



CHAPTER EIGHT

WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME (WFP)

Along with simulating the General Assembly Plenary and its First, Second, Third and Sixth Committee, AMUN will also be simulating the World Food Programme (WFP). WFP will meet all four days of the Conference, and will report on its findings to the Combined General Assembly Plenary on Tuesday afternoon. WFP's membership is open to all member-states, and as such, participation is open to one member from each delegation represented at the Conference. Requests for a second seat on this simulation should be directed to the AMUN Executive Office.

About the WFP

The United Nations World Food Programme was created in 1962 to be the food aid arm of the United Nations and to provide leadership for global efforts to provide food assistance. The WFP works in cooperation with its sister agencies the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). While the WFP is primarily involved in responding to emergencies, it is also committed to preparing for

emergencies, preventing food insecurity, and reducing chronic hunger and malnutrition. The WFP is based in Rome and reports annually to the General Assembly.

Purview of this Simulation

The World Food Programme (WFP) is the United Nations agency responsible for humanitarian aid in the context of world hunger. The WFP is primarily involved in the areas of food assistance in emergencies, reducing chronic world hunger, and helping countries plan for food security in the future. The WFP works closely with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and other organs of the UN, as well as various non-governmental organizations, to provide aid directly and to work toward incorporating food security into the development agenda. The WFP submits annual reports to the General Assembly on the initiatives in place to confront the problems of food security and hunger.

Website: <http://www.wfp.org/>

FOOD PROCUREMENT IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Today, 850 million people, or 13% of the world population, cannot afford their most basic food needs. The human right to food is recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESC). At the World Summit in 1996 and later at the UN Millennium Summits in 2000 and 2005, governments made pledges to reduce world hunger by half. However, between 1996 and 2006, the number of chronically hungry people in poor countries increased by over 20 million. The WFP outlined a new three-year plan in 2008, focusing more on reducing dependency and to supporting governmental and global efforts to ensure long-term solutions to the hunger challenge.

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) called for action in the areas of creating jobs and improving rural and agricultural development during its 2008 session. Discussions revolved around a broad, multi-sectoral plan of action focusing on reducing poverty, ensuring medium- and longer-term sustainability, and having the WFP adapt its assessment programmes and existing technical and programmatic support to Governments to meet the needs of urban populations. It had also promoted a "Purchase for Progress" approach, which aimed to optimize the impact of WFP local food purchases to support local agricultural development while completing the WFP's mission of feeding the hungry.

Purchase for Progress (P4P) builds upon the long-standing WFP policy of purchasing food in countries where the WFP has operations, but takes it a step further by enabling smallholder and low-income farmers to supply food to the WFP's global operations. Its goals are to create incentives for farmers to develop their crop management skills and produce quality foods, create a market for surplus crops of

locally processed foods, and realign the way the WFP buys food to better address the root causes of hunger. Past models have focused on improving food security and procuring food for the hungry as two separate issues; however, importing the foods to meet the needs of the hungry did nothing to create sustainable food systems. The P4P approach recognizes that the cycle of hunger cannot be broken unless a meaningful connection is made between food production and food distribution.

The WFP selected 21 countries for five-year P4P pilot programs: Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of Congo, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guatemala, Honduras, Kenya, Liberia, Laos, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia. Within the first year the WFP estimates 40,000 tons of food will be bought, with 350,000 smallholder farmers to benefit, at a cost of \$76 million in funding. The Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), UN agencies, the World Bank Group and non-governmental organization (NGO) partners will work with farming communities to enhance crop management capacities and marketing skills. Under the pilot programs host governments are responsible for developing the overall strategy for the agricultural sector, as well as for investing in improved production and rural infrastructure.

The P4P plans focus on two of the five goals of the WFP's Strategic Plan for 2008-2011: strengthening the capacities of countries to reduce hunger and rebuilding lives in post-conflict or transition situations. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) had estimated that the hunger crisis now threatens to push at least 100 million people below the poverty line, joining nearly one billion more already struggling to survive.

P4P presents a positive long-term solution to relieve the stresses of poverty and hunger. Looking forward, WFP will need to consider

how best to encourage and develop the work of P4P so that opportunities for food procurement are fully realized and implemented in other countries. Unfortunately, there has been very little published about implemented policies or program results. Better data and improved reporting mechanisms will be needed to measure the ultimate efficacy of these programs. The WFP will also need to continue to encourage and foster cooperation between governments, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector toward developing new and more secure purchasing systems. Toward this end, the WFP must consider how other actors can help provide education and training, as well as what role the private sector can play in facilitating market access to smallholder farmers.

Questions to consider from your government's perspective on this issue include:

- What steps can the international community take to promote sustainable methods of food procurement?
- What other opportunities for partnerships with the private sector exist for promoting food procurement?
- What can be learned from the causes of the present global hunger situation? How can these lessons be used to guide P4P toward its goals?

