RWANDA:
National Consultations on Home Grown School Feeding

Kigali, 26 - 27 February, 2013
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WFP Centre of Excellence against Hunger
The Centre of Excellence against Hunger is the result of a partnership between the Government of Brazil and the World Food Programme - WFP to support the African, Asian and Latin American governments in developing sustainable strategies against hunger and poverty, especially in the areas of school feeding, nutrition and food security. Located in Brasilia, the Centre of Excellence works with Brazilian and international institutions closely to share with developing countries best practices and lessons learned in promoting food and nutrition security. The Centre is a global forum for policy dialogue and South-South learning in school feeding, nutrition and food security programmes. It provides policy and programme advice, technical assistance, learning opportunities and brings southern nations together to help them to develop their own programmes.
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Education, agriculture, and social protection for the most vulnerable are clear priorities of the Government of Rwanda. School feeding forms part of the Government of Rwanda Programme, the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS), the Education Sector Strategic Plan, the draft School Health and Nutrition Policies, the Multi-sectorial Strategy to Eliminate Malnutrition, and is recognized as an effective targeted safety-net by the Social Protection sector in the country. Its potential to provide structured demand for increased agricultural production is well recognized and has been well established through the Ministry of Agriculture’s One Cup of Milk per Child programme.

Linking school feeding to agriculture has a great potential to stimulate production, while catalysing quality improvement and value addition at the cooperative level, and stimulating private sector agribusiness initiatives. Acknowledging school feeding’s potential contribution to multiple economic development and poverty reduction goals and objectives, the Government of Rwanda has stated its desire to develop a nationally owned home-grown school feeding programme with a high degree of community ownership.

In April 2012, the Government of Rwanda sent an inter-ministerial team, accompanied by WFP personnel, on a study tour to Brazil in order to gain exposure to their Zero Hunger strategy, of which the Brazilian national school feeding programme is a core pillar. The team witnessed the impressive educational, social, and economic progress resulting from the programme’s reform and scale-up. Extremely relevant to Rwanda, the Brazilian strategy relies in large part on procurement directly from smallholder farmers. Coupled with appropriate extension services provided to individual farmers and cooperatives, the strategy has contributed greatly to lifting significant portions of the population out of poverty and hunger over the last decade while simultaneously catalysing the strengthening of cooperatives and agribusiness endeavours.

The Rwanda delegation found several aspects of the Brazilian programme very relevant to the Rwandan context, where similarly ambitious developmental objectives are envisaged and strived for, with poverty reduction strategies focused on increasing the resilience of the population by building upon homegrown initiatives. The study tour was a useful step in building the consensus required at the technical level across multiple ministries for vision setting and better defining the way forward. The main output of the study tour was a draft action plan, in which the Rwandan Government, the Brazilian Government, and WFP planned together future joint actions.

Following this study tour, a high-level Brazilian delegation made up of government and WFP personnel held high-level meetings with the Ministers of Agriculture and Education in Rwanda as well as the Prime Minister. These high-level consultations led to broad agreement among the parties that school feeding is a tool that is highly relevant in Rwanda as it can greatly contribute to multiple development objectives as laid out in Rwanda’s Vision 2020. It was noted that a solid foundation upon which to build a national programme exists in the country, with separate smaller-scale programmes already being funded and implemented by the Ministries of Education and Agriculture.
The Brazilian experience demonstrated that school feeding is an affordable instrument for development and yields significant returns on investment. Based on these discussions, the Government of Rwanda requested WFP’s assistance in conducting an investment case study on school feeding in Rwanda, as well as a systematic cost analysis of ongoing programmes to inform decision-making going forward. Both of these studies have since been completed in collaboration with Government of Rwanda technicians and validated by senior levels of the government.

In order to move forward on the planning and development of the nationally owned home-grown school feeding programme in Rwanda, a national stakeholders consultation on school feeding was organised on 26-27 February, 2013. The consultation was convened by the Government of Rwanda, with the support of the Government of Brazil through WFP’s Centre of Excellence against Hunger and technical support from the Rwanda country office. Its objectives were:

- to develop a common understanding of school feeding among all actors and together define and prioritise objectives of the future programme
- based on objectives defined, to identify appropriate implementation model(s) that can be prototyped/scaled up over time
- based on the objectives and implementation model(s) identified, to define specific roles and responsibilities of various actors involved
- to develop achievable scale-up plans, with clear priorities defined and milestones developed
- to identify areas where technical assistance and external expertise may be useful in achieving the goals and objectives set


The four provincial Governors and Vice Mayors of Social Affairs and District Education Officers from all 30 districts also participated, in addition to Development Partners and representatives from the Government of Brazil.
Day I: VISION SETTING

1. Opening Remarks

Ms. Cecilia Prado, Deputy Director, Brazilian Cooperation Agency  
Mr. Abdoulaye Balde, Representative and Country Director, WFP Rwanda  
Dr. Vincent Biruta, Minister of Education

Opening remarks from the Brazilian Cooperation Agency highlighted the importance of partnership in addressing the issue of hunger and implementing an effective school feeding programme. During the session the representative from the World Food Programme (WFP) Rwanda highlighted the shift from providing food aid to providing assistance and enabling communities to address issues of food scarcity and vulnerability. It was in this context that the Brazilian school feeding programme and the Centre of Excellence against Hunger were developed, and that is why they now provide important lessons on the strengthening linkages between school feeding, agricultural productivity, health and hygiene initiatives.

