well as vocational training in construction skills and agricultural techniques.
  - The primary aim of the Southern Africa drought emergency response was to save lives and livelihoods by using food aid to prevent severe food shortages that could lead to deteriorated nutritional status and starvation, to safeguard the nutritional well-being of vulnerable groups, to preserve productive and human assets and to prevent distress migration. Free food distributions, food for work and supplementary feeding were all used to accomplish these objectives.
12. Normally, livelihood-support activities were selected and planned with the target groups to ensure that the assets preserved or created were relevant to the community, particularly women. WFP also often works with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to promote

<sup>3</sup> In addition, at least six of the EMOPs included the objective of preserving or preventing the distress sale of productive household assets such as livestock.



agricultural recovery following crises, by distributing food in conjunction with seeds and agricultural inputs.

13. The evidence suggests, however, that WFP faces serious challenges in achieving livelihood objectives in emergency situations. By their nature, emergencies pull the attention of staff towards those who are most vulnerable in the short term (those who have already lost their assets and risk death). When time and resources are insufficient to meet fully the needs of this group, it is unrealistic to expand efforts to include also those who retain some assets. Furthermore, emergency situations that are characterized by rapidly changing needs and requirements may hinder efforts to preserve livelihoods, at least until the situation has stabilized. Crisis-affected people, and particularly those who have been forced to move to new areas, may need to adapt old livelihoods, or develop new ones, to survive. Security concerns bring a particular challenge, and virtually preclude efforts to support livelihoods in some areas.
14. There are, however, many situations where opportunities to preserve assets and support livelihoods exist, especially in response to slow-onset disasters, such as drought and crop failure, and in longer-term EMOPs or PRROs. In these situations, the capability to support livelihoods could be put in place. Such efforts could enable WFP to save a greater number of lives by strengthening and maintaining the livelihood systems and coping capacities that are already being used by women and men within the community. Otherwise, vulnerable groups could fall into destitution and become fully dependent on food aid rations in the future and over a longer period.

## Key Programming Challenges

### ⇒ *Emergency Assessments and Analysis*

15. Livelihood assessments are the first essential ingredient of any effort to support livelihoods. In emergencies, such assessments should not only identify the livelihood assets and strategies of men and women in each distinct population group, but should also assess the impact that the crisis has had on these. Such assessments should consider the traditional, social and economic roles of women and men and the extent to which they are, or have been, changing as a result of the emergency. Where there is no prior analysis of livelihood strategies before the crisis, efforts should be made to collect these data from affected households; where prior livelihood strategies are no longer applicable in the current context, this should also be considered. Assessments should also include analysis of formal and informal policies, institutions and processes, how these have been affected by the crisis and how they are currently influencing livelihood strategies. The results of livelihood assessments and analysis should guide all stages of programme design and implementation.
16. WFP's vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM) can provide a sound basis for livelihood programming. VAM units analyse secondary data to create a picture of food insecurity and vulnerability, and divide the programme area into livelihood zones. Subsequently, they use detailed field assessment to identify the livelihood strategies of priority vulnerable groups and to create vulnerability profiles. These vulnerability profiles describe the causes and levels of vulnerability, indigenous coping capacities, gender and intra-household allocation concerns and issues related to the role of food aid. However, VAM analysis is not yet available for all WFP countries. Other forms of WFP assessments can contribute to livelihoods analysis, but would need to focus more specifically on the effect that the crisis has on all of the various livelihood assets, in order to provide a sound basis for efforts to support livelihoods.



17. WFP is currently reviewing its emergency needs assessment guidelines in consultation with partners, and considering how further to incorporate livelihood approaches within them. WFP and FAO are also working to enhance the micro-economic focus of Joint Crop and Food Supply Assessment Missions, which currently calculate food aid needs at the macro level on the basis of estimates of a country's total food requirements, minus production and commercial food imports. Furthermore, the WFP and Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) revised Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) expands Joint Food Needs Assessment Missions (JFAM) into broader assessment missions, which are not limited to food requirements but also incorporate self-reliance potential and socio-political analysis. Such efforts will facilitate the use of these important tools in livelihood programming.

