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SPECIAL ECONOMIC AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE

Assistance to the drought-stricken areas in Kenya

Report of the Secretary-General

Corrigendum

1. Annex, page 7

Replace the page by the text appearing on the reverse of this sheet.

2. Annex, page 25, paragraph 113

The paragraph should read

- The Government should assume responsibility for a closer monitoring of the health services offered in the remote areas by non-governmental bodies in order to obtain, for planning purposes, a clear and current picture of services against estimated needs.

22. The mission was impressed by the frank reports from the Government and donor agencies of failures, as well as successes, in arid-land development projects. The mission took note of the fact that, without the full participation of the drought-stricken people themselves, the projects aimed at their betterment had small likelihood of success. The mission therefore attaches high priority to the search, on site, for solutions to local problems, taking into account all human and environmental factors. For example, in irreversible desertification, a new and rewarding ecosystem might perhaps be established, by introducing camels in the place of cattle and fodder trees in the place of former pasture grasses.

23. This is not to say, however, that modern technology does not also have a place. One example is the need for studies of present land use and land-use potential of the arid and semi-arid areas, using the latest techniques of remote sensing, low-flight surveys, and "ground truth" to map actual and potential soils, land formations, vegetation, settlements, water sources, livestock, wildlife, infrastructure etc.

24. With regard to improving the marketing of livestock, particularly in times of drought, the mission took note of a proposal for credit to stock traders. The mission believes that the first step should be to encourage the drought-affected people to take some responsibility for their own marketing system, perhaps by establishing co-operatives among nomadic pastoralists, as has been done elsewhere in the drought-affected zones of Africa.

25. Aid to hard-pressed Government bodies, in the form of technical assistance and investment projects, will continue to be needed.

26. The mission noted several expressions of interest in specific measures of technical co-operation to combat drought among Governments of the region. Details are given in section VI below.

III. GENERAL BACKGROUND

A. Economic background and infrastructure

27. The total area of Kenya is 583,000 square kilometres. In addition to an equatorial location and high altitude in some parts, the country has some good agricultural land, though in strictly limited quantity. Of the total land area only about 7 per cent can be described as excellent agricultural land, with adequate and reliable rainfall and good, relatively flat soil. An additional 11 per cent is arable but is subject to periodic drought and crop failure. More than 80 per cent of the land is suited only to dry land farming and livestock grazing and even for those purposes its potential is very low. Up to 60 per cent of the total land area may be described as semi-desert.

28. The population was about 15.3 million in 1979, when the President referred (para. 7 above) to a rate of growth approaching 4 per cent per annum.