Dr. Vincent Biruta, Minister of Education

The Minister of Education highlighted how school feeding brings together many of the objectives around agricultural development, education and health established in Country Vision 2020 and the second Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS). In addition, the new Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) prioritises inclusive access to education for all and early childhood development – both key areas in which school feeding can play an active role in enabling us to achieve our overarching objectives. It was noted that the School Health and Nutrition policy is in development, and that a reviewed national home-grown school feeding programme will build upon existing initiatives in Rwanda such as the One Cup of Milk programme. The Minister reiterated that the aim of the consultation was to focus on developing one comprehensive school feeding programme that targets the neediest children.
2. Setting the Stage

2.1 Global Overview of school Feeding – Introduction of “Homegrown school Feeding”

Mr. Daniel Balaban, Director, Centre of Excellence against Hunger, WFP Brazil

In his session, Mr. Balaban presented the findings of a WFP research on school feeding around the world. He highlighted that every day 330 million children receive school meals. The investment in school feeding is $30 billion per year. Some of the low-income countries are investing in school feeding; however they are also reliant on WFP. Most of the investment targets primary schools, with some finance resource going to pre-primary and secondary schools. It is crucial to invest in children’s nutrition to support children’s development. In most of the countries, the leading Ministry in school feeding is the Ministry of Education, supported by ministries of Agriculture, Health, Local Government and Social Development. However, this cross-sector work is required to meet goals of school feeding programmes. Mr. Balaban emphasized the benefits of school feeding programmes, which have a positive impact in several fronts:

- Educational (children understanding the importance of healthy, nutritious food). Plus benefits for enrolment, attendance, retention, achievement
- Support for local food production – fresh food, plus support for local economy – provides structured demand for food
- Nutrition – fighting against malnutrition, addressing deficiencies in micronutrients and general health improvements
- Social protection – meal at school can often be the most important meal for children in the day
- Gender – school feeding can be an incentive for girl’s enrolment

In order to have a sustainable school feeding programme, it is important to set five pillars:

- National policy framework to guide the programme
- Institutional framework and coordination – required for effective implementation and monitoring
- Stable funding and planning – demonstrating commitment and long term plans
- Sound design and implementation
- Community participation and ownership – critical for success

2.2 Homegrown school feeding: linking education, health, nutrition, social protection and agriculture

Ms. Rachel Sabates Wheeler, Social Protection Specialist, UNICEF Rwanda

Rachel Sabates Wheeler, a representative from UNICEF Rwanda, presented the multiple objectives that can be achieved through school feeding, the multiple target groups, and the multiple impacts of school feeding. Whilst traditionally school feeding was about meeting deficits in children’s nutrition and supporting access to education, now objectives have broadened, with home-grown school feeding linking school feeding with agriculture and the promotion of resilient livelihoods – taking a more holistic and integrated programme approach.
The presentation highlighted four categories of social protection that can be achieved through school feeding (protection, prevention, promotion and transformation), and elaborated on the pathways of change to achieve these impacts. The aims of home-grown school feeding included developing structured demand and stimulating agricultural production. The different models of home-grown school feeding were highlighted, with programmes varying according to how close food production and procurement are to the school level. It was recognised that because home-grown school feeding programmes structure demand they may need to be accompanied by supply-side measures to support farmers to respond to the demand for school feeding.

Different procurement models (national/centralised level; district level; and decentralised school level) were presented, with a summary of the pros and cons of each. It was recognised that there are implications to the different procurement models for: reliability of food supplies; costs of purchase and delivery of food supplies; workloads of school staff; employment creation and income generation for local farmers and caterers.

Considerations when choosing the approach for home-grown school feeding should include how the model will maximise the level of food security provided, maximise the education impact, maximise social equity outcomes and most effectively reach the target group. Consideration should also be given to primary and secondary beneficiary groups.

### 2.3 School Feeding in Rwanda: Context, Challenges and Opportunity

Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education

The Permanent Secretary (PS) gave a presentation on school feeding in the Rwandan context, using the findings from the 2012 Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis to illustrate the need for a national school feeding programme and where interventions could be best targeted in the short term.

The PS firstly defined what it means to be food secure in terms of availability, access and utilisation of food.

The finding of the Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis undertaken in 2012 were presented. This study provides the context for the development of this school feeding programme, identifying types of support needed. More specifically the study looked at who is facing food insecurity and malnutrition in Rwanda, how many people are affected, where they are, why and what can be done. The importance of matching interventions to target the neediest population groups was stressed.
A summary of school feeding approaches in Rwanda was given. This currently includes:

- School feeding at secondary level for boarding students
- One Cup of Milk per Child programme targeting primary students
- The WFP-assisted programme (since 2002)

It was noted that there have been WFP pilot programmes to encourage community participation in school feeding, whereby the communities would provide food for children two days a week, with WFP supporting on the other three days. The aim of this pilot was to develop into a fully community-owned initiative. But it was noted that there have been challenges in implementation, and that community provision was not reliable in a majority of schools with communities facing difficulties in being able to mobilise enough food to feed children on their two days, with bigger challenges in poorest and more food insecure areas.

2.4 Analytical Work: The Investment Case and Cost Analysis

Ryan Anderson, Programme Officer, WFP Rwanda

The Government of Rwanda commissioned WFP to undertake an analytical study in the Investment Case and Cost Analysis of a school feeding programme. The investment case was based on economic modeling which focused on the following factors:

- Value (income) transfers to household
- Return on investment that families can expect from the value transfer
- Increased productivity for child in long term
- Difference in children’s potential future earnings from a healthier and longer working life
- Externalities, such as the impact on the local community

Whilst the programme will initially incur costs the projected benefits will exceed these costs by a ratio of 3:1 over the lifetime of beneficiaries.
The aim of the cost analysis was to identify costs of different approaches to school feeding and then to evaluate the efficiency and trade-offs in programme design to inform the future scale and approach of the national programme. The analysis looked at the three programmes currently in operation in Rwanda, identified their costs, nutritional efficiency and the potential cost savings that could be applied. From this basis different scenarios of future food baskets and operational approaches were considered.

