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**Executive Board
Second Regular Session**

Rome, 2–3 June 2003

INFORMATION NOTES



Distribution: GENERAL

WFP/EB.2/2003/INF/7

30 May 2003

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS' VISIT TO MAURITANIA, SENEGAL AND GUINEA

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INTRODUCTION

1. A delegation of WFP Executive Board members visited Mauritania, Senegal and Guinea between 22 February and 5 March. It consisted of representatives from the following countries: China, Haiti, Mali, Mauritania, Pakistan and Slovenia and the liaison officer for West Africa. The group was headed by the Mali Ambassador. The visit comprised meetings with government representatives, United Nations and other partner agencies, WFP staff and other stakeholders, as well as field visits to WFP operations. The delegation was accompanied by Mr M. Aranda da Silva, Regional Director for West Africa for the visits to Mauritania and Senegal, and Mr A. Vercken, Deputy Regional Director for West Africa, for the visit to Guinea. The members of the delegation are listed in Annex I, the programme of the visit is in Annex II, and a list of main government representatives with whom the mission interacted is in Annex III.
2. The members of the delegation offer their warmest congratulations to the Board Secretariat, to personnel of the regional bureau and country offices, and to the national authorities in the three countries visited, for their support and contribution to the success of the mission.

MAURITANIA

3. WFP's 1998–2002 Country Programme (CP) was scheduled to terminate by end December 2002, but an extension in time was requested for the period through June 2003 in order to deplete existing balances pending the arrival of commodities against the new CP 2003–2008. Objectives of the new CP are to: a) promote the education of children in rural areas, with special emphasis on girls' school attendance; b) reduce the rate of malnutrition among children in impoverished areas, and provide their mothers with healthcare and nutrition; and c) improve the food security of poor rural households and reduce their vulnerability to climatic hazards by protecting the environment. EMOP 10147 was approved in March 2002 at a total cost of \$US7.5 million. Distribution was scheduled to start from 1 April, but was delayed until September owing to donor response, which only manifested itself after the Government's declaration of a state of emergency on 1 September. A regional EMOP 10249 was approved on 16 December at a total cost of \$27.8 million for a one-year duration. This operation responds to the drought and production deficit in the Western Sahel region. Mauritania's 43,632-ton resource allocation, representing 80 percent of the overall 55,365-ton commitment, will target 420,000 beneficiaries in the south of the country, 120,000 of whom live in highly vulnerable areas.
4. In Mauritania, the delegation met the Prime Minister, the ministers for Women's Affairs and Planning, Health and Education and the Commissioner for Food Security. The Commissioner accompanied the delegation for the field visits. All of the political leadership showed great respect for, and interest in, WFP's work. The Prime Minister mentioned the severity of the drought, which is now in its third consecutive year. He appreciated WFP's response to the drought and underscored the salient features of his Government's own emergency plan, which is funded through a special budget and which, in addition to saving human lives, is trying to preserve livestock assets. Other issues raised in the meetings included: the extent of the coverage of WFP's CP; food baskets in relation to national/local food tastes; the school feeding programme and capacity building in the



Ministry of Education; the prevalence of HIV/AIDS; the costs of transporting commodities on account of the virtual monopoly of transporters; and resourcing of the CP.

5. The delegation had very useful meetings with the partner non-governmental organizations (NGOs) the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), the Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development [ACORD], the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief [OXFAM] and World Vision) that are implementing different components of the programme. All were extremely appreciative of WFP activities and also of the Government's attitude towards NGO involvement in emergency operations (EMOPs). They also highlighted the gravity of the situation created by the drought.
6. Partner United Nations agency representatives highlighted areas of previous and possible future collaboration. These concern joint studies, nutritional surveys, vulnerability analysis, logistic strategies and joint programming. The European Union representative emphasized the need to reinforce the national food security strategy and plan of action.
7. The site visits comprised visits to emergency distribution centres, school feeding programmes, food-for-work activities and nutrition centres. It was evident that women were the principal beneficiaries at the sites visited, that NGOs' collaboration in emergency distribution was extremely useful and that food-for-work programmes resulted in sustainable outputs.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8. The Mission felt that Mauritania was a deserving case for continued WFP involvement in both emergency and development activities. The government was firmly committed to monitoring the national strategic plan and to meeting the country's food needs.
9. Donor coordination was quite good but could be strengthened further through strategic collaborative initiatives.
10. WFP's initiatives in Mauritania could become more efficient through government assistance in negotiating with transporters to lower the cost of commodity transportation.
11. CP implementation could be made more effective through appropriate local capacity building initiatives.

