



World
Food
Programme

Programa
Mundial de
Alimentos

Programme
Alimentaire
Mondial

برنامج
الأغذية
العالمي



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Executive
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OHCHR REGISTRY

12 APR. 2007

Recipients : N...M...K...L...
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Dear Louise,

I am writing in response to your letter of 8 March 2007, requesting input from WFP to inform a study on human rights and access to water as per Human Rights Council decision 2/104.

Access to water is an issue that goes to the core of WFP's ability to fulfill its mandate of ensuring that vulnerable people have access to food in times of need. Our experience in this field demonstrates that food delivered to people who lack access to water is of limited value. The principle that access to food is tied up with access to water is therefore deeply embedded in WFP's approach to food assistance programming.

That principle resonates with several international human rights covenants that directly or indirectly link access to food with access to water. Included among these agreements are the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child; the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners; the Innocenti Declaration on the Protection, Promotion and Support of Breastfeeding; the World Declaration and Plan of Action on Nutrition; the Rome Declaration on World Food Security; and the World Food Summit Plan of Action. Also worthy of note is that the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food is charged with monitoring access not only to food but also to water.

While WFP, in general, does not engage in direct provision of water to its targeted beneficiaries, it does coordinate with other agencies—mainly UNICEF and UNHCR—to make sure that water, especially for drinking and cooking, becomes part of a comprehensive emergency assistance to vulnerable populations. This is consistent with WFP's humanitarian principles that recognize the totality of the needs of the vulnerable, aiming to promote their dignity and integrity. WFP further welcomes greater inter-agency collaboration to ensure predictable supply of water in emergency settings.

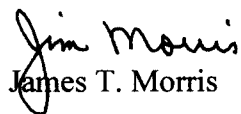
In addition to collaboration of this type, WFP strives to integrate development and conservation of water resources into its protracted relief, recovery, and development programs. WFP's Enabling Development Policy notes that poor

households need to build their asset stocks and preserve them during difficult times. Water resources are key amongst such assets. In line with this Policy, WFP engages in a range of food-based programming interventions aimed at enhancing access to water. Typically designed as “food-for-asset” and “food-for-work” activities, these interventions include construction of water holes and wells, installation of pumps, and erection of irrigation dams and levees. WFP can report a number of important positive outcomes of these investments.

For instance, in 2006, in Somalia, 14 kilometers of irrigation canals were rehabilitated, 32 wells dug, and 380 hectares of farmland protected from soil erosion. In Chad, 32,900 m³ of water encatchment were constructed, 260 wells dug, and 7,000 m³ of dams rehabilitated. In Sierra Leone, 1,300 hectares of inland swamps were rehabilitated. Similar outcomes are evident elsewhere in Africa and in other parts of the world. Through these projects, livelihood options of the affected communities have been expanded considerably, especially for highly vulnerable individuals and groups.

Thank you for this opportunity to contribute to this important study. We would be delighted to provide you with any additional information you may require. My best wishes for a successful initiative.

All the best,


James T. Morris