Mid-term evaluation
Second International Decade of the World’s Indigenous People
2005-2014

Questionnaire for UN system and other intergovernmental organizations

Information submitted by World Food Programme (WFP)

Unedited version
WFP’s Contribution to the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII)

Latin America and the Caribbean (2008-2009)

The World Food Programme’s (WFP) assistance is based on food insecurity and not strictly on the social or ethnic/cultural status of an individual. As such, at global level, WFP does not have specific programmes for Indigenous Peoples, unless they are food insecure. In the Latin America and the Caribbean Region (LAC), however, WFP is paying more and more attention to indigenous peoples because these are the most excluded people in the region. Inequality and discrimination negatively affect indigenous peoples and they lack access to all basic services compared with non-indigenous peoples. This results in high poverty rates, high prevalence of undernutrition, infant and maternal mortality, lack of education, and lack of social and political participation.

Some activities developed during 2008-2009 are as follows:

1. In its operations, WFP has succeeded in reaching indigenous beneficiaries widely in countries with a high proportion of indigenous population, such as Bolivia, Guatemala, Ecuador and Peru. Between 2007 and 2008, WFP projects reached a total of over 220,000 indigenous beneficiaries in Peru, some 75 percent of total beneficiaries, while in Bolivia WFP’s indigenous beneficiaries totalled over 570,000, which constitutes 80 percent of that country’s total beneficiaries.

Throughout 2008 and 2009, WFP has been involved in numerous information-sharing meetings with representatives of Indigenous Peoples as well as UN agencies colleagues, as follows:

2. In October 2008, WFP was part of an inter-agency group that prepared the first seminar on the Declaration on Indigenous Rights for South American countries. The seminar assembled over 70 participants from various indigenous groups, human rights institutions and governments from 10 South American countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela). The seminar offered these indigenous groups the opportunity to exchange their experiences and good practices and voice their recommendations for implementing the Declaration. The participants examined in detail the Declaration and its background, including ILO Convention Number 69 on Indigenous and Tribal People. Participants identified key challenges and developed clear action points to implement the Declaration and realize the rights included therein. The indigenous participants recognized the Declaration as an international instrument. They urged Latin American governments to diffuse information on Indigenous Peoples’ rights, initiate the process of collaboration and dialogue with Indigenous Peoples and develop public policy to implement the relevant international instruments. Follow-up has been carried out for the dissemination of the Declaration within countries at local level.
3. During 2008, WFP was involved in preparing three-year Concept Notes to the MDG Spanish Window: Infancy, Food Security and Nutrition, in an inter-agency effort developed with UNICEF, PAHO, FAO, and UNFPA, among others. WFP and the other agencies agreed to focus these proposals on reducing indigenous children and mothers’ undernutrition and food insecurity. Seven countries where WFP has country offices received approval for its Concept Notes (Bolivia, Colombia, Cuba, Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Peru). During 2009, WFP has been working in developing complete proposals in these countries for the benefit of indigenous children and families.

4. From 30 March to 3 April 2009, WFP participated (as facilitator and giving 3 presentations) in the ‘training of trainers’ workshop on the “Right to Food” for the LAC UN Country Teams (UNCT) in the context of the rights of Indigenous Peoples and Afro-descendants population. Some country offices, such as Panama and Bolivia, have replicated this workshop at local levels.

5. In June 2009, WFP was also part of the second inter-agency seminar on the Declaration on Indigenous Rights for Central American Countries (Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama and Costa Rica). The seminar counted nearly 70 participants. The objectives of this seminar were similar to the one conducted in late 2008. Follow-up has been carried out for the dissemination of the Declaration within countries at local level.