SENEGAL

12. Prior to 1999, WFP's presence in Senegal was through a patchwork of projects. A coherent CP was first approved for 1999–2001. At present, WFP is operating through its second-generation CP for 2002–2006. This comprises three basic activities: health and nutrition; school feeding; and crisis prevention. There have also been several EMOPs. Currently, there is an EMOP for the conflict situation in the low Casamance, as well as two regional EMOPs: one targeting flood-affected populations in the Senegal River valley and the other aiming to assist rural populations in the most vulnerable areas.
13. In Senegal, the delegation was briefed on the situation in the country by the Minister of Family Affairs and National Solidarity, who was accompanied on this occasion by the Deputy Secretary-General of the President's office and directors of central services. It also received separate briefing on the country operations from the country director and undertook several field visits.



14. The Minister conveyed a message from the Prime Minister's regarding the Government's policies and priorities. Education was accorded the highest priority, followed by health and nutrition, agriculture, water and environment. She emphasized her Government's step-by-step approach towards food security, phasing out food aid over the longer term. In the transitional period she sought continuation of food aid and technical support, particularly in vulnerability analysis. She also expressed concerns over the developing emergency of Senegalese returning from the Côte d'Ivoire. In terms of partnership with WFP, the Minister highlighted the development of the CP within the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and the Government's ownership of the Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping study. Finally she welcomed and appreciated the selection of Dakar as headquarters for the regional bureau.
15. The delegation visited school feeding programmes in Kaolack. The school authorities quoted 'before and after' figures to show the improvement in school attendance and school results on account of the school feeding programme. They also highlighted the importance of providing two meals in order to achieve the desired impact on school attendance and learning. The importance of parent-teacher associations in supervising the programme was also underscored. The delegation visited a health centre supported by WFP and others. WFP support consisted of providing enriched flour for distribution among underweight children and expectant and nursing mothers. The delegation also visited two WFP warehouses.
16. The Regional Director and his team briefed the delegation on the work of the regional bureau. Its achievements to date, the challenges and opportunities it faces and its programme of work for 2003 were highlighted. A free and frank discussion took place regarding the process of decentralization and its costs and benefits. The Regional Director also presented an overall perspective of the food security situation in the entire region. He particularly mentioned the plight of the Sahel on account of recurring droughts, and stressed the need for an early warning system. He also highlighted the increase in armed conflicts and their adverse impact on regional food security.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

17. The delegation was of the view that the school feeding programme and the nutrition support for undernourished children and expectant and nursing mothers was helping to further the government's top education and health priorities.
18. WFP support for Senegal in this context should continue throughout the transitional phase, as requested by the Government, as the country endeavours to shoulder a progressively higher burden with a view to phasing out food aid.
19. The government's capacity building needs should be addressed, particularly in the area of vulnerability analysis, in collaboration with other United Nations partners.
20. The regional bureau's finance and administration capacity may require further strengthening.