Targeting criteria was also considered, with the suggestion of using food consumption, poverty and stunting as indicators of districts’ vulnerability and therefore need to be targeted within the pilot stage of the school feeding programme.

The Vision: Government of Rwanda Proposed School Feeding Programme Design – Erasme Rwanamiza, Director General Education Planning, Ministry of Education

Dr. Erasme presented the proposed Government School Feeding Programme. He started by outlining the current programmes and challenges to be addressed, learning from their implementation, plus the findings from the CFSVA.

The objectives of the proposed programme are to:

• Ensure adequate nutritional intake for school age children particularly in poor areas

• Improve equitable access to education and school performance by increasing school attendance and retention and reducing school dropout

• Create a structured demand for agriculture production with a significant portion procured from smallholder farmers

The programme will initially be targeted at the most vulnerable districts, with food being provided to children in pre-primary and primary schools.

An overview of the centralised, district and decentralised procurement models was provided. After this overview, few questions were posed by the audience in relation to the implementation of the programme.

Some questions were posed:

Q1: Will the programme also cater for children in community based ECD?

The current proposal has not specified if children aged 3-6 are in government or community-based ECD provision, rather it accounted for all children in a structured programme to ensure that they have access to adequate nutrition and preparatory educational opportunities. The modalities of how it will work with community-based and how all children can benefit are still to be developed.

Q2: Other questions were raised regarding the management of programme, and how it will be structured to ensure delivery, quality assurance, effective procurement, timeliness of delivery and that it means nutritional standard.

These concerns will be encouraged to be discussed during the group work.

Q3: Question regarding the importance of good nutrition during the first 1000 days of life – where most input is needed to prevent stunting – and whether or not was this considered in proposal design? For example work with lactating mothers etc.

The programme has been targeted at school feeding to provide for those children who are accessing education. Initiatives to fight malnutrition and other initiatives to address malnutrition during the first 1000 days were highlighted.

Q4: Question regarding the contribution of the community and circumstances where communities may struggle to contribute.

The PS emphasized that the programme design has a broad concept of community participation, which does not just refer to financial
contributions, but also includes time and non-financial contributions. She noted the strong context of community contributions in Rwanda, whilst also recognising that the home-grown aspect will have to reflect what the community has to offer and use this as a starting point.

Experience from Brazil was shared, whereby the communities’ involvement is in fiscalising and budgeting for the school feeding programme and ensuring accountability. The budget for school feeding is at federal level, then allocated to each municipality (mayor) according to the number of students in each municipality. School feeding is then coordinated at municipality level in accordance with national guidelines, and supported by a school feeding council (teachers, headteachers, civil society, students, parents) in each municipality.

Q5: Questioned if consideration had been given to the cost and benefits of producing food in school sites, e.g. school gardens and school farming programmes – that can educate children and teachers on improved attitudes towards gardens and farming, as well as providing nutritional benefits (plus raised awareness of nutritional requirement and care of the environment); it can also be linked with rain water collecting.

It was recognised that building on existing initiatives is key as we apply what we have learnt to inform the programme structure; and that the continuity and sustainability aspects of the suggestion was welcomed. The WFP representative clarified that the costs presented did not include school gardening, but this was recognised as a linked educational tool. Building on this discussion, it was noted that the costs and benefits for farmers (as the secondary target beneficiary group) could be given more consideration; and that more specific objectives could be developed in this area.

3. Learning from Brazil and Mozambique

3.1 The Brazilian Zero Hunger Strategy and an Introduction to the Centre of Excellence against Hunger – trilateral cooperation on school feeding

Daniel Balaban

Daniel Balaban presented Brazil’s achievements of Brazil in reducing poverty, malnutrition, child mortality over the last 10 years. In Brazil school feeding is one of the initiatives in the Zero Hunger Strategy. Lessons from the Brazilian experience highlight the importance of improving local purchase from family agriculture as part of the approach to tackling hunger and poverty.
The work of the Centre of Excellence against Hunger was introduced. The Centre works with national governments to enable capacity development in school feeding and a transition to nationally-owned and led programmes.

As Rwanda moves forward in the development of a national school feeding programme, the critical importance of commitment from all stakeholders was emphasised. School feeding should be viewed as a strong investment for the country and not an expenditure. It was recognised that it takes time to change mindsets on this issue, but that the returns are significant. These returns apply not only to the direct beneficiaries of the programme, but a home-grown school feeding approach also supports economic transformation and agricultural development, and develops self-sufficiency, reducing reliance on actors outside the country and therefore the influence of external factors.

3.2 The Importance of School Feeding: Evidence from Brazil

Dr. Andrea Galante

presented on the national experience of Brazil in school feeding programmes.

The main principles behind Brazil’s school feeding programme:

• social control and ownership – school feeding council
• school feeding as human right
• universal coverage and equity
• continuity of provision
• decentralisation
• intersectorality connection between many different government actors

The presentation described how Brazil’s national school feeding programme addressed the five pillars of school feeding.

