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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

MESSAGE TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD
OF THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME

Rome, 9 June 2008

This Executive Board session takes place at a time when the United Nations system is urgently called upon by the world to prevent large-scale hunger and human suffering. As was evident at the High-Level Conference in Rome last week, the World Food Programme is a critical partner in my work to ensure an immediate, effective and unified UN response. I welcome this opportunity to convey my support today.

The recent rapid escalation in global food prices has become a crisis for the world's most vulnerable people -- the very people that WFP is mandated to serve. Malnutrition and misery is increasing, adding many more to the 850 million people already estimated to go to bed hungry each night. Most of the hungry -- and over 80 per cent of WFP's beneficiaries -- are women and children.

The food crisis is threatening to undo the progress we have made so far in meeting the Millennium Development Goals. Food riots and social unrest is undermining stability in several countries. Export restrictions are compounding market pressures - and unduly complicating WFP purchases of food. I urge all governments to allow full access for humanitarian food procurement and deliveries, and to exempt humanitarian food from export restrictions.

As the largest and most field-based humanitarian agency, WFP is on the frontline of United Nations' efforts to tackle the crisis. I pay tribute to the 10,000 women and men of WFP, who show courage and commitment, under difficult and often dangerous circumstances, to bring life-saving food and nutrition to people in need. We will work to enhance the security of humanitarian workers worldwide, to ensure that sacrifices made - in Iraq, Darfur, Algiers and elsewhere -- can be avoided in the future.

WFP has a unique position in the UN family, with its global network of humanitarian workers and food pipelines ready to respond when countries and communities need international assistance. WFP is the leading humanitarian logistics lifeline and service provider for the whole UN and NGO community during crises and emergencies. I have myself recently witnessed in Myanmar the effectiveness of WFP as a vital team player in support of other agencies' efforts. I encourage the Board to explore ways and means to

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secure more stable and predictable financing for the crucial global public goods that WFP provides and embodies.

The new challenges posed by higher food prices require a coherent broad-based strategy, with the UN system as a whole pulling together, in support of developing government efforts, to close the hunger gaps. I am confident that the Strategic Plan before this Board is designed to deal effectively with the future challenges related to food security, climate change and disaster mitigation. It is forward-looking and focussed on finding sustainable solutions to hunger, in government-led partnerships with other agencies. It marks a shift towards a more nuanced and robust set of tools, including cash and local purchase, while building on tried and tested safety net programmes such as school feeding.


Scaling up safety nets and building employment programmes are key elements of the joint UN Framework for Action that was presented by my Task Force to the High Level Conference in Rome last week. The Framework represents a comprehensive and constructive blueprint for dealing with the global food crisis in a coherent and consistent way across the UN system.

Let us also see the food price crisis as a trigger to step up the work for effective strategies on climate change and its potential devastating impact on world food and water supplies. I urge the board to consider every possible way WFP can support such efforts.

I am heartened that the with the historic 500 million cash contribution from Saudi Arabia, donors heeded the call to fully fund WFP's emergency appeal of 755 million dollars to deal with the food and fuel price rises on top of the approved programme of work. Now I call on you to also secure the necessary resources for WFP's voluntarily funded assessed programme of work, as well as the new needs arising from the "New Face of Hunger" -- the hundred million or more people now at risk of being pushed into hunger and poverty as a result of the current food crisis.

I thank WFP and its Board member states for assuming a crucial role and responsibility, providing personnel and financial resources in response to the challenges facing the world's hungry and vulnerable. WFP is truly making a difference in the lives of the people the UN exists to serve.

Annika Savill/NY/UNO
06/06/2008 12:21 PM

To Paul Larsen <Paul.Larsen@wfp.org>@UN-MAILHUB
cc Ruxandra Ferascu/NY/UNO
bcc
Subject SECRETARY-GENERAL'S MESSAGE TO THE EXECUTIVE
BOARD OF THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME, Rome, 9
June 2008 



worldfoodboard2008.doc

Paul,

Please find attached the final Secretary-General's message based on your excellent draft, along with our best wishes for a successful meeting.

Best,

Annika

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Annika Savill/NY/UNO
16/05/2008 01:33 PM

To paul.larsen@wfp.org
cc Ruxandra Ferascu/NY/UNO, Nathan Henninger/NY/UNO
bcc
Subject request for a video message to WFP Executive Board meeting

Dear Mr. Larsen,

As discussed by telephone, Mr. Nambiar asked me to follow up on your request for a message to the WFP Executive Board meeting.

The Secretary-General would be happy to send a written message which could be read out the meeting.

Would your office be able to send a draft or elements for such a message?

Thank you,

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