Executive Summary

A few general comments first:

1. In many respects, the similarity between some of the principal lessons learned from Somalia and Rwanda is striking. The cause of the conflict in both cases is the cumulative and inter-related effect of historical, ethnic, economic and political factors. And in both cases, the international community and the UN system was not geared-up to intervene effectively.

2. In both cases there are clear recommendations that the UN system should develop it's capacity for such complex tasks.

3. Both exercises call for evaluation to be built into future operations.

4. For WFP to contribute to what is very much an evolving approach to "collapsed states", we need to acknowledge that there is a close link between political failure, a consequent slide into chaos and a humanitarian crisis. We should be alert to political developments in those parts of the world in which we operate and not shy away from them. Today, the very mention of a political emergency evokes protests that we only respond to humanitarian emergencies. Whilst this is certainly true, there is need to monitor incipient conflict situations. Perhaps this should be done through the new breed of NGOs that have recently emerged that do just this. In any event, we need to be more prepared for the increasing number of incipient conflict situations before they become disasters.

5. DPKO has set up a Lessons Learned Unit in New York staffed by a team of 10 persons. The Unit is headed by a DI, Mr. Leonard Kapungu. I would suggest that the starting point for the WFP/DPKO discussions be with Elizabeth Lindenmayer, Principal Officer, DPKO, and Leonard Kapungu, Chief LLU, DPKO. It is with these two officials that I discussed the need for WFP/DPKO dialogue. Both were highly receptive.

Following are the main points that emerged from the four syndicate discussions:

Syndicate I: Security Council Mandates

- Although the world at first understandably focused on the humanitarian crisis, the cause of the Somalia conflict was political.

- The UN system should develop it's capacity for such complex tasks.

- Clear and practical mandates are only possible if the Security Council takes decisions on the basis of better information and assessment and on thorough exploration of options.

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- The UN Secretariat has a responsibility to inform Security Council members on what would be required in order to implement Security Council Resolutions. This requires professional judgements to be made in several fields including the political, military and humanitarian. We need to ensure that DHA properly represents our views at the regular DPA DPKO, DHA, DPI meetings. We should ask to be put on the mailing list for the minutes of these meetings.
Syndicate II: Political Aspects and Institution Building

- Significantly, there does not appear to have been any DPA representation at the seminar.

- Collapsed states are plagued by multiple crises, which collectively constitute a "vicious cycle" reinforcing an environment of chaos; international intervention must therefore pursue a strategy aimed at concurrent progress in several key interdependent areas.

- To effectively respond to these situations, adequate front-loaded funding is essential.

- An essential ingredient of a successful operation involves extensive coordination and cooperation with other international actors, including UN agencies and NGOs. This was a point emphasised by WFP.

Syndicate III: Humanitarian and Information Aspects

- It is hoped that the entire report will be found important!

- The text of recommendation (b) of Information Aspects; Public Information incorporates the revision proposed by WFP. Originally, the text read that the SRSG's head of information/spokesperson would be the only UN system spokesperson authorized to make statements.

Syndicate IV: Military Aspects, Logistics and Intelligence

- Like much of the seminar, this report is couched in brutally frank terms. We are left to conclude that the entire operation was doomed to failure from the start.

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- The vagueness of the mandate led to situations where it was left to individual contingents to interpret their role and task, which at times differed from what was intended.

- The command and control structure was not clearly defined.

- There should be a single line of authority between DPKO and the "mission" (whoever that may be) on all operational matters to safeguard against the possibility of issuing contradictory instructions by various Departments (or Agencies). All Departments (and Agencies) should route instructions to their officials through DPKO. Here I can see a situation developing, if left unchecked, where communications between WFP HQ and the Country Director would have to be routed through DPKO NY. See the recommendation 7 of the Syndicate III Report which requires that the mandates of the agencies to be respected and the reference in the Syndicate I section above to the weekly DPA, DPKO, DHA, DPI meetings.

- Humanitarian and developmental aid should be evenly spread in the area of responsibility of each military contingent to avoid discontent among the local population and to minimise the possibility of a contingent being singled out for criticism. Well, well, well!! Although back in Syndicate HI, I tried to blunt, but obviously in much too obtuse diplomatic language, the quest of the military to "win the hearts and minds" of the local
population with our food, viz Recommendation 7, obviously much more needs to be done to get the message across.

Finally, I am of the view that the reports of Syndicates I, II and IV, do not, in any way, change the decision of the ERC or the follow-up action required which for ease of reference is repeated below:

Decision: WFP should develop a corporate position on the involvement of the military in emergencies.

Action: OP (as focal point)

Decision: WFP should enter into dialogue with DPKO at a senior policy level on collaboration in emergency relief operations.

Action: OP (as focal point)