### ⇒ *Links to Programme Design*

18. A clear link is needed between livelihood assessments and programme design and implementation in order to ensure realistic objectives, appropriate targeting and sound monitoring and evaluation systems. Case studies and desk reviews found that the following factors tend to prevent the translation of livelihoods analysis into emergency programme design and implementation:
- There is insufficient understanding of the link between saving lives and saving livelihoods.
  - The information generated from the assessments is not summarized in a way that decision-makers can use effectively.
  - Decision-makers may opt for rapid and less rigorous analysis of the information collected, owing to the added cost and time needed for detailed livelihood assessments and interventions.

### ⇒ *Targeting*

19. Household-level targeting, which is essential when implementing a livelihoods approach, is extremely challenging in emergencies. Programmes to preserve assets and support livelihoods should include those people who are undertaking negative coping strategies in order to retain their assets or who may survive acute crisis but with a severely depleted capacity for pursuing their livelihoods in the future. WFP would also need to understand the different assets controlled by men and by women within households and men's and women's distinct livelihood strategies, in order to ensure that women benefit equally from the assets protected or generated as part of a livelihood strategy.
20. There are also time and logistics constraints associated with targeting people who may be dispersed over a large area. Additionally, there may be limited access to affected areas, and to affected people within those areas, because of insecurity, and this would prevent household targeting exercises. Because most household-level targeting is conducted by community members themselves, there can also be problems when communities define vulnerability and entitlement to assistance differently from WFP and its partners, which try to assist the most food-insecure households and focus on children under five, expectant and nursing women, the disabled, the elderly and HIV/AIDS-affected families.
21. Targeting to preserve assets and support livelihoods may also increase the size of the target group as it expands to include people who still have some assets, in addition to those who are already destitute or malnourished. This could pose resource constraints,



particularly if new geographical areas were added on the basis of expanded criteria of vulnerability.

### ⇒ *Early Intervention*

22. Preserving assets and supporting livelihoods requires intervening early, before households are forced to adopt crisis strategies (such as over-borrowing, selling essential assets or stress migration). This requires effective early warning systems, preparedness, sufficient funding and the capacity to respond early. WFP could strengthen its early warning capabilities by building on best practices, enhancing the management of early warning information and building stronger linkages among early warning, preparedness actions and decision-making processes, and steps are under way to do this. Still, and particularly in areas where WFP is not already working, a situation may already have reached crisis stage before WFP distributes food. Moreover, donors are often reluctant to commit resources to emergency operations until the needs have reached crisis levels. By then, it is often too late to begin asset preservation activities because most critical assets may already have been depleted.
23. Recent steps by WFP to improve early warning and contingency planning will facilitate more rapid response. Adjusting these systems to include livelihood considerations should contribute to WFP's efforts to make a convincing case to donors for early resource commitments. Some related issues are also being addressed in the context of WFP's internal business process review. These various efforts should further facilitate WFP's ability to respond early, before essential assets are depleted—provided that resources are available.

### ⇒ *Monitoring and Evaluation*

24. Success in preserving assets and supporting livelihoods has rarely been monitored or documented by WFP. One exception to this is Cambodia, where surveys conducted in 1998 and 1999 indicated that food aid helped beneficiaries to avoid selling assets and incurring debt. Evaluation documents have highlighted the lack of reliable, formal baselines and measurable outcome indicators for use in monitoring and evaluation. Indeed, most of the EMOPs and PRROs reviewed provided only output-related indicators, such as number and type of activities under way through food-for-asset programmes, and number and type of physical outputs supported by food for work. Two examples that did include results-based, outcome-oriented indicators were Myanmar (PRRO 10066.1), which collected information on gross and net amounts of increased agricultural production, increased job opportunities and increased access to markets and services, and Sri Lanka (PRRO 10067.0), which collected information on the percentage of participants working fewer than three days a week shortly after training.
25. WFP's proposed policy for results-oriented monitoring and evaluation will set the stage for increased tracking of outcomes (including those related to livelihoods), emphasizing the identification of realistic objectives and related assumptions and risks, the selection of a minimum set of performance indicators and the use of baseline surveys and ongoing data collection and analysis. These efforts should also include the monitoring of any possible negative impact of food aid—particularly as it affects local food production and markets—that may occur when assistance is provided over an extended time period.



