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Meeting held to discuss the Government of Switzerland's offer of technical assistance in the Sahelian zone of West Africa - 9 a. m., 2 December 1977

Participants : Swiss delegation - Mr. Bill
Délégué du conseil fédéral pour
l'aide en cas de catastrophe

Mr. Ochsenbein

Mr. T. Glaser
Conseiller agricole
Ambassade de Suisse, Rome

World Food Programme -

Mr. E. Lühe
Acting Director
Project Management Division

Mr. V.P. Dhital
Chief, Emergency Unit
Project Management Division

Mr. R. Pollaris
Project Management Officer
Emergency Unit
Project Management Division

Mr. D.E. Sintobin
Acting Deputy Director
Resources Management Division

Mr. E. Moller
Chief, Transport Branch
Resources Management Division



During the Fourth Session of the CFA, a meeting was called on 3 November 1977 of the major potential donors to discuss food shortages in the Sahelian zone of West Africa. At the meeting, the Swiss delegate, apart from stating that his Government was considering a cash contribution of up to Swiss Francs 2 Million to be channelled through WFP, also indicated that they were prepared to make available to WFP a number of experts who could assist in matters of transportation, distribution, etc. WFP followed-up the matter with Mr. Glaser and, on the basis of this, a meeting was arranged for today, 2 December, to allow the Swiss Government to more fully explain its offer and the Programme its needs.

After welcoming the Swiss delegation to WFP, Mr. Sintobin suggested that they might begin first with a summary of WFP's needs from the point of transportation and then distribution, thus giving an idea of what the Programme required and how Switzerland could assist.

Mr. Moller briefly explained the work involved relating to transportation and arrival of the commodities, principally in the ports of Dakar, Abidjan and Douala, the handling and bagging, etc., and the efforts made to reduce costs along the line. He indicated the requirements and qualifications necessary for the type of job the expert would be called upon to do - familiarity with port conditions, good knowledge of cargo handling, etc. For this work it was thought sufficient for the time being to request the assistance of three experts, one in each port, with the more senior in Dakar where the bulk of the commodities will be handled.

Mr. Dhital then explained the second stage of the operation - the transportation of the commodities to the various points inland and distribution thereof. He pointed out that WFP would not only be handling WFP-supplied commodities, but also monitoring bilateral contributions from other donors. While the

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operation is expected to last for about six months, it is difficult to assess just how many experts could eventually be used. For the moment Mr. Dhital therefore recommended that four be provided with a good knowledge of inland transportation, storage, handling and distribution methods.

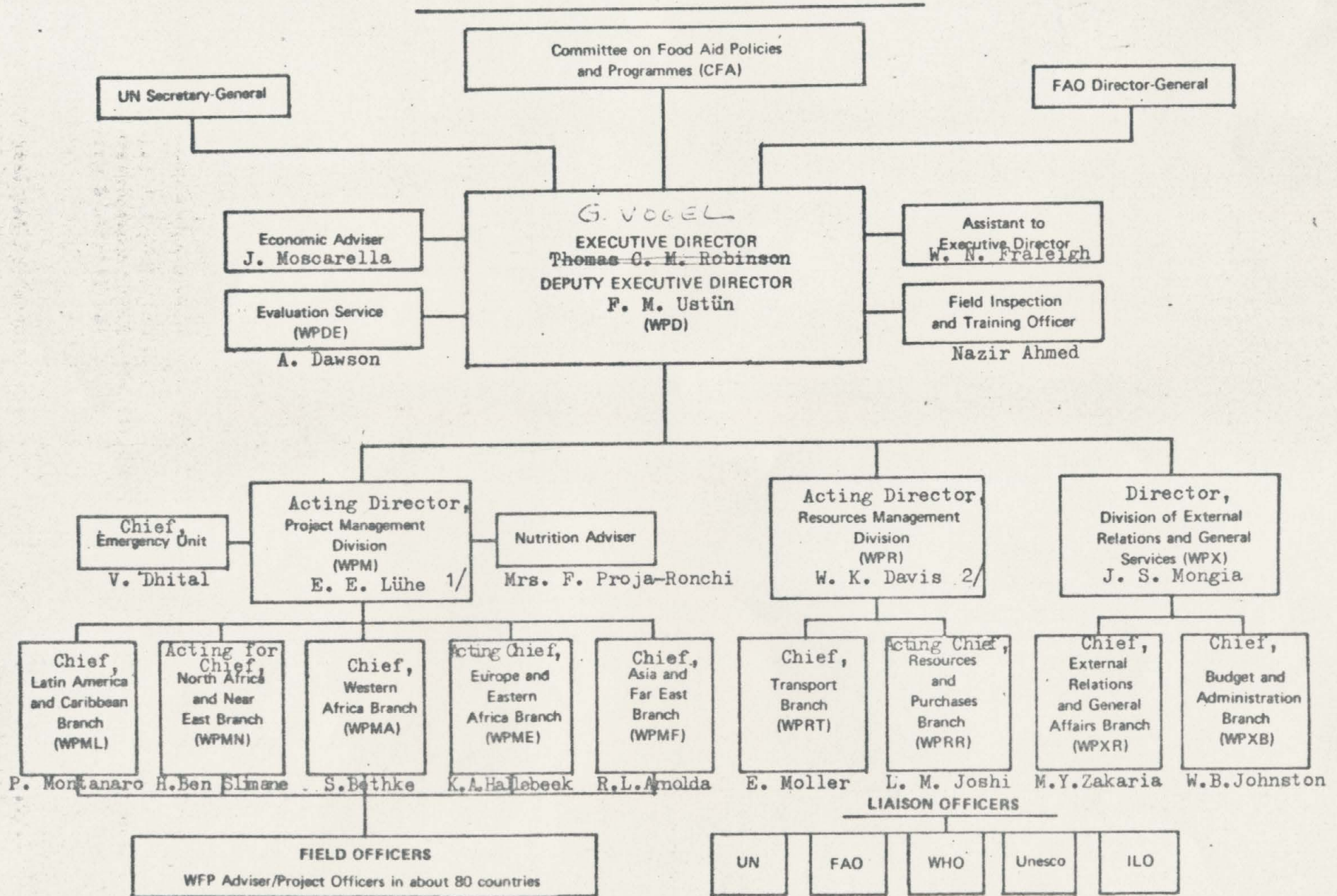
The Swiss delegation followed with a brief explanation of the type of assistance they are able to provide and asked the Programme to prepare job descriptions as soon as possible in order that a list of suitable candidates can be sent for WFP's scrutiny. It was agreed that we would provide the information to Mr. Glaser by Monday, 5 December. They indicated that they on their part would be able to make experts available as from 1 January 1978 and that while the contracts were ~~usually~~ ^{normally} for 2/4 months, the period could usually be extended or a replacement sent.