The following areas were identified as good practice:

• Integration with the national strategy against poverty
• Intersectoral approach
• Food supply
• Promoting local procurement
• Improving learning through nutrition
• Preventing malnutrition (under-nutrition and obesity)
Lessons learnt from the programme highlighted the importance of developing small farmers capacity to meet legal requirements, such as invoicing, quality control and delivery arrangements.

3.3 Example of Trilateral Cooperation in Africa: Piloting School Feeding Models in Mozambique

Ms. Cecilia Prado and Dr. Christina Murphy

Ms. Prado gave an overview of the Brazilian Cooperation Agency’s goals and approach to trilateral cooperation. Triangular cooperation with international organisations should be demand driven responding to national priorities and also be in line with the mandate of the international organisation, include the ‘southern element’, promote local ownership and leadership, create opportunities for knowledge generation, sharing and innovation, and have a structural impact promoting sustainable change. Ms. Christina Murphy provided an overview of school feeding in Mozambique. The programme originated in a similar national consultation in 2011, followed by the development of a proposal for a National School Feeding Programme in 2012 which will be submitted to the Council of Ministers for approval early in 2013. The new national school feeding programme was developed by a multisectoral group, led by the Ministry of Education, supported by the WFP and Centre of Excellence from Brazil. These are the key elements of Mozambique’s School Feeding Programme:

- Targeting primary schools or primary districts (high food insecurity and/or low performance in education indicators)
- Local procurement (as close as possible to schools) – procurement from small farmers was prioritized
- Food basket
- Government approach:
- Multisectoral committe
- Decentralisation – strengthened government capacity to implement an monitor at all levels
- Budget:
- Education sector plus partners
- Community Participation:
- Implementation and monitoring – school committee to provide quality control
- Nutrition Education:
- School gardens
- Teachers curricula review

There are two pilot schemes, the results of which will be used to finalise programme design and approach. Some of the challenges identified in implementation include:

- Availability of reliable, potable water sources: potable and regular
- Difficult access to most of the schools: high transportation costs
- Reducing the environmental impact: fuel and managing waste of both food and water
- Equipping schools: providing structures for delivering school meals
• Developing local capacity: training both government and community members for implementing, monitoring and evaluating the programme

• Establishing the link with the local food production: working with small farmers

3.4 Plenary

In this session some of the questions posed and discussions among the participants are highlighted.

Q1: (PS) What were the top three implementation challenges in Mozambique that we can learn from?

• Access to schools – in hard to reach areas, often lacking local production (because they tend to be arid areas)

• Capacity of local government to implement the programme, because they lack similar experience of delivering this type of programme – training and discussion is required with officials and communities

• School structures – lack of kitchens, storage house, equipment – there is a high cost to build this infrastructure

Q2: WFP (Deputy Country Director): There were two pilots in Mozambique, asked for clarification on the differences between the pilots, including where funding was coming from.

Main difference is determined by who is implementing, the level of government involvement, and the roles adopted by different stakeholders. In the first pilot it was the government who decided what was in the food basket and targeting of the programme, but WFP managed local procurement of food. Food preparation was supported by the government and communities, as was monitoring. The second pilot is being implemented in 2013 via a trilateral partnership. The government will take the lead on implementation and monitoring of the pilots, with other partners providing technical assistance.

Q3: Jon Mugabo - Millennium Villages Project: Is there a plan for community provision for food for themselves rather than relying on partner organisations?

The importance of having an identified shared goal and ownership by local communities in achieving this was highlighted. From Brazil’s experience community participation is not just focused on food provision, it includes fiscalisation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes, and providing inputs into programme improvement. There is a strong framework of accountability in the programme design and clearly defined responsibilities of all actors involved. Examples were provided of the Annual School Feeding Congress in Brazil. In Mozambique, communities are expected to contribute fuel for cooking, but a majority of community contributes their time working in school gardens.

Q4: (WFP Rwanda): In Brazil it is a right for every school to be provided with a state-funded meal. What percentage of children accesses that right?

Access to the programme is dependent upon the income-level of students and their capacity to purchase their own meals. Where students have available resources they tend to purchase their own food. An increasing problem has been that children then purchase snack food of less balanced nutritional value, which has been linked to increasing problems with childhood obesity. This illustrates the importance of combining school feeding with food education. Comment from WFP Rwanda: There is potential for the proposed national school feeding programme to include different levels of subsidisation in the longer term. Whilst initially the programme will target according to nutritional needs as the programme is scaled up (to areas where there is less poverty and nutritional deficiencies) it will become easier for communities to support the programme. It was also suggested that it is possible to target provision so that children from households in higher Ubudehe Programme categories are requested to make some contribution towards the costs.
Q5: (REB) Further information was requested on quality assurance, for example how you ensure safety of the food provided and that they meet minimum nutritional standards; and who is responsible for this? Further illustrations from Brazil’s and Mozambique’s experience of food procurement were requested.

It is critical that from the outset a legal framework is in place, which includes partnership agreements and clearly established programme design. Part of the legal framework should also include agreement on budget, goals and standards.

In Brazil nutritional standards are enshrined in a resolution in law (available in English). The resolution specifies the types of food to be used, nutritional requirements etc. Supporting this each municipality has a nutritionist responsible for the menu. The nutritionists use an IT system, in which they can input the food menu and calculate whether or not the menu meets all requirements.

In Brazil the model is a combination of the centralised, decentralised and school model depending on the municipality and their context. For example school procurement tends to take place in large urban schools. But the procurement processes are consistent across all models.

Q6: Hope Foundation – What are the main factors behind Centre of Excellence in deciding where programmes operate?