## Refugee Operations

26. Refugee operations, in which WFP plays a supporting role in an overall effort under the management of UNHCR, pose particular constraints to efforts to preserve assets and support livelihoods. Refugees have left behind most of their assets and may have limited access to land, livestock, jobs or other sources of livelihood during their time of refuge, which limits their ability to pursue livelihood strategies.
27. Security may also be an issue. Refugees in camps located near national borders may risk attack or conscription, which can compromise any efforts to rebuild or restore assets, and travel by aid workers to these areas may be difficult. Women face particular risk of abuse in implementing their livelihood strategies.
28. Linking livelihoods during refuge to livelihoods once refugees return to their own country or are resettled also poses challenges. The actions required to help refugees to re-establish their livelihoods, or develop new ones, once they return home or are resettled are not always well understood. If funding shortfalls occur during the repatriation process, returnees may not receive the assistance that they need in order to retain, restore or develop livelihoods. Moreover, there may be transportation constraints that have an impact on the assets that refugees are permitted to repatriate, as is the case in Guinea for the Sierra Leonean refugees.
29. Despite these challenges, in refugee camps, the existence of an UNHCR-led coordination structure to bring food and non-food assistance together under a common strategy could permit close linkages among sectors, which are essential for livelihood interventions. In addition, most refugee camps have functioning markets and some opportunities for labour—within the camp if not outside—which can support livelihood strategies. For instance, the Guinea case study found that refugees can be engaged as skilled and unskilled labour in support of the relief effort (setting up tents, building health centres and sanitation systems, making bricks for sale to relief agencies), can trade with other refugees or the host population (offering services or selling produce cultivated in small gardens, fish or processed goods) or can participate in small income-generation activities (such as tailoring or bread-making). The recently updated WFP–UNHCR MOU highlights the importance of efforts to support asset-building activities and encourage the self-reliance of beneficiaries, which is a step in the right direction.

## Limitations of Food Aid

30. Food aid should be coupled with non-food assistance and services to preserve, recover or develop the assets and livelihoods of crisis-affected people. In many cases, the lack of funding to other agencies that are responsible for these complementary inputs or interventions has impeded the effectiveness of food-assisted programmes. For example, the lack of support for water supply, sanitation, health and agricultural interventions in the Horn of Africa significantly reduced the nutritional impact of food aid and impaired the re-establishment of pastoral livelihoods. Most EMOP and PRRO documents also noted the importance of obtaining non-food inputs to implement the WFP food-for-work and food-for-training activities that were used to preserve assets and support livelihoods.
31. When seeking to support livelihoods, WFP and its partners should look at the relative benefits of food aid and cash assistance, keeping market considerations in mind. This includes taking into account the role that each type of input plays within a household and its impact on the range of assets and livelihood strategies. For instance, women tend to have more control over food in the household than over cash, which may make food inputs more viable than cash inputs in both meeting food needs and supporting the livelihood



strategies of women. In other situations, cash inputs may be preferable, if they are available.

### Staff Capacity

32. Lack of training to carry out livelihood assessments and programming, including rapid or participatory rural appraisals and gender analysis, was highlighted as a constraint in implementing livelihood-support activities in Angola, for example. Although livelihood and participatory considerations were included in the food aid and development training that followed adoption of the Enabling Development policy, this training was not sufficient to instil the skills necessary to support efforts to preserve livelihoods in emergency situations, nor did it extend to many of the country offices implementing emergency programmes.