GUINEA

21. WFP has been involved in development and emergency operations in Guinea for almost 40 years. The organization started its operations in 1964 with a feeding scheme in technical schools. The CP for 2002-2005 was approved in August 2001 for a total value of



US\$15 million. The school feeding programme began distributions in March 2002, and the rural development programme is scheduled to take off in 2003. In addition to the various development programmes, WFP Guinea has been in charge of several emergency response operations. For the past 12 years, since the outbreak of civil war in Liberia, Guinea has hosted hundreds of thousands of refugees. Rebel attacks have caused hundreds of thousands of people to become internally displaced. EMOP 6312, approved in November 2000, was designated to assist the internally displaced persons (IDPs). Assistance to refugees was provided through protracted relief and recovery operation (PRRO) 06271.0 in 2001, and through PRRO 10064.0 and PRRO 10064.1 in 2002 and 2003. The recent strife in Côte d'Ivoire has caused a third wave of refugees. Since September 2002, a total of 551 tons of food has been distributed by WFP Guinea to people who fleeing Côte d'Ivoire. Food aid is being provided under PRRO 10064.1.

22. The delegation held meetings with the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Territorial Administration and Decentralization, Agriculture, and Pre-University and Civic Education. All highlighted the political, economic and social dimensions of conflicts in neighbouring countries and their impact on Guinea, particularly in terms of refugees, repatriated persons and IDPs. WFP's support through emergency and development initiatives was highly appreciated and attention was drawn to the new decentralization structure, which has been set up for interface with the programme. Appreciation was also expressed for the school feeding programme. In this connection, mention was made of adjusting food basket to local food tastes and local purchases. At the request of the WFP representatives, the delegation raised the problem of non-respect of certain privileges. Full assurances were given that the representatives would enjoy all due fiscal exemptions.
23. The delegation held meetings with other United Nations partner agencies, partner NGOs and bilateral donors. The representatives of the other United Nations agencies explained the nature of their collaboration with WFP and the challenges posed and opportunities presented for partnership in the complex situation confronting Guinea. All appreciated WFP's performance and highlighted areas of mutual collaboration. The delegation was informed of the status of the UNDAF and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). It was emphasized that good governance formed the centrepiece of the PRSP. The future of development assistance to Guinea hinged on the country's delivery regarding criteria related to governance. There was also mention of donor fatigue given the prolonged conflicts in the region.
24. To a great extent, field visits corroborated the impression gained from discussions at the headquarters. The Governor of N'zerekore voiced serious concern over the influx of refugees and repatriated persons from Côte d'Ivoire, noting the inability to accommodate them in the existing camps and the impact on the local economy, its social infrastructure and security. At the transit centres it visited, the delegation saw for itself the effects of overcrowding and lack of other amenities. The issue of food baskets that suit local tastes was also raised.
25. The delegation visited several school feeding programmes. There was strong ownership of the programme among the beneficiary community. Parent-teacher associations were extremely active in supervising the programme. Their representatives were the most enthusiastic supporters of this initiative. Here again, the issue of adapting the food basket to correspond to local tastes was highlighted. It was clear that the school feeding initiative had contributed to raising school attendance, particularly among girls. The regional representative expressed appreciation for WFP's collaboration in food for training and support to women at the outset of the lean season.



26. The delegation received a complete briefing on the security situation in the region. Satisfaction was expressed regarding the collaboration of security staff from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and WFP. A need was expressed for the use of helicopters to obviate dependence on airstrips and airports. The delegation travelled to various sites in a WFP plane funded through a Special Operation. Its utility was self-evident, and its service commended by other partner agencies.
27. The country office also shared with the delegation its inquiry and investigations into allegations of corruption and food for sex, and the actions taken in response to these.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

28. The delegation was of the view that WFP was running a highly coordinated programme in Guinea. Its work was commended by all stakeholders.
29. WFP will strengthen its partnership with the Guinean authorities.
30. Guinea required the support of the donor community given the continued insecurity in neighbouring areas. Particular attention was required to meeting its needs regarding repatriated people and IDPs.
31. WFP should give serious consideration to the demands pertaining to adapting the food basket to local food tastes, as well as to local purchases.
32. The WFP country office should strengthen its internal controls to ensure that cases of corruption and fraud are immediately exposed and appropriate action taken. Furthermore, it should remain vigilant to situations that can lend themselves to the misuse of food aid by the deliverers.