Initially this was discussed in partnership with ABC and WFP. The first countries were those who already had bilateral cooperation agreements with Brazil and where WFP was operating and a readiness to engage was perceived. Now the Centre of Excellence receives requests for support from several countries.

Five pillars of SF: drafting an action plan for Rwanda by the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Agriculture, and WFP Centre of Excellence

In this session the Action Plan developed during the study visit in Brazil was presented.

PLENARY

Below are some of the questions posed and discussed.

Q1: WFP (Deputy Director): One of the recommendations is that school feeding should be included in the EDPRS2 and ESSP. Has this been done, and if not is there time?

It was clarified that the EDPRS2 and ESSP have not yet been finalised so there are still opportunities for the outcomes of this meeting to be fed back to the EDPRS2 and ESSP. It was noted that the current draft of the EDPRS2 highlights issues of nutritional security, but that further details will need to be elaborated in the sector strategies (education, agriculture, social protection, health) if not already done so.

Q2: Concern: Building the capacity of PTAs and PTCs to support nutrition in schools is critical. How has this been considered?

Capacity building should cover both technical training and awareness raising on owning the process.

Q3: Concerns over having sufficient capacity and resources to ensure provision if we say that children have a right to school feeding.

This issue could be seen from the opposite perspective, arguing that because we have agreed that it is a right, we need to ensure that there are resources to support it.
4. Group work

In this session the group work was presented to the participants.

The five pillars will be used as framework to set the discussion.

- Introduction for the group work

1) Legal and Policy Frameworks,

2) Financing Mechanism,

3) Institutional Arrangements,

4) Programme Design and Implementation, and

5) Community Participation

Some suggestions were given to the group in order to be aware during the group work.

These were:

- Participation during the discussion

- Special dynamics in the group

- Discussions

- Highlights

The groups were separated in order to discuss the suggested points.

Methodology of the working group

On the afternoon of the Day 1 the participants were divided in seven groups of around 20 people. Three groups discussed district model, two decentralized and two centralized.

- District model – Groups A, B and C

- Decentralized model – Groups D and E

- Centralized model – Groups F and G

Each group had a group leader and a note taker, who were responsible for coordinating the group and facilitating the activities (see guidelines for moderators/note takers - Annex). The group leaders were provided with guiding questions for each of the five pillars.

Based on the objectives defined, and building upon the draft action plan formulated during the Brazil study tour, groups assessed current situation and defined the way forward for each of the five quality standards for the model they were assigned. After the group discussion the leaders of each group, one government representative of each group and the roving facilitators met and compiled an overall matrix of results of each model, to be presented on the morning of Day 2. After each model presentation there were 20 minutes for questions and answers as well as comments from the panel. The Minister of Education, the State Minister and the Permanent Secretary were at the plenary during the presentations and commented on important points of the future of the school feeding programme, such as budget, mix of modality, intersectorial coordination and collaboration.

The works were focused on discussing perspectives for the way forward in the implementation modalities. Each group discussed on the needs to improve the implementation models in terms of the each five quality standards and the elements presented in the analysis of the current situation. The table below presents the five quality standards in relation to each of the models.
School Feeding Modality

Where we are/Goal/Steps needed/Who/When?

1. Legal and Policy framework
2. Financial Capacity
3. Institutional Capacity and Coordination
4. Design and Implementation
5. Community Participation

Day 2: CHARTING THE WAY FORWARD

Highlights from Day 1

Below are some of the key points discussed during Day 1:

- 330 million receive school feeding worldwide, 26 million of these are fed by WFP
- Providers are mainly government and partners
- A majority of beneficiaries are primary school students, but also some pre-primary and secondary pupils

• School feeding programmes tend to be led by Ministries of Education, with Ministries of Health, Local Government, Social Protection and Agriculture also involved

Key benefits of school feeding programmes and impacts we would expect to see in Rwanda:

- Educational – improvements in enrolment, attendance, retention and achievement
- Nutritional – ensuring that all pre-primary and primary aged children have at least one nutritional meal per day
- Supporting local production – this will be key in the new approach and an innovation with regards to what has gone before. Working with farmers, cooperatives and local communities will be critical for the sustainability of the programme, local ownership and also to support national goals of economic transformation and rural development

As discussed in the groups around the five pillars the new programme will require:

- A strong national policy to guide it. This should be reflected in the EDPRS 2 and sectors’ strategies
- Sustainable funding and planning
• Strong institutional support, capacity and multisector coordination. Working groups/steering committees will need to be put in place to coordinate inputs

• Strong design and implementation of the programme. This should build upon the evidence base we have from the Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis undertaken in 2012, to target the programme during the initial years before national roll out. It should also take into consideration the cost analysis work and investment case made. We need to be advocating that a national school feeding should be considered as an investment, not an expenditure. It is important that the approach also includes mechanisms to ensure quality and accountability

• Community ownership – key element for success. We need to ensure that communities feel engaged from the start

At the first day of the National Consultation we learnt many lessons from the delivery of school feeding programmes from Brazil and Mozambique that we need to consider as we develop a national programme for homegrown school feeding in Rwanda. Particularly:

• integrating it into national policy to address hunger and poverty, supported by strong inter-sectorial engagement

• ensuring that there’s sufficient capacity at local government and community level to own and implement the programme

• providing a strong framework for accountability and monitoring, including schools, parents, and districts officials

**Presentation of Day 1: Deliberations and Action Plan Recommendations**

During the presentation of the three different models, government officials, development partners and all participants had the opportunity to go into the details of the model of implementation in terms of the five pillars for sustainable school feeding programmes. Below the results of the working groups are presented with the highlights of the goals and steps needed to achieve them for each model:

**1. District Model**

**a. Legal and Policy framework**

**Goals: where do we want to be?**

• To develop a comprehensive standard school feeding legal policy to ensure multisector coordination

• To develop a strategic implementation plan for the policy on school feeding

• To develop appropriate

• To prepare a district Procedure Manual regarding food procurement

**Steps needed**

• Learn from experiences of school feeding programmes in other countries (local and regional consultations)

• Meetings with parents, teachers and students to discuss the school feeding programmes

• Analyse existing initiatives in Rwanda
• Formation of multisector technical working group for policy development/steering committee on school feeding, at national, district (chaired by mayor and vice mayor with DEOs), sector and school level. Decision-making body, implementation and monitoring – similar approach to that already adopted with school construction

• Analyse of the procurement law (processes and structure) in place in order to adjust to programme needs

• Development of strong legal framework, with norms and standards, including guidance on percentage of food to be procured locally. There should be accompanying norms and standards for private schools to include an obligation to feed school children. Principle should also apply for community-based ECD provision

• Need to set up monitoring process to respect procedure

b. Financial Capacity Goals:

where do we want to be?

• Predictable core budget for school feeding from the government

• To promote the involvement of other stakeholders to join the SF programme

• To establish a budget line for SFP with coordinated financing

• Financial support should be determined according to the needs (number of students) of the district

Steps needed

• A cost estimate of a school feeding programme

• Government needs to start looking for potential donors and funding

• Social mobilization

• Coordination mechanism independent from ministries

• MINECOFIN, MINEDUC and other ministries should meet with DPs to coordinate how funding will be provided, and to clarify respective contributions

• Development of earmarked transfer guidelines on use of funds

• To organize a financial need assessment (to identify the cost implantation plan)

• Capacity building of staff in management of SF

• Cost chairing by stakeholders
c. Institutional Capacity Goals:

where do we want to be?

• To develop an intersectorial coordination mechanism with an integrated approach to school feeding

• A ministry leadership to coordinate at the central level

• Similar leadership at the local level

• To establish appropriate governance structures at central and district level

• To set up a structure for school feeding

Steps needed

• Define the key ministries and create a committee/council to coordinate the school feeding programme

• Establish a committee at the district level

• Establish a committee at sector level

• Need for officer at district level in charge of school feeding programme, who could work with district procurement officers

• Centrally do not need very heavy structure, expert in MINEDUC to manage communication, coordination and multisector work
d. Design and Implementation

Goals: where do we want to be?

• To define target and food basket strategies (primary education)

• To establish management committee at the District level for the procurement (District level will create committees)

• Procurement by the district and monitoring at the sector and parent level. If required, mixed procurement strategies could take place

• To develop a SF concept note; an implementation plan, and monitoring system

Steps needed

• Develop capacities on the existing procurement units

• Develop programme and procurement guidelines

• MINAGRI and MINICOM to identify and produce a list of key commodities to be purchased at each level (central, district and school), and incorporate into procurement guidelines. List to be reviewed annually

• Develop two scenarios based on food baskets with and without milk (depending on availability financing, and also access to milk collections at sector levels)

• Incorporate in design the use of milk from cows provided on one cow per family programme, and farmers associations can be used also for collect milk for food basket that includes these

• Capacity building of SF committee and multisector groups

e. Community Participation

Goals: where do we want to be?

• Parent’s contribution (in kind) according to the financial situation of the family (create categories)

• Community should provide services (deliver meals, for example)

• Making land available for agriculture

• Participation of the family in the school garden

• Community participation at the decision making and overseeing the programme

• To promote community ownership on the programme

• Effective participation by community for the sustainability of the programme

Steps needed

• Sensitization of the community

• Making very clear the key role of the community in the school feeding programme

• Developing reporting mechanisms (feedback to the parents)

• Need to define what community contribution will be (including non-monetary and non food contribution such as collecting firewood, cooking etc. and initially to build kitchens). Contributions may be considered with scaling up

• Sensitisation on importance of child nutrition for communities and parents – use of media (press releases), joint press conference with all Ministries

• Need to involve communities in programme design so that they are engaged from the start
2. Decentralized model

a. Legal and Policy Framework

Goals: where do we want to be?

- Include SF in EDPRS2, ESSP and sector plans
- School feeding policy that obliges schools to implement SF
- Guideline/Law on implementing SF at the school level
- Procurement/tender committee guidelines: roles, revise the ceiling of what can be bought
- Revising the PTC Manual/Guidelines to Integrate the SFP

Steps needed

- Involving stakeholders
- Drafting policies/laws and clear guidelines for practical implementation at school-level
- Validation of the process

b. Financial Capacity

Goals: where do we want to be?

- Funding to cover all schools and all children at all levels
- Schools plan and budget for the School Feeding Programme
- Audit by district or auditor general of the sectors and schools
- Schools have a procurement committee
- Parental contributions carefully designed and flexible, but not in contradiction with principle of fee-free education

Steps needed

- Schools should Plan with PTC, Local Leaders and other stakeholders
- Sought for initial investment from development partners
c. Institutional Capacity and Coordination

Goals: where do we want to be?

- National inter-ministerial steering committee for policy and a SF board at each level of government
- Specialized staff at the school level: e.g. nutritionists
- Additional staff at the district and sector level
- Strong and trained PTC and School Management Committees
- Established small farmers’ cooperatives.
- District agronomists and SAOs, SEOs, health centres provide support for SFP. SEO and PTA monitor SF

Steps needed

- Recruit necessary staff
- Train and sensitize stakeholders

d. Design and Implementation

Goals: where do we want to be?