### Funding Constraints

33. The unpredictable funding stream that characterizes most emergency operations can hinder the planning that is necessary to preserve assets and support livelihoods. Even emergencies that are well funded overall face breaks in the pipeline when donor commitments or food shipments are delayed. Furthermore, donors are not always interested in supporting programmes that address longer-term considerations. Some activities aimed at supporting livelihoods attract adequate funding, while others must be delayed or cancelled. For WFP, the fact that livelihood programming may raise staff and other non-food costs is a consideration.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR EMERGENCY PROGRAMMING

34. By helping households to preserve their assets and pursue livelihood strategies, WFP can expand its life-saving efforts beyond those individuals who directly receive food aid to include their extended families and those community members who rely on them, thereby quickening recovery. By using food aid to support and enhance local capacities to cope with crisis, WFP can build vulnerable people's resilience and ability to cope with future hazards. WFP's or its partners' interaction with affected men and women, which underlies household-level targeting, yields insights into longer-term needs, which can inform the overall relief effort by ensuring that it is based on deeper knowledge of the men, women and children who WFP wants to serve.
35. WFP could further its efforts to preserve assets and support livelihoods in emergencies by taking the steps outlined in the following paragraphs.
36. **Pre-emergency interventions must be linked to emergency responses.** WFP should link early warning, contingency planning, VAM and both emergency and longer-term programmes in a comprehensive process that builds communities' resilience to the hazards and risks that they are likely to face. For example, further investments in early warning systems and baseline and vulnerability information can help anticipate when shocks will hit and who will be most affected, so that steps can be taken to reduce the shocks' effects. Simple community-based indicators can be adopted to track changes in vulnerability over time (such as asset sales, changes in food security status, increase in school drop-out rates and malnutrition levels, changes in overall health status, etc). In addition, food for work and other targeted interventions can be designed specifically to reduce the vulnerability and improve the resilience of women, men, children and entire communities in flood-, drought- and conflict-prone areas, so that the effects of these disasters can be lessened. Consistent with Enabling Development and Disaster Mitigation policies, WFP already has some good experience linking emergency and longer-term programmes in, for example,



crisis-prone areas of Ethiopia, Bangladesh and Mozambique, and this can be used as a basis for further work.

37. **Livelihood assessments should be integrated further into emergency needs assessments.** Even in quick-onset emergencies where detailed assessment may not initially be possible, livelihood assessments should be carried out at a later stage, after the initial response has occurred. Such assessments should document the livelihood strategies that women and men are pursuing, the assets that they rely on for their livelihoods, the policies, institutions and processes that influence their ability to pursue their means of living, and household coping strategies. They should also outline the differences between the strategies adopted and the risks faced by men and by women within a household, indicate when food aid is an appropriate response (and when it is not), and clarify the non-food strategies that are required to support livelihoods. In keeping with its gender policy, WFP would need to ensure that women benefit equally from the assets that are protected or generated as part of a livelihood strategy.
38. **Links among analysis, programme design and implementation must be made explicit.** This can be facilitated by ensuring that information is presented in a format that is conducive to decision-making, as well as by involving assessors and analysts in programme design. For those interventions that fall outside WFP's mandate, other agencies should be informed on a systematic basis.
39. WFP should also review experiences with household-level targeting, traditional methods for sharing resources within households and communities and ways that targeting practices would need to be altered for livelihood-support activities. This may include considering whether, in some cases, more lives can be saved if WFP targets: (a) a smaller geographical area in order to include those who are undertaking negative coping strategies to maintain essential assets; or (b) a larger geographical area where beneficiaries are limited to those who have already lost all of their assets.
40. **Improve the timing of interventions.** WFP needs to ensure that emergency food aid interventions occur early enough to reduce the need for negative coping strategies, such as selling or mortgaging essential livelihood assets or incurring prohibitive debt. This will require incorporating risks to livelihoods in early warning efforts and ensuring effective links among early warning, preparedness and response. It will also need to involve quicker and more predictable access, by country offices, to full funding for their activities—through, for example, an increase in the Immediate Response Account (IRA), changes in WFP's internal business process and donor willingness to provide funding before an evolving situation reaches crisis proportions. In countries where WFP has an existing presence, it will have the ability to respond more quickly if its long-term interventions are already directed to those areas that are most vulnerable to hazards.
41. **WFP should advocate for the needs of those at risk of losing their livelihoods, in addition to those whose lives are at risk.** Situations where food assistance plays an important role in preserving assets and supporting livelihoods may require a larger quantity of food aid than activities aimed at meeting the immediate survival needs of the destitute. Target groups may be larger, because they include people who still have assets, and there may be additional staff and other costs. Livelihood-support interventions will also require complementary inputs from partners. Supported by research and impact evaluations, WFP staff need to be well versed in the benefits of sustaining livelihoods as a life saving measure and to avert negative and risky coping strategies, especially as they may be adopted by women. Staff should also know when food aid is an appropriate response and when it is not. WFP should use this information to advocate on behalf of crisis-affected people.