ANNEX I**EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER VISITS 2003****MAURITANIA – SENEGAL – GUINEA****22 February – 05 March 2003****Departure from Rome: 22 February 2003****Return to Rome: 06 March 2003****LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

- List A:** H.E. Ibrahim Bocar Daga
Ambassador
Embassy of the Republic of Mali
- H.E. Hamoud Ould Ely
Ambassador
Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania
- List B:** Mr Adnan Bashir Khan
Agricultural Counsellor
Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan
- H.E. Ma Shiqing
Minister Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representation of the People's Republic of China
- List C:** Mr Patrick Saint-Hilaire
First Secretary
Embassy of the Republic of Haiti
- List D:**
- List E:** H.E. Bojana Hocevar
Ministry Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representation of the Republic of Slovenia
- WFP Secretariat:** Mr Manuel Aranda da Silva
Regional Director for West Africa Regional Bureau
- Mr Thomas Lecato
Liaison Officer for West Africa Regional Bureau



ANNEX II

**VISIT OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS TO MAURITANIA,
SENEGAL AND GUINEA**

(22 February – 5 March 2003)

PROGRAMME**Saturday 22 February**

- 07:00 hrs Departure from Rome to Paris — flight AF 2305
- 09:10 hrs Arrival in Paris
- 11:00 hrs Departure from Paris to Nouakchott — flight AF 764
- 15:35 hrs Arrival Nouakchott airport
- Welcomed by Philippe Guyon le Bouffy, WFP Representative in
Mauritania
- Departure for *Hotel Mercure*
- Afternoon and evening at *Hotel Mercure*

Hotel Mercure Tel.: (222) 529 50 50 Fax: (222) 529 50 55

Sunday 23 February

Departure from the hotel with WFP car to go to the WFP office

- 08:00 hrs Briefing session at Country Office
- Meetings with Government Authorities:**
- 09:00 hrs Meetings with MEN (Education) **TBC**
- 10:00 hrs Meetings with MDRE (Rural Development) **TBC**
- 11:00 hrs Meetings with Prime Minister
- 12:00 hrs Meetings with CSA Commissioner
- Lunch at *Hotel Mercure*

Field visits

- 15:00 hrs Departure from Nouakchott to Boghe (on tarmac road)
- 19:30 hrs Arrival to Boghe
- 20:00 hrs Dinner at *Hotel Azur*

Hotel Azur Tel.: (222) 550 88 99 Fax: none



Monday 24 February**Field visits :** Boghe — Aleg — Male — Monguel — Kaédi

07:00 hrs Breakfast

08:00 hrs Departure for Abri Moulin de Moundi (Axe Boghé – Aleg)

08:40 hrs Arrival at Moundi

08:55 hrs Departure for Aleg

09:30 hrs Arrival at Aleg and visit Périmètre de M'aivissa

10:00 hrs Departure for Edebay Benar (Axe Aleg – Male – Monguel – Kaédi)