- Schools have clear guidelines from national level on how to implement the programme
- Local farmers and cooperatives are prioritized in procurement. If not possible or too expensive, a clear process for national or international procurement in place as the last resort
- Strengthen Quality Control system right from the district to the school level: train key actors, PTAs to do quality control

Steps Needed

- Build capacity of farmers/cooperatives to guarantee food production level
- Provide guidelines and training to nutritionist, PTAs, school staff
- Put in place minimum infrastructure (stores, kitchen etc.)
- Develop school gardens (if land available)
- Consider increasing rations for ECD

e. Community Participation

Goals: where do we want to be?

- Parents provide food, cash or labour based on ability (UBUDEHE)
- Parents and communities are aware of SF, their role in the programme
- Active community participation in the SFP Management
Steps Needed

• Sensitize communities on nutrition, education, right

• Creation of SF committee (parents, civil society, teachers, executive, leaders etc.)

• Introduce income generating activities in households

• Support farmer and cooperatives on modern farming and animal rearing techniques

3. Centralized Model

a. Legal and Policy Framework

Goals: where do we want to be?

• To develop a multisectorial School Feeding and health Policy (SHNP) framework with the integration in the EDPRS and ESSP (and other sector plans) and advocate for HGSF to be in national constitution

• Public procurement Act to be modified to support smallholder farmers

• Set up a SF strategic plan to include norms and regulations on food quality to all schools to follow including private partners running pre-primary and primary schools

• To develop a school feeding law for all schools

Steps Needed

• Multisectorial team work (meetings)

• Ministerial decree on GHSF, then Policy, then Constitution

• Implementation

• Review the procurement act

• MINEDUC and other ministries to advocate for SF to be included in the EDPRS2 and sector strategic plans

b. Financial Capacity

Goals: where do we want to be?

• To establish a National budget MINEDUC and MINAGRI (75%), for the rest of the 25%, development partners encouraged to contribute – WFP, Plan, SDC as well as district contributions depending on district resources

• To establish coordinating financial mechanism

Steps Needed

• Create a national budget line for HGSF

• Create a basket fund (from DPs) for HGSF

• MINEDUC to develop a budget plan for HGSF

• MINECOFIN to allocate the necessary budget to MINAGRI and MINEDUC

• Budget needs to be available for deworming and nutrition training
c. Institutional Capacity and Coordination

Goals: where do we want to be?

• To establish interministerial commission for HGSF, reporting to Minister (MINEDUC) with interministerial coordination mechanism (MINAGRI, MINALOC, MINECOFIN and others)

• To develop a plan for enhancing the capacity of the committee

Steps Needed

• Appoint members of the committee from the implicated ministries for a HGSF team

• To establish a committee responsible for coordination of HGSF

• To develop a plan of capacity building-technical and managerial (learning from the experiences e.g. Brazil)

• To establish a mechanism of coordination between MINEDUC and MINAGRI to work jointly to purchase the food

• To establish a mechanism of coordination between RBS (to issue some guidelines and monitor for quality of the food in all warehouses), the Office of Auditor general (to monitor purchase procedures), MINALOC (to be involved in community contributions at the decentralized level) and others

d. Design and Implementation

Goals: where do we want to be?

• Implementation through pilots

• To develop a scale up plan for school feeding programme to cover all Districts in pre-primary and primary schools

• Food is dispatched to schools from District warehouses (group of Districts) based on beneficiaries’ records

• Deworming and nutrition awareness in schools for teachers, cooks, and children

• One nutritionist should be at each Administrative Sector to monitor the quality of the food served at school

• Minimum 40 percent of food should be purchased locally (in Rwanda)

Steps Needed

• Geographical selection of the pilots based on vulnerability (to start with poorest and most food insecure districts and scale up as soon as possible)
• Selection food basket (milk, maize flour, beans) and SOSOMA

• To improve infrastructure (warehouses at district level, kitchens, cooks, non-food items, safe drinking water)

• To improve the tools to adequate enrolment and attendance records at school

• Hire and train nutritionists on their roles and responsibilities

• To strengthen cooperation with MINAGRI (strengthening of local cooperatives in value chain development, commodity management, sale)

**e. Community Participation**

**Goals: where do we want to be?**

• To promote the fully commitment of the community

• School feeding management committee to supervise the transparency

• Encourage school gardens and community contribution of fresh food

• According to local production, community to contribute to school meals

**Steps Needed**

• To promote community sensitization and mobilization (MINEDUC, MINAGRI, MINALOC and others)

• To promote capacity building activities

• To reinforce school feeding management committees at school level and train on R&R

• MINAGRI, FAO to support local contributions especially fresh foods

During the presentation, the need for flexibility in the model arrangements came out as essential governmental definition in which different arrangements of implementation could be combined and adjusted to the Rwanda case, creating the Rwanda model. The preparation for the national school feeding programme in Rwanda will also request a definition of roles and responsibilities of institutions and structures. This also means to take advantage of existent structures and avoiding heavy ones. Capacity development activities in all areas at the different levels were highlighted as an important need within government areas.

**Conclusions and Recommendations**

**1. Legal and Policy Framework**

In the chosen model, there is the need for a clear unified framework to define the approach to ensure that this is an integrated national programme. Within this framework we will need to provide enough space so that we can be flexible to specific district requirements and needs.