6. In June 2009, WFP also attended a meeting with UN County Teams of Central America to analyze and plan the implementation of the UN Development Group Guidance on the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

7. From June to December 2009, WFP is conducting a “Study on the scope of Nutritional Dimension within Social Safety Nets Programmes in Central America and the Dominican Republic”. The objective of the study is to assess the scope of the nutritional dimension of the Social Protection Nets in this sub-region. Within these programmes, priority was given to children under 2, pregnant and lactating mothers, people living with HIV, indigenous peoples, and afro-descendant populations. The study’s conclusions will, on a short term basis, enable countries to confront the global crises in order to protect their vulnerable populations and, on the mid-long term basis, strengthen their social public policies. Additionally, the study should provide WFP with important elements and outputs to reorient its cooperation towards these objectives. The study will include active and main programmes: mother and child nutrition, conditional transfers, food-based programmes, micronutrient fortification and supplementation programmes, and other programmes linked to nutrition, such as food production and water and sanitation.

8. A third seminar on the Declaration of Indigenous Peoples Rights, with similar objectives than the first and second events, will be developed in December this year for the Caribbean countries.

9. Finally, WFP is currently working in a UN Inter-agency Consultative Group on Indigenous Issues.
Southern, Eastern and Central Africa

Republic of Congo

In the Republic of Congo, Pygmies are in almost all the regions of the country (Sangha, Likouala, Plateaux, Lekoumou, Pool). Pygmies are still following their traditional lifestyle: hunters-gatherers. Some of them work in the wood industry, national parks or as labourers on farms in exchange of food, alcohol or cigarettes. Some of them also practice modest agriculture, and give preference to forest activities. Pygmies do not have access to administrative support. They are predominantly illiterate and have no access to formal education. This makes it extremely difficult for any effective political representation and any protest against discrimination.

In the government’s Poverty Reduction Strategic Document, (PRSD) it is noted that 5% of the children in school age do not have access to education. These 5% are mainly Pygmies. Therefore WFP, in collaboration with UNICEF and the Ministry of Education, is implementing school feeding projects to improve access to formal education among pygmy children. Currently, four schools of Pygmies (540 girls and 660 boys) in the Plateau region are benefiting from WFP food assistance through the school feeding programme, compared to 3000 planned. The average new enrolment is about 80 children each year and the attendance rate is about 60 percent.

The accessibility of villages inhabited by pygmies and the lack of schools in pygmies areas are the main difficulties encountered in assisting pygmies children. Also high diseases incidences in school have reduced children’s attendance.

WFP, UNICEF and the Ministry of Education have planned to work together again in order to expand this assistance to Sangha and Likouala Regions in 2010.
Examples Drawn From Current Project Documents
in the Asia Region

Bangladesh

The Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) region has sizeable concentrations of ultra-poor households depending on vulnerable and fragile livelihoods. Demographic diversity is high, with 12 different tribal groups residing alongside a non-tribal population. After more than two decades of politically motivated armed conflict, a peace agreement was signed in 1997 and is still under implementation. The region therefore continues to be characterized by chronic insecurity and instability, with a large number of internally displaced people (IDPs) in need of resettlement. Access to cultivable land is a major issue in CHT; much of the territory is reserve forests. Land settlement issues, particularly concerning returned refugees and IDPs, have yet to be addressed following the peace agreement.

Cultivation problems are particularly acute in the most remote and hilly areas where many of the smaller ethnic groups reside. These groups traditionally engage in shifting cultivation. Although crop diversity is relatively high, yields tend to be low. Compared to the rest of the country, the CHT lean season is long — from May to September; severe food shortages occur during this period. Most food is grown for household consumption, although a portion is sold in the market to generate disposable income. Farmers face problems in bringing their produce to market because of poor roads, a limited transport system and hilly terrain. Producers are often forced to sell their products to intermediaries at unfavourable terms. Market facilities are generally underdeveloped. The insecure environment and poor infrastructure discourage private sector investment. During the non-agricultural period there is some labour migration to Chittagong city, but most people tend homestead gardens, cut wood from the surrounding forests or remain jobless. Unemployment is a serious problem throughout the year.

India

WFP’s food-delivery components operate in Chattisgarh, Jharkand, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Rajasthan. Some districts in these states have large tribal populations with above-average levels of food insecurity and malnutrition; the government and UN agencies identify them as primary target areas for the eradication of hunger and poverty. The capacity-development components will be implemented in additional states that have requested WFP’s assistance. The Government is not expected to require emergency food assistance from WFP.

