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REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES,
QUESTIONS RELATING TO REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS AND
HUMANITARIAN QUESTIONS: QUESTIONS RELATING TO REFUGEES
AND DISPLACED PERSONS

**Emergency humanitarian assistance to Liberian refugees
and displaced persons**

Report of the Secretary-General

I, INTRODUCTION

1. In its resolution **45/139**, the General Assembly appealed to organizations of the United Nations system, governmental and intergovernmental bodies, as well as non-governmental organizations, to provide the necessary material and financial assistance for the return and resettlement of victims of the Liberian civil war and further requested the United Nations High Commissioner **for** Refugees to continue with her efforts to mobilize the additional resources necessary for the rehabilitation of Liberian refugees and displaced persons and to find a durable solution to the problem of Liberian refugees. The Assembly also requested **the** Secretary-General in cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), to report on the implementation of the present resolution to the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session.

* A/46/150.

II. EFFORTS BY THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM, GOVERNMENTAL AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL BODIES AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS TO PROVIDE NECESSARY FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE RETURN AND RESETTLEMENT OF VICTIMS OF THE LIBERIAN CIVIL WAR

2. The year-long civil war in Liberia caused over 750,000 Liberians to seek asylum in five West African countries⁸ Côte d'Ivoire - 300,000; Guinea - 325,000; Ghana - 10,000; Nigeria - 1,000; and Sierra Leone - 125,000, as well as the intern-1 displacement of another 1.5 million Liberians. Efforts were deployed on the part of the United Nations, through the United Nations Emergency Relief Operations in Liberia (UNSCOL), which started to provide emergency relief assistance to 300,000 persons at Monrovia in December 1990. UNSCOL is mandated to oversee and coordinate all activities pertaining to relief in Liberia, including the provision of financial assistance and the logistical support of the management and technical guidance to over 30 non-governmental organizations involved in the operation.

3. The World Food Programme (WFP) plays its traditional role of supplying food rations for all beneficiaries. Under its regional Emergency Operations (EMOP 4452), 202,026 metric tons of food is planned for 1,350,000 persons in Liberia. Local and international non-governmental organizations handle food distribution; by the beginning of May, the seventh distribution was completed to 778,300 beneficiaries. The eighth distribution, in mid-May, catered to 900,000 displaced persons and returnees.

4. Food donated by WFP and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) was distributed in Bomi Hills to an estimated population of 130,000 persons and in Cape Mount county to an estimated 203,000. The distribution is being carried out by Médecins sans Frontières - France (MSF-F) and Lutheran World Service (LWS), respectively.

5. The malnutrition rate has substantially decreased in children 0-5 years in the Monrovia area. Comparative figures from December 1990 indicated that the overall malnutrition rate dropped from 35.4 to 5.1 in April 1991. Severe malnutrition is reported to be 1.7 per cent against 15.8 per cent for the same reference period.

6. The World Health Organization (WHO) operates in the medical field for UNSCOL and supervises the 31 medical institutions opened so far.

7. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Plan International and MSF (Belgium) have finalized plans for the support of up to 30 educational community centres, which will provide a literary and numeracy programme in addition to day-care facilities and counselling. UNICEF is also soliciting \$US 300,000 for the rehabilitation of the water and electricity systems. CRS operates as a donor agency by supplying supplementary food such as oil, fish powder, salt, corn soya blend and sugar to vulnerable homes. They also offer logistical support.

8. Although the conditions *in* Liberia are not yet propitious for the **promotion** of an organized mass voluntary repatriation, refugees who do so spontaneously are absorbed in the existing United Nations relief activities. United Nations agencies and some 30 non-governmental organizations **are continuing emergency** relief operations pending a comprehensive needs-assessment mission to all parts **of** Liberia, which will result in **a** unified appeal and a concerted plan **of** action for the relief and rehabilitation of Liberia.

III. MOBILIZATION OF **RESOURCES** BY THE **UNITED** NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES FOR THE REHABILITATION OF LIBERIAN REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS AND FINDING OF A DURABLE SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF LIBERIAN REFUGEES

9. Immediately after the first wave **of** Liberian **refugees** entered **Côte d'Ivoire** and Guinea, the High Commissioner launched an appeal on 21 February 1990 to cover the needs of 143,000 refugees in both countries. Following the influx into Sierra Leone in late May 1990, a second appeal was made on 28 June 1990 to cover the needs of 20,000 refugees in that country. Also, owing to new influxes and increased demands, the updated requirements for **Côte d'Ivoire** and Guinea were also included for a total amount **of \$11,326,600**. As numbers increased so rapidly a third appeal for **\$15,930,000** dated 3 September to cover the needs of 490,000 refugees in the three countries (280,000 in Guinea, 150,000 in **Côte d'Ivoire** and 60,000 in Sierra Leone) was launched. Contributions received towards **the** appeal were used to provide initial emergency relief assistance under a multisectoral project. By the end of 1990 the total number of refugees attained 750,000.

10. Although the response of the donor community was generous, it was none the less slow. The programme was eventually fully funded at the end of October 1990. As a result, some activities had to be extended into the first quarter of 1991. That undoubtedly affected effective and timely programme delivery. Despite the late funding, the assistance programme for Liberian refugees in all hosting countries was sustained at an acceptable standard. The morbidity, mortality and malnutrition rates were similar to that of the local population,

11. WFP, within the framework of six country-specific and two regional emergency operations, provided 90,470 metric tons of basic food items with **\$57,328,627** to Liberian refugees **and** displaced persons. As at 1 August 1990, it also agreed to meet a substantial part **of** the internal transport and related internal transport, storage and handling (**ITSH**) to the principal warehouses in the three countries. UNHCR, for its **part**, contributed 4,348 metric tons of complementary commodities at a cost of **\$4,563,400** to the refugee relief operations in the three countries. The League of the Red Cross Societies also provided assistance to the National Red Cross Societies in the form of food distribution in the **three** countries. It also met the cost of that operation.

12. **MSF (France) in Sierra Leone and MSF (Belgium) in Guinea provided curative and preventive health services. Refugee children were included within the ongoing national expanded programme of vaccination in all countries. Most of their programmes were funded directly outside the UNHCR appeals.**

13. Efforts were made to improve the water and sanitation infrastructure in all countries through funding of borewells, shallow wells and improvement of water sources. Over 100 borewells were sunk and fitted with hand pumps. An education component **of the water/sanitation programme sensitized** refugees to the need to protect water **sources**. Materials were provided for the construction of improved pit latrines.

14. As the year-long fighting threatened peace and security throughout the country during 1990, refugees opted to remain in asylum countries until they saw some indication of **the** situation returning to normal. In view of the dynamism of the population and to prevent dependency, UNHCR made efforts, even during **the** emergency phase, to provide means, although limited, to encourage self-reliance **among** the refugeea.

15. In October 1990, the UNHCR Executive Committee approved an **operational** budget **of \$23,247,000** for **refugees** under the 1991 general **programmes**. A revised **figure of \$27,100,000 was approved at the annual UNHCR target review** exercise