But it is also clear from the discussions that central coordination and leadership is integral to provide direction and vision to the national programme. We have a starting point for our legal framework (school and health policy, decentralisation policy and organic law); the challenge is to bring these together to support a cohesive school feeding programme.
This will require a detailed assessment of the legal and procedural framework already in place and how they can be applied to the school feeding programme. It is evident that districts and schools will expect policy guidance and vision from central level, but also operational guidelines, with clearly defined roles and responsibilities for each of the stakeholders involved in implementation.

2. Financial Capacity

There is the need for a predictable and sustainable funding for school feeding. A key element of the programme will be promoting partnership; this will also involve exploring options for financial partnership to support the programme, and development of financing plan outlining expected areas of contributions from all stakeholders. This will require close work with other ministries involved to ensure that there are dedicated budget lines and these are costed in sector strategies.

Any parental contributions need to be carefully designed and flexible so that they do not contradict the principle of fee-free basic education, or inhibit access to pre-primary education.

3. Institutional Capacity and Coordination

For the chosen model we need to identify the gaps in the institutional arrangements and capacity. This will require an assessment of institutional capacity at the decided level, and consultation with those who will be leading on delivery. We must consider if we need additional personnel, and/or bodies to put in place to implement and govern, and how we engage with existing governance structures, for example district councils. The training and capacity development needs of all involved should also be captured within the programme design. Technical skills and capacity need to be in place from day one of implementation to ensure the quality of delivery and consistency of standards across all districts.

The need to ensure that the model is built upon the strengths of each districts, whilst also recognising specific constraints they may face in implementation, was emphasized. The importance of establishing a Steering Committee at national level was also highlighted to ensure strong multi-sector coordination and leadership, and to facilitate national level dialogue on financing, monitoring and to provide strategic direction.

4. Design and Implementation

The focus of the design should be founded on how we can achieve the established objectives of the national school-feeding programme. As the operational model and approach are clarified, it should focus on what is required to achieve, targets for the programme and how the best way to achieve these. Ensuring quality
and quality control needs to be considered as part of this process, alongside financial and operational concerns, so that the food provided meets the minimum nutritional targets. The approach adopted should also ensure efficiency and sustainability. It is likely to require a mixed approach to procurement to ensure that the final adopted approach supports local development as well as recognising when central procurement may be more cost effective.

It is proposed that the model initially targets the neediest districts, and is then expanded to national level. We need to put in place monitoring and evaluation systems from the outset so that we can assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the programme, and refine the implementation model as we learn.

The design of the programme needs to be built upon good practice (here and from other countries’ school feeding programmes), and the Rwandan context. For example the need to consider in more detail what existing procedures are in place that can be applied to school feeding, and what we can learn from our experience implementing similar procurement and programmes, to ensure that we have effective processes in place for implementation.

It is also important to ensure that processes are accountable, and make sure that appropriate institutions are in place to undertake these roles. In addition the model design needs to ensure that there is a mechanism to facilitate strong coordination at central, district and school levels. This should include defining flows of information and reporting guidelines.

All of these issues will need to be outlined in clear operating procedures and guidance, so that all stakeholders are clear on their roles and responsibilities.

5. Community Participation

Sensitisation and engagement of the communities is paramount. Schools and communities need to be empowered for the programme to be sustainable. It is critical that the final programme design incorporates the importance of working with communities from the start so that they develop ownership of the programme. Community engagement needs to involve raising awareness of the importance of good childhood nutrition, and also understanding of the objectives of the school feeding programme, how households will benefit and how they can be involved.

Closing Remarks

Ms. Sharon Haba, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education

- Ms. Haba noted that regardless of model selected, a legal framework is needed to guarantee an integrated national programme. Room for flexibility with central coordination and leadership is needed

- Starting point of legal framework: SHN policy, decentralisation policy, organic law. These to be brought together for a cohesive programme

- Operational guidelines that detail the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder are needed

- Predictable and stable funding is needed for school feeding

- The programme will promote partnership, especially in terms of financial contributions from all stakeholders. This requires inter-ministerial coordination and inclusion of school feeding in sector strategies

- Parental contributions must be carefully designed to ensure they do not hamper access to education or contradict the principle of fee-free education

- The institutional capacity at the decision level must be assessed and these stakeholders consulted

- The engagement with existing governance structures needs to be thought through

- A steering committee can help provide dialogue, leadership on financing, monitoring and strategic direction
• Meeting the minimum nutritional and food safety must be guaranteed

• A mixed procurement model is needed to guarantee cost-effectiveness

• Targeting will start with the neediest district and the programme is envisioned to be expanded to national coverage

• The design of the programme must draw from good practice from around the world

• Implementation processes must be accountable and supported with the necessary capacity and guidelines

• Schools and communities need to be empowered to guarantee ownership. Larger awareness raising is needed, as well as understanding of the programme among the beneficiary communities

**Minister of Agriculture:**

**Closing Remarks**

• The Minister emphasised the importance of the nutrition of school children and underlined the urgency of school feeding for child development and improving the national food security situation

• She noted that school feeding comes in late in the sense it does not address the first thousand days. A comprehensive set of tools is needed. A comprehensive approach involving the decentralised levels of government is needed

• The Minister reminded the audience of the magnitude of the investments needed, and the responsibility and tasks at hand

• She promotes the idea of linking farmers to school feeding. She reminded the audience that the challenges involved can be overcome. She reaffirmed the government’s commitment to school feeding

• She noted that nutrition cannot fall through the cracks again, and that clear benchmarks will be set for the steps forward