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Additional Web Resources:

www.agra-alliance.org - Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa
www.fao.org - Food and Agriculture Organization
www.wfp.org - World Food Programme
www.wfp.org/purchase-progress - World Food Programme - Purchase for Progress

HUMANITARIAN ACCESS AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME

The United Nations defines humanitarian access as "the free and unimpeded movement of humanitarian personnel to deliver relief serves, or the free and safe movement of humanitarian agencies to reach civilians who are trapped, unable to move or detained because of armed conflict, natural disasters or other difficult situations." International humanitarian assistance occurs within a framework established by the international community. Unobstructed access is a necessary precondition for the World Food Programme (WFP) to be able to provide emergency food aid during times of crisis. However, securing this access is one of the biggest challenges that the UN in general and the WFP in particular faces in providing emergency relief services. Humanitarian access can be denied for political reasons or because the nature of the emergency itself prevents relief workers from delivering aid. Regardless of the cause, lack of access has profound negative consequences on populations impacted by the crisis. In 2004, the Secretary-General estimated that over 10 million people worldwide were blocked from emergency relief services.

The Geneva Convention and its Protocols state that free access to food and other essential services should be granted if conflict blocks a civilian's ability to obtain these resources. The General Assembly, in 1990, passed the Guiding Principles for Humanitarian Principles to direct the international humanitarian work. The basic principles outlined in this document are that "humanitarian assistance must be provided in accordance with the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality and that sovereignty, territorial integrity," and that "national unity of States must be fully respected in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations." The WFP Executive Board has also adopted the core principles of humanity, impartiality and neutrality as the framework for its humanitarian operations.

To provide emergency food aid in a timely manner, the WFP needs safe and unrestricted access to at-risk populations. Providing food aid, in contrast to other humanitarian services, has several unique challenges that make regular, unobstructed access essential. Food aid is challenging because: 1) food aid is life-saving, perishable and easily marketable; 2) food assistance deliveries must take place regularly, whereas non-food items are often delivered on an ad-hoc or one-off basis and; 3) timing of food distribution is crucial, especially in order to hit lean seasons and for programmes aimed at enhancing self-sufficiency by distributing food in support of agricultural activities. The limited shelf-life and bulk of food aid create additional logistical requirements. Food aid also carries additional security concerns, as it can be used to gain political leverage. The politically-charged nature of food aid also adds a level of complexity to negotiations for access.

Humanitarian access can be blocked for a variety of reasons. Active fighting or the inability to secure the safety of relief workers, deliberate denial by the state or other political actors, physical blockages such as road blocks or flooding, and logistical challenges are all factors that can prevent the WFP from delivering aid. The most significant effect of blocked access is the inability to deliver a sufficient amount of food aid, which impacts the nutritional status of targeted groups. Other consequences of blocked or delayed access include incomplete needs assessments, failure to fully monitor and evaluate the status of the crisis, and higher operational costs.

The international community lacks a standard set of procedures for negotiating access. Multiple UN agencies, members of the international community and NGOs, such as UNICEF, UNHCR and the International Committee of the Red Cross, can participate in negotiating rights to humanitarian access. The WFP's role in these negotiations varies depending on the level of food insecurity in the crisis. Within the UN, the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) and the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) typically guide the negotiations. The WFP is responsible for advising both the ERC and the HC throughout the negotiations on estimates for required food aid, its operational requirements for delivering and distributing the food aid, and potential options for gaining access to affected civilians. Negotiations often include obtaining permission for transport operations across national borders or cross-line operations in areas where there is still open conflict. Regardless of the WFP's level of involvement in the negotiations, it always remains an impartial and neutral party to the proceedings.

Several high profile emergencies in recent years have highlighted the significance of humanitarian access. In May 2008 after Cyclone Nargis, relief workers were hampered by limited access to affected populations. After several weeks of intense negotiation between multiple parties, the Myanmar government lifted restrictions on the movement of relief workers in the country. The WFP has made repeated calls for increased access to citizens in Darfur. Other access issues in recent history include restrictions to aid agencies during the Israeli-Lebanon war in 2006, and a call to quell violence in Mogadishu, Somalia to allow humanitarian aid in 2007.

Providing humanitarian assistance is a complex process with many different interested parties. Gaining access to citizens impacted by crisis situations is a crucial step in providing humanitarian aid. The WFP plays an important role in providing humanitarian assistance. Because food aid requires special considerations, the WFP has a vested interest in addressing the challenges of securing access, and when access is limited, developing innovative and creative solutions to the problems posed by limited access.

Questions to consider from your government's perspective on this issue include:

- How can the World Food Programme improve its operational model to better serve areas where humanitarian access has become limited?
- What can other bodies, both within and outside the United Nations, do to improve the accessibility of regions where humanitarian access has been problematic?

- What alternate approaches can the World Food Programme take to provide assistance in areas that are hindered by a lack of humanitarian access?
- Is it possible to develop an international framework or instrument to govern food delivery in emergency circumstances? How might the WFP take the lead in such an effort?

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Additional Web Resources:

- www.unicef.org/emerg/index_33198.html - UNICEF in Emergencies
www.wfp.org - World Food Programme