



Remarks by the World Food Programme

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**Economic and Social Council Operational Activities Segment
Dialogue with Executive Heads of Funds and Programmes**

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Madam Vice-President of ECOSOC,
Distinguished Heads of Delegations,
Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to participate in this meeting on behalf of the Executive Director of the World Food Programme, Ms. Ertharin Cousin.

We are at the cusp of a new era in development cooperation. As we approach the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 2015 deadline, we also have a historic opportunity to redress concepts of progress and prosperity and ways of collectively tackling them.

My statement will focus on four areas of change:

- what it will take to leave no one behind
- addressing the humanitarian-development divide
- opportunities for South-South and triangular cooperation

What it will take to leave no one behind

The MDGs were instrumental in spurring unprecedented progress. For example, the proportion of people living on less than US\$1.25 a day fell from 47 per cent in 1990 to 22 per cent in 2010, five years ahead of schedule. However, poverty reduction has not been inclusive and inequality has increased. Not only has the hunger target of MDG1 not been achieved, but today most of the food-insecure people live in middle-income countries.

Therefore a key challenge that stands out in the formulation of the Post-2015 Agenda – and how the UN will tailor its support to the implementation – will be to focus on the most vulnerable populations, wherever they are.

For this to happen, we need to sharpen our knowledge base.

In each country where the UN development system is operational, we need to have a greater understanding of the root causes of poverty, hunger, inequality and associated vulnerabilities. This understanding must both underpin and guide our work.

At WFP, we have been on the cutting edge with our food security analysis work known as “Vulnerability Assessment and Mapping” (VAM). Through tailored assessments and analysis carried out with national counterparts and other stakeholders, we have deepened our collective understanding of the food insecurity and nutrition situation in a country – including geographically, by population group and other contextual factors.

This work informs all of our programming work, from design to targeting. It allows us to provide evidence-based policy advice and raise the bar in our work in support of both national governments and implementing/ cooperating partners.

Leaving no one behind means going the extra mile to ensure that development opportunities are provided to those who need it the most.

To do this we need an ODA that is focused on the poorest, most marginalized and vulnerable segments of societies. An ODA that is explicitly targeted on poverty instead of its current broad mandate of promoting ‘economic development and welfare’. It also needs to be more sharply focused on meeting the needs of the poorest quintile.

This also brings new light to the UN development system’s operational activities at national level. We need to go deeper and get closer to the poorest and most marginalized groups including by going beyond the capital and major cities.

This holds true particularly in low-income and fragile countries with limited institutional capacities and continued need for operational support.

In middle-income countries, while our collective support should concentrate on capacity building and institutional support, the overall orientation should still be in helping to lift the poorest, most marginalized and vulnerable populations.

The Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Delivering as One (DaO) can be used as an effective tool to foster greater collective understanding of the most critical needs and provide more coherent operational support to address them.

WFP's deep field presence and innovative tools to reach the poorest and most vulnerable populations makes it well placed to serve as platform for UN agencies seeking to enhance their operational outreach.

Addressing the humanitarian-development divide

In most countries where we operate, extreme poverty and chronic hunger are inextricably linked to vulnerability to crises. Development gains made in times of stability can be quickly wiped out by a natural disaster, a surge in market prices, an outbreak of conflict or other shocks. At other times, gains are progressively undermined by the cumulative effects of chronic stressors such as recurring droughts.

The emergence of the resilience agenda has increased our level of understanding that the transition from emergency relief to post-crisis recovery and development is rarely linear – it is more like a pendulum. We must ensure that our support and investments trigger a larger forward swing.

For example, investments in effective emergency response help protect hard won gains in health, food security and poverty reduction. And development planning processes must foresee adequate preparedness and response capacities to sudden crises and changes in the needs of vulnerable populations.

Investments in both short-term humanitarian response and longer-term development must overcome the humanitarian-development divide and better address vulnerabilities to shocks and the realities of the people exposed to them.

In some cases, failing to address both the immediate and longer-term needs of the most vulnerable populations will have serious consequences to long-term stability and social and economic growth, and may lead to more severe crises in the future. The new

development agenda being negotiated provides us with both an opportunity and a moral obligation to tackle this issue.

There is potential within each of the upcoming global events – Sendai (Disaster Risk Reduction), Addis Ababa (Financing for Development), New York (post-2015), Paris (climate change) and Istanbul (World Humanitarian Summit) – to set us on a path where funding policies and frameworks can help us most effectively address this long-standing divide.

Opportunities for South-South and triangular cooperation

I would just like to draw your attention to one last point, while I'm talking about resources and partnerships, and that is South-South and triangular cooperation.

It will not be possible for countries to put in place the solutions required to achieve a world with Zero Hunger without mobilizing more resources and calling on additional expertise, skills, capacities and solutions. With the Sustainable Development Goals emerging, it is also becoming clear that many developing countries already have relevant solutions to offer under each of the goals, regardless how big or small these solutions are.

Making these relevant experiences available and facilitating the sharing of expertise, knowledge, skills, innovations and technologies should therefore be a shared priority for all - developing as well as developed countries and the international community.

In supporting South-South cooperation, we need to embrace its differentiated and voluntary nature as a complement rather than substitute to North-South cooperation. Also, we have to recognize that developing countries are not homogenous and that all countries – independently of their stage of development – have relevant experiences to share. In the fight against hunger and malnutrition, this is an opportunity, as we can capitalize on their diversity in development stages, capacities, innovative practices, approaches and solutions that we know work for the most vulnerable.

In conclusion

Working together, building on each other's strengths and competencies is the way forward for the UN development system.

For WFP, this is part of our DNA. We recognize that hunger and malnutrition are multi-dimensional and we know that eradicating hunger in a sustainable manner requires a combination and layering of policies, strategies and activities.

We also know that integrating the humanitarian and development spheres is the only way for a lasting impact – it will require a collective effort and a more coherent approach.

This vision of “togetherness” and complementarity needs to be built into the ECOSOC Dialogues and the QCPR. But – and there is a but – it will be equally important to build in sufficient space and flexibility so that our collective responses can be inclusive, contextualized and nimble.

As Walt Disney would say “If you can dream it, you can do it”.

Thank you.