

feeding projects, including the feeding of pre-school and school-age children and of hospital patients. My conclusion was that, if they were well managed, these social programs were definitely beneficial in a developmental sense. On the whole, delegates reached a useful compromise and food aid was provided for all these categories.

"It was not the intent of WFP, nor could it be, to solve the problem of agricultural surpluses. It did not aggravate the problem, either. And, from the very beginning it was recognized that food aid could not solve the problems of feeding large populations in developing countries. What it did do was make additional resources available.

"WFP, however, influenced changes in the whole structure of food aid. You see, for the first time on the governing body of WFP were brought together representatives from developed and developing countries—or donor and recipient countries—to help shape policies, approve projects and evaluate the results of food aid programs. At first, major donors were dominant in setting the ground rules and making decisions. But the balance shifted a good deal as developing countries became more articulate and assertive.

"WFP has always aroused strong emotions, for and against, in many circles: among governments, academics, NGOs [Non-Governmental Organizations] and the media. Even officials inside the same government have been divided in their views, and the critics and the doubters have had substance for their arguments.... [S]ome projects have been poorly planned; delivery has been slow; food distribution has been badly done; supervision and follow-up has been unsatisfactory. Other criticism has been based more 'on emotion than on substance, for example when they refer to WFP food aid as 'hand-outs' and say it encourages laziness and corruption. But it is fair to say that food aid does not always benefit the poor—others get the benefit.

"Delegates and the secretariat were aware of these weaknesses, and it is a pity that critical suggestions raised at WFP meetings were not always followed up by action. At the same time, delegates have to remember that the bottom line in all WFP operations [is] the neediest people. Unfortunately, there has to be a constant reminder of this 'bottom line.'

"When I retired in 1979, I felt qualified to judge the effectiveness of WFP. I had been involved with the program for 16 years, and had served as chairman of the WFP governing committee. I had been a member of many of its intergovernmental committees dealing with matters of finance, constitution and administration, and also with technical and operational questions. My experience with other international agencies gave me a broad perspective of United Nations activities. My general conclusion in 1979 was that I felt I could give the World Food Programme high marks in the United Nations class."