42. **Promote partnerships with organizations that understand the needs of communities and are open to a livelihood approach.** WFP should proactively seek to bring partners, particularly community-based organizations, into its assessment, analysis and programme design processes in order to expand the possibilities of, and scope for, preserving assets and supporting livelihoods in emergencies. In addition, support for twinning arrangements between larger international NGOs with experience in supporting livelihoods in emergencies and smaller, indigenous organizations that bring community-level knowledge should be encouraged. WFP should also seek partnerships with governments, United Nations agencies and NGOs that can couple non-food resources with the food resources provided by WFP. This should include working closely with UNHCR to review further the potential of efforts to support refugee livelihoods.
43. **Build the capacity of staff and partners.** Many of the skills needed to support livelihoods are the same as those that are needed generally to promote sound programming. WFP needs to reinvigorate programme cycle training to ensure that all staff, including those who work in emergencies, have the capacity to conduct participatory assessments, design and implement effective programmes, monitor the impact of their activities, and incorporate gender considerations. Such an effort should include building capacities that are specifically relevant to efforts to support livelihoods, but should not be limited to this. In addition, WFP staff need to be able to conduct institutional capacity assessments to determine whether partners are capable of designing and implementing food-based projects to preserve assets and support livelihoods, or what capacities they would need to do so. A more systematic use of project log frames in emergencies, including the required capacity building to permit this, could prove extremely helpful in ensuring that programmes include realistic goals and objectives and that selected indicators are measurable and relevant to measuring outcomes.

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## CONCLUSIONS

44. Not all emergencies are conducive to efforts to preserve assets and support livelihoods. However, WFP should systematically assess and analyse livelihood-related issues in emergencies and strengthen its capacity to assess, design, implement and monitor interventions that save lives and livelihoods. Gender analysis and gender-sensitive approaches should form a fundamental and integral part of WFP's livelihood strategy.
45. WFP should build synergies between its emergency and longer-term interventions. Longer-term interventions should be concentrated in hazard-prone areas where vulnerable/food-insecure people reside, and should emphasize efforts to build household resilience and to strengthen coping strategies to mitigate the impact of crises. Emergency interventions should preserve those assets that are essential to meet basic needs and help affected people recover more quickly from crises.
46. WFP should strengthen partnerships with community-based organizations and should build staff capacity to assess, design, implement and monitor interventions that seek to preserve lives and livelihoods in emergencies. This should include a particular focus on the livelihoods of women within a household and on which assets are key to preventing risky behaviour that has a negative impact on the health and well-being of women and girls.



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## ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

DFID	United Kingdom Department for International Development
EMOP	emergency operation
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
IDS	Institute of Development Studies
IRA	Immediate Response Account
JFAM	Joint Food Needs Assessment Mission
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	non-governmental organization
PRRO	protracted relief and recovery operation
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
VAM	vulnerability analysis and mapping

