

WFP INPUTS TO THE UN PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES (UNPFII)

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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.

Below are some recent examples received from the WFP field offices:

Republic of Congo (RoC)

In Betou, Likouala Province in eastern Republic of Congo (RoC), the World Food Programme (WFP) is currently assisting around 1,100 Pygmies among the Congolese refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). These refugees fled the escalated ethnic conflict in October 2009 among fishing communities in Equateur Province in western DRC, along the Oubangui River.

Different measures were considered by the WFP to avoid discrimination of the Pygmies during relief food distributions, i.e. to sensitize the refugees in a protracted manner or to conduct a separate distribution for the refugee Pygmies. The latter option was eventually implemented and the WFP and its partners continue to monitor the situation.

In another part of the Republic of Congo, namely the Plateaux department, the WFP assists 430 Pygmy pupils through a food-for-education project. Four schools dedicated to indigenous children are being assisted by the WFP under its protracted relief and recovery operation. It is planned to expand this activity under the new school feeding development project - currently under review and approval - through assistance to indigenous primary schools in the Plateaux supported by UNICEF.

In the Cuvettes, 300 Pygmy families currently targeted through the government integration programme are to receive food assistance. In January 2011, at the request of the government, WFP arranged the delivery of five metric tons of food commodities to support the government's efforts in integrating Pygmy groups within the communities. This is in line with a new law aiming at the protection and promotion of the rights of indigenous people in the Republic of Congo.

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

In the Equateur Province of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), where there is a high prevalence of food and nutrition insecurity, the majority of the beneficiaries of the WFP supplementary feeding and school feeding programmes are from the Pygmy population. Some 1,200 Pygmies are currently assisted by WFP. Pygmies are the indigenous population traditionally marginalized in the DRC society and their access to basic social services (education,

health, etc.) tends to be limited compared to the other ethnic groups. The above-mentioned WFP food safety net interventions contribute to filling such a gap.

Central Africa Republic (CAR)

In the Central Africa Republic (CAR) the Pygmy Aka tribe is mostly found in the western part of the country mainly in the Lobaye prefecture. The Akas are traditional hunters-gatherers that mostly rely on wild food in the context of the diminishing forest resources. They are dependent on vulnerable and fragile livelihoods such as cutting wood from the surrounding forests, precarious subsistence farming or some irregular piece of work in informal mining (carrying tools, moving stones, etc..)

The Akas are predominantly illiterate and are poorly empowered to access formal education which makes them more vulnerable to the new challenges of modern life. In education, the government has expressed strong commitment towards achieving both Millennium Development goals and Education for all, as reflected, in the government's Poverty Reduction Strategic Paper (PRSP). The PRSP focuses on ensuring universal primary education and improving literacy rates. CAR faces enormous challenges in meeting its commitment to basic education for all, a commitment that requires reaching the underprivileged—predominantly children from poor rural populations as well as of those of ethnic minorities.

The WFP's development project in CAR contributes to improving access to primary education, and the health status of women and children in poor rural households. The WFP assistance to the Aka minority group is channelled through the School Meals Programme which in 2010 targeted three Aka schools totalling 337 children. Through health centres located in the vicinity of Pygmy villages, the WFP also provides nutritional assistance to children under-five and pregnant and lactating women suffering from malnutrition.

WFP Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean

Last year, WFP conducted a study titled “Nutritional Dimension on the Social Safety Nets Study in Central America and the Dominican Republic” which incorporated the intercultural dimension within all the phases of the study. Among other issues, it focuses on indigenous peoples as a priority vulnerable group. The overall objective was to know if social safety nets have a nutritional dimension and what priority they give to children under two years, pregnant

women and lactating mothers, people with HIV, indigenous peoples and afro-descendants populations.