

SUPPORTING DOCUMENT III

WFP Input To Environmental Management Group Work-plan 2014-2015

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1. WFP has been actively involved in the operational and management initiatives under the previous EMG work-plan - "Advancing Environmental and Social Sustainability" and "Enhancement of Sustainability in Management". For the 2015-2016 work plan, we request that the EMG consider an appropriate mechanism for streamlining these two inter-agency working groups, potentially through the merging of the two work streams. These two initiatives developed as distinct and separate processes and bodies, creating the potential of some areas of overlap with respect to aspects of UN internal operations, as well as requiring a not insignificant commitment of resources on the part of participating entities to contribute to and manage these processes. While the Environmental and Social Sustainability Framework is positioned as an overarching higher level guidance framework under which the management sustainability falls, the interaction of the two working groups on these initiatives has been limited to date and has given rise to a situation in which there is not a uniform understanding of the two initiatives and how they fit together even within the restricted community of environmental practitioners. Given that the resources available within the UN system to address sustainability issues are extremely limited, WFP encourages the EMG to review the mandate of these two working groups, formulate a clear and cohesive vision of sustainability within the UN context, and consider the merging and streamlining of these inter-agency sustainability initiatives in order to better leverage the available resources, ensure clarity of purpose, align the efforts of the UN entities, and identify the highest priority areas for the UN system where efforts to improve environmental and social sustainability performance would garner the highest returns, whether those returns be financial, reputational, or risk reducing.

2. WFP also suggests that a specific priority area for the UN agencies to jointly address would be waste management, particularly in emergency settings and remote locations where the UN has a presence, as this is a challenge for many agencies which would benefit from a system-wide response that leverages resources and taps into the expertise that the EMG can provide on the subject matter. The UN humanitarian response often occurs in settings where the environment is already fragile and where the presence of refugee camps and support facilities for humanitarian workers increase the pressure on the environment. One of the notable areas of environmental impact of the support structures for humanitarian work in these fragile environments is the waste that is generated, ranging from the plastic bottles often brought in for potable water supply for humanitarian workers to the specialized packaging materials utilized for conserving specific nutritional food items for beneficiaries. Often the disposal of these materials can be a challenge for the humanitarian operations. Materials are often disposed of onsite either through incineration in rudimentary burn pits,

creating potential air pollution issues and associated health risks to people in the vicinity, or in ad-hoc and unmanaged landfills. The UN needs to find agile and responsible mechanism for leading by example in minimizing the impact of its own operations in emergency settings and in fragile environments in order to not further strain the natural resources or jeopardize the human communities.

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