



Speaker Summary Note

Session: Enhancing Nutrition Along the Value Chain

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Title: Perspective from Development Agency

WFP has changed greatly over the past few years.

Seeking to adjust the WFP food basket to include more nutritious foods.

WFP buys locally for cash about US\$ 1 billion annually—mostly in developing countries.

This local purchase—and distribution of this food in WFP programmes reaching vulnerable people—provides a huge opportunity to leverage improved nutritional and health outcomes.

One opportunity for leveraging agriculture for health and nutrition is the PURCHASE FOR PROGRESS—or P4P—initiative.

P4P is a 5-year R&D experiment to learn lessons for sharing with all actors—that uses WFP's demand to improve market access for smallholder farmers in 21 pilot countries in Africa, Central America and Asia, and is linked to partners' supply-side expertise.

P4P is built on partnerships—the objective is to link 500,000 SH farmers to sustainable markets—not just to WFP but to wider market opportunities—through increasing quality, production and reducing post-harvest losses through capacity development, among other strategies.

My comments on enhancing *nutrition* along the value chain emanate from our practical field experience over the past two years working with smallholder farmers in the 21 countries.

Crop Choice

- Need to link more effectively to Agricultural Research systems—adoption of research findings is often excruciatingly slow.

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- There is much greater potential **to link small producers to nutritionally improved varieties**, such as improved rice with enhanced iron, protein maize, and to link to other actors promoting nutrition in production, such as Harvest Plus.
- Farmers do not like risks when they are poor—consideration may be given to use of vouchers to improve access to improved varieties for small producers.

Gender Opportunities

- Effort within P4P to use the program to empower women economically as well as socially.
- One route is to focus on crops cultivated by women—such as PULSES.
- Another is to involve women in micro-processing to add value—for example, producing and marketing crops that would improve women’s access to nutritious crops while saving time and firewood, such as partially cooked pulses to reduce cooking time, that could be packaged for sale at local shops.
- Using Farmer Organization meetings as opportunities for nutrition education for women and men.

Reducing Microtoxins in Staple Foods

- Aflatoxin has been linked to stunting in children—and may explain why stunting rates have remained high even where food availability has improved.
- Need a more concerted effort to improve testing facilities in country—are working on this through P4P in Mozambique, Afghanistan.
- Aflatoxin testing needs to be incorporated into all food production, and storage systems to ensure increased safety for consumers, who have remained innocent of the effects for generations in developing nations.

Value Addition

- Need to focus on enhancing nutrition in the value addition process
- Medium scale processing opportunities should be further pursued to link smallholder farmer s to commercial small/medium scale processing facilities. This link is presently being made in Guatemala, Mozambique and Uganda and even Afghanistan in the near future.
- Another value addition option may be the small-scale processing through the partial cooking, packaging and retail marketing of nutritious foods to make them easily accessible to mothers.
- Preservation.
- As the world’s largest humanitarian agency that targets the world’s most vulnerable mothers and young children in nearly 80 countries globally—and RUSF products are increasingly part of WFP’s operations.
- In Pakistan as one option within the larger toolbox, we are helping meet our demand through local nutrition solutions. With guidance from food technologists—and in partnership with local industry—WFP locally produces a chick-pea based RUSF that was recently deployed in the flood emergency operation.
- Complementing the local production of RUSF, we must work to educate mothers on the right food choices for young children.
- And in time, as local RUSF products are available on the local retail market, they can be included as options within voucher programmes.

In addition to in-kind food, WFP now programs about \$300 million of cash and voucher programmes.

Cash and vouchers provide another opportunity for improving health and nutrition—and for enhancing the inclusion of perishable crops such as vegetables in the food basket.

IN CONCLUSION, WFP is now increasingly focused on achieving nutritional outcomes, rather than just feeding people.

AND most importantly, in agricultural, nutrition and health efforts, we should ALL seek to act as advisers and partners with Governments as they take over implementation—including for example P4P or HGSF programmes.

The coordination function should rest with governments—we should work to the build government capacity to ensure synergies between agricultural, nutrition and health efforts at the national level,

Thank you.