This component will support poor and chronically food-insecure households in remote areas with limited access to markets, focusing on tribal communities that rely on declining natural resources and are vulnerable to natural disasters. WFP will help households to develop productive assets and resource management techniques to improve income levels and resilience.

The Department of Tribal Welfare will continue as the main implementing partner under the IFAD–WFP programme and will coordinate implementation, involving
departments of government, NGOs and community-based organizations. Decisions on measures to be undertaken at the village level will be taken in consultation with the communities on the basis of plans formulated by beneficiaries and approved by the gram panchayats (village councils).

The Ministry of Agriculture is the main channel of communication between the government and WFP. Components will be implemented by the following ministries: component 1, Capacity Development for Food Security: the Ministries of Tribal Affairs, Education, Women and Child Development and the National AIDS Control Organization; component 2, Support for ICDS–Improving the Nutritional Status of Vulnerable Children and Women: the Ministry of Women and Child Development; and component 3, Support for Livelihood Activities: the Ministry of Tribal Affairs.

Support to Livelihood Activities (Food for Work - FFW): The programme supports poor and chronically food-insecure households in remote tribal areas that have limited access to markets. In a unique collaboration with the government and IFAD, WFP provides 3 kg of rice per day of work that supplements the cash-based inputs of IFAD. The programme is expected to benefit 0.2 million beneficiaries in 14 districts spread across three states.

Lao PDR

Because the primary period of food shortage coincides with the peak agricultural season, the need to meet immediate household food requirements by working on other farmers’ land or in scarce off-farm employment activities further threatens food production in the poorest households. The rural Lao economy is also undergoing a number of transitions which have negative food security implications: with the growing population, upland slash and burn (swidden) agriculture is becoming increasingly unsustainable. Permanent cultivation is encouraged; however, the lack of appropriate production techniques causes soil depletion, resulting in reduced production, and the high labour requirement to establish permanent fields is limiting to the poorest households. The Government of Laos’ promotion of village relocation to areas with perceived higher development potential, although beneficial in terms of accessibility to markets, is increasing population density in such areas, with resulting pressure on scarce productive land and forest resources. Rigorous global efforts to eradicate opium cultivation are forcing livelihood transitions for ethnic groups on otherwise low-potential land for whom opium cultivation is a traditional source of income.

Lao women play an important role in household and community activities, although the specific aspects of their role vary among ethnic groups and between rural and urban areas. In rice cultivation, men are generally responsible for preparatory activities such as land clearing, ploughing and preparing seed beds, while women transplant rice, weed and carry out harvest and post-harvest activities. Women are also responsible for most essential household tasks such as fetching water and fuelwood.

The food-for-training (FFT) activities will primarily focus on improving agricultural production. Because traditional agricultural production in Laos takes place at household level, with both men and women sharing overall responsibility, the training
will target all adults within the household, in order to ensure that both men and women develop the relevant skills. Where opportunities exist to particularly promote female participation within both the FFW and FFT aspects of the project, this will be encouraged.

The project will work in conjunction with other donor-supported activities, thus co-resourcing a wide range of food security interventions. Examples of partnerships that will continue are the Oudomxay Community Initiatives Support Project supported by WFP, IFAD, the government of Luxembourg and the Lao government with a total budget of US$ 13.4 million and reaching 29,000 largely ethnic minority households; and the Sekong Ethnic Peoples Development Project supported by UNDP, WFP and the Lao Government with a total budget of US$ 5 million, aimed at developing local Government capacity to assist ethnic minority households enhance their livelihood security.

Levels of enrolment and attendance in primary schools are extremely poor: the primary net enrolment ratio (NER) for the whole country was only 82.5 percent (78.8 percent for girls) in 2003. Large regional disparities are hidden, however, and only about 50 percent of students complete primary school. Rural areas, especially remote poor regions, have low NERs and low completion rates. Girls are under-represented at every level of education: the national ratio of girls to boys in primary schools in 2002 was 84/100; girls’ enrolment is even lower in poor rural areas, and for some ethnic minority groups the enrolment rate can be as low as 8 percent. Of the few girls in these areas who do enrol in primary school, many drop out after grades 1 and 2 and never return. As a consequence, only 51.2 percent of the national adult population — 60 percent of men and 45 percent of women — have basic literacy.