10:45 hrs Visit to drought-affected areas at Edebay Benar

11:00 hrs Departure for Male

11:45 hrs Arrival at Male

Lunch at Male offered by Le Wali

14:00 hrs Departure for Bofal

14:15 hrs Arrival at Bofal and visit to Cac de Bofal

14:30 hrs Departure for Sawata

15:10 hrs Visit barrage of Sawata

15:25 hrs Departure for Sadda

15:55 hrs Visit to drought-affected areas at Sadda

16:10 hrs Departure for Moit

16:25 hrs Arrival at Moit and visit to drought-affected areas

16:40 hrs Departure for Monguel

17:05 hrs Arrival at Site de la Digue Tezekra and visit

17:30 hrs Arrival at Monguel

17:30 hrs Departure for Kaédi

18:30 hrs Arrival at Kaédi

20:00 hrs Dinner offered by Le Wali

Night in Kaédi at *Hotel Faboly*

Hotel Faboly Tel.:(222) 649 33 41 Fax.:none



Tuesday 25 February**Field visits:**Kaédi — Boghe — Aleg — Nouakchott

07:00 hrs	Breakfast at the hotel
08:00 hrs	Visit Périmètre Maraîcher de Guidime
08:30 hrs	Visit site reforestation of Kaédi
08:45 hrs	Visit Centre Alphabetisation SECF-Kaédi
09:00 hrs	Departure for Debay El Hijaj (Axe Kaédi — Boghé — Aleg)
09:30 hrs	Visit School Canteen at Edebay El Hijaj
10:00 hrs	Arrival at Abari and visit Abari
10:30 hrs	Departure for Pi de Thila
11:15 hrs	Visit Pi de Thila
11:45 hrs	Departure for Bouhidda
12:15 hrs	Arrival at Bouhidda and visit School Canteen
12:30 hrs	Departure for Aleg
13:00 hrs	Lunch at Aleg offered by Le Wali
16:00 hrs	Departure for Nouakchott

<i>Hotel Mercure Tel.:(222) 529 50 50 Fax:(222) 529 50 55</i>

Wednesday 26 February

	Departure from the hotel with WFP cars to the United Nations Compound
08:30 hrs	Meeting with NGOs (World Vision, FLM, OXFAM, ACORD) at WFP
10:00 hrs	Meeting with donors and the United Nations Country Team at UNDP conference room
	Lunch
	Debriefing with WFP country office
	Departure for the airport
17:00 hrs	Departure of flight V7 321 to Dakar
18:00 hrs	Arrival at Dakar Leopold Sedar Senghor airport
	Welcomed by Richard Verbeeck, WFP Representative in Senegal

<i>Hotel Sofitel Teranga Tel.:(221) 823 10 44 Fax:(221) 823 50 01</i>



Thursday 27 February

- 08:45 hrs Departure from the hotel with WFP cars to WFP Regional Bureau/Country Office
- 09:00 hrs Brief with Senegal Country Office (ground floor meeting room)
- 11:30 hrs Meeting with Ms Awa Guèye Kebe, Minister of Family and National Solidarity
- 13:00 – 14:30 hrs Lunch at Lagon 1
- 14:45 hrs Departure to Kaolack by WFP bus
- 17:45 hrs Arrival at the hotel *Relais de Kaolack*
- 19:30 hrs Dinner with the Governor Mr Souleymane Ly

Hotel Le Relais de Kaolack Tel.: (221) 941 10 00 Fax:(221) 941 10 02

Friday 28 February

- 07: 15 – 08: 30 hrs Visit to school feeding project at Sibassor
- 09: 00 – 10: 20 hrs Visit to Catholic health centre at Maka Kahone
- 10: 30 – 11: 00 hrs Visit to CSA warehouses complex at Kahone
- 11: 30 hrs Return to the hotel and lunch at the hotel
- 13: 45 – 16: 45 hrs Return trip to Dakar

Hotel Sofitel Teranga tel.: (221) 8231044 Fax:(221) 8235001

Saturday 1 March

- am Briefing at the Regional Bureau

Hotel Sofitel Teranga Tel.:(221) 823 10 44 fax:(221) 823 50 01



Sunday 2 March

- 14: 15 hrs Departure to Conakry, flight V7 724
- 16: 35 hrs Arrival Conakry
- Welcomed by a Representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation and by Mrs Myrta Kaulard, Officer in Charge of Guinea Country Office
- Installation at the *Hotel Camayenne*
- Security briefing at *Hotel Camayenne* and review programme of the visit
- Dinner at *Hotel Camayenne* with O.I.C. WFP Guinea