It was thought useful for the experts to visit Rome for briefing for 1/2 days prior to taking up their duties in the Sahel. The Swiss delegation also proposed that one of the experts head the group in the Sahel, acting as liaison point and supervisor of the group with location for the time being in Dakar.

With regard to the cash contribution of Swiss Francs 2 Million, it appears that the Federal Council will take a decision within the next two weeks upon which we will be informed immediately. The Swiss delegation, on our enquiry, also assured us that there would be no restrictions as to how the money is used (apart, of course, that it must be used for the Sahel) - in other words it will not be tied to the purchase of food but can be used for transportation and related expenditures, purchase of trucks, equipment, etc.

The meeting concluded with an exchange of general information and the opportunity was taken to give the Swiss delegation some literature on WFP.

UN/FAO WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME



WPM 1/ Deputy Director, A. Cuomo, Acting Deputy Director, F. Pronk

WPR 2/ Acting Deputy Director, D. E. Sintobin

NOTE

The generous contribution of the Swiss Government to make available a number of experts in connexion with the Programme's mandate for the Sahel emergency operation is highly appreciated.

As regards the requirements of the Transport Branch of WFP, these can be identified in order of priority as follows:

- (1) A senior logistics expert preferably with qualifications as a port captain to be stationed in Dakar as soon as possible and preferably not later than the first week in January. This expert would assist the local WFP office in arranging quick discharge from ocean-going vessels, bagging arrangements, storage and reloading into trans-shipment vehicles, be it coasters, trucks or rail wagons. This expert should be between 40 and 50 years of age.
- (2) An expert on forwarding to be located in Abidjan to assist the local WFP office, particularly with regard to on-carrying from Abidjan to land-locked countries, thus requiring logistical know-how on trucking and rail forwarding. This expert should be between 30 and 45 years of age.
- (3) An expert who should basically do the leg work in the port of Douala with a view to ensuring that on-forwarding arrangements take place timely as regards trucking and railing in-land-locked countries. This expert should be between 20 and 25 years of age.

It is expected that the expenditure per expert as regards food and lodging would amount to US \$ 2 000 for Dakar, \$ 2 500 for Abidjan and \$ 1 800 for Douala, monthly.

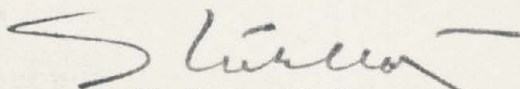
The priority requirement is Dakar, and it is suggested that the Swiss Government select all three experts, but that only the expert for Dakar be put in place immediately. In other words, the remaining two experts would be on call at the shortest possible notice.

All three experts should pass through Rome for briefing for one or two days prior to taking up their posts.

As regards the expert to be located in Douala, it is possible that a vehicle would have to be made available.

It is assumed that the Swiss Government will cover all expenditure and also such travelling which will be required in the area as well as insurance arrangements etc.

... A job description is enclosed herewith for Dakar; the job descriptions for the other two posts will be available early next week.



Erik L. Moller
Chief, Transport Branch
Resources Management Division

2 December, 1977