Other complementary donor programmes are the European Commission’s Basic Education Sector Project, the World Bank’s Second Education Development Programme, the French Government’s Basic Education Support Project, the Church World Service’s Basic Education Project and the Lao-American Integrated Rural Development Project. Most of these focus on girls from ethnic minority groups and aim to improve access to education, quality of primary education and management support for educational institutions. This project will benefit considerably from the experience of the Basic Education for Girls Project (BEGP), supported by ADB and AusAID, which will have ended by the time this project starts.

The impact of the food crisis in Northern Laos is expected to last at least two years and food-for-work (FFW) activities will be required to diversify coping strategies and improve resilience to livelihood shocks such as this one. To address chronic malnutrition, which is a major problem in Laos with half of rural children under 5 affected, WFP has launched ‘Feeding the Future’ to educate ethnic communities through a tailored, culturally relevant training package, which is complementary to WFP School Meals Programme. After successfully piloting the project in 2008, WFP plans to expand this project in collaboration with international NGO partners. Funding is needed to implement this project.

WFP’s development project aims to strengthen livelihoods and improve the long-term food security of vulnerable, ethnic minority communities through FFW and FFT activities implemented by IFAD-assisted national projects, development agencies and
international NGOs. Beneficiaries are selected in close consultation with these implementing partners who have a permanent presence in target areas. FFT activities focus on teaching basic literacy and numeracy to women and adolescent girls. In 2008, WFP assisted 73,608 beneficiaries through this project. In 2009, the project is being implemented in 10 districts across four provinces of Laos and reaching over 77,000 beneficiaries.

Myanmar

Inhabitants of the remote Northern Rakhine State share ethnic and cultural links with neighbouring Bangladesh: 82 percent of its 800,000 people are Muslims of subcontinental origin. Restrictions placed on Muslims by the central authorities adversely affect livelihoods, and economic and social indicators show that the population is the most vulnerable in the country. Restrictions also apply to non-Burmese inhabitants of the Shan and Kachin States – including impediments to trade and movement – hindering the establishment of alternative livelihoods following poppy bans jointly imposed by the government and local authorities.

Pakistan

In education, the government has expressed strong commitment towards achieving the goals of both Millennium Development and Education for All, as reflected, in the Education Sector Reform for 2001–2004, the National Education Policy 1998–2010, the PDP and the National Plan of Action for Education for All 2000–2015. These plans focus on ensuring universal primary education and improving literacy rates. Pakistan faces enormous challenges in meeting its commitment to basic education for all, a commitment that requires reaching the underprivileged—predominantly girls and children from poor rural families, minority groups and tribal populations. To support the Government’s initiatives in this sector, UNDAF has recognized six areas of cooperation, including universal, free and compulsory quality primary education for all children, especially girls, and literacy and a non-formal basic education programme for out-of-school children and young people, particularly girls and women.

WFP’s Country Programme in Pakistan helps to improve the lives of 5.9 million beneficiaries. PRROs for food insecure households in tribal areas and earthquake victims reach over 718,000 beneficiaries. Two EMOPs in response to the high food price crisis targeting 3.1 million beneficiaries, and 600,000 displaced people have been launched.

Fighting between government forces and the armed opposition across Pakistan’s Federally Administered Tribal Areas and North West Frontier Province has triggered significant displacement since August 2008 of IDPs and locally affected people and returnees. The number of people requiring assistance by WFP is likely to reach 600,000 by May 2009. WFP is launching a new EMOP “Food Assistance to Internally Displaced and Conflict Affected Persons in Pakistan’s NWFP and FATA.” WFP is urgently seeking cash contributions for food procurement locally or in the region to cover food needs. A prioritization statement was issued to donors for March–May in the amount of US$36 million for the Humanitarian Response Plan of which food costs amount to US$19 million.
Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (10671.0) contributes to improving household food security, access to primary education, and the health status of women and children in the conflict affected tribal areas along the Afghan border. In order to extend the scope of the project to IDPs, a budget revision process has been completed. WFP provided 2,640 mt of food to the area.