<i>Hotel Camayenne Tel.: (224) 01 66 48 48 Fax:(224) 41 29 91</i>

Monday 3 March

- 08: 00 hrs Departure from the hotel to the WFP office
- 08: 15 hrs Briefing with WFP Country Office
- 10: 00 hrs Meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs (at the Ministry)
- 10: 45 hrs Meeting with the Minister of Interior (at the Ministry)
- 11: 30 hrs Meeting with the Minister of Agriculture (at the Ministry)
- 12: 15 hrs Meeting with the Minister of Education (at the Ministry)
- 13: 15 hrs Lunch at *Hotel Camayenne* with Minister of Action Sociale, Promotion Féminine et de l'Enfance
- 14: 30 hrs Meeting with the United Nations Country Team and implementing partners at WFP office
- 16: 30 hrs Meeting with donors at the WFP Office
- 18: 00 hrs Return to *Camayenne Hotel*, evening free

<i>Hotel Camayenne Tel.: (224) 01 66 48 48 Fax:(224) 41 29 91</i>



Tuesday 4 March

- 07: 15 hrs Departure from *Hotel Camayenne* for Conakry airport
- 08: 00 hrs Departure by WFP plane for Nzerekore
- 10: 00 hrs Landing at Nzerekore airport
- 10: 40 hrs Meeting with Nzerekore Governor
- 11: 30 hrs Departure by WFP car for Thuo border crossing point with Liberia to observe inflow of people due to Côte d'Ivoire crisis; visit to Bossou transit centre; visit to emergency school project in the Lola prefecture near the border with Côte d'Ivoire
- 16: 30 hrs Return to Nzerekore, check in at *Hotel Nimba* and rest
- 18: 00 hrs Meeting with United Nations and implementing partners
- 20: 00 hrs Dinner at *Hotel Nimba* with key partners

<i>Hotel Mount Nimba Tel.: (224) 91 15 57</i>
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Wednesday 5 March

- 07: 15 hrs Departure from *Hotel Nimba* for Nzerekore airport
- 08: 00 hrs Departure from Nzerekore airport with WFP plane
- 10: 00 hrs Arrival at Siguiiri airport (Kankan prefecture)
- 10:30 hrs Meeting with Prefet and key partners
- 11: 30hrs Visit to CP school feeding project in Siguiiri
- 13: 00 hrs Departure for Siguiiri airport
- 13: 30 hrs Departure from Siguiiri to Conakry with WFP plane
- 15: 30 hrs Arrival at Conakry airport
- 16: 00 hrs Arrival at *Hotel Camayenne* and rest
- 17: 00 hrs Luggage, tickets and passports collected by WFP staff to settle check and formalities
- 17: 30 hrs Debriefing with Humanitarian Coordinator and Resident representative at *Hotel Camayenne*
- 18: 30 hrs Debriefing with WFP Guinea senior staff at *Hotel Camayenne*
- 19: 30 hrs Light dinner with WFP senior staff at *Hotel Camayenne*
- 21: 00 hrs Departure from *Hotel Camayenne* for Conakry airport
- 22: 55 hrs Departure to Rome with Air France flight AF 767
(ETA in Paris 06:00 am 6/3/03)



ANNEX III**LIST OF MAIN GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES****MAURITANIA****22 – 26 February 2003**

H.E. Cheikh Al Avia O/ MOHAMED KHOUNA, Prime Minister
H.E. Mohamed O/ NANY, Minister of Economic Affairs and Development
H.E. Mohamed Mahmoud O/ JAAFAR, Minister of Health and Social Affairs
H.E. Aboubakrine O/ AHMED, Minister of National Education
Mr Sidi Mohamed O/ BIYA, Commissioner for Food Security
Mrs Mintata M/ HDEID, Secretary of State for Women's Affairs

SENEGAL**27 February – 2 March 2003**

Mrs Awa Guèye KEBE, Minister of Family and National Solidarity
Mr Mbaye DIACK, Deputy Secretary-General of the President's Office
Mr Souleymane LY, Governor of Kaolack Region

GUINEA CONAKRY**2 – 5 March 2003**

H.E. Lounceny Fall, Minister of Foreign Affairs
H.E. Moussa Solano, Minister of Administration of Territory and Decentralization
H.E. Jean Paul Sarr, Minister of Agriculture, Livestock Farming and Forestry
H.E. Galéma Guilavogui, Minister of Pre-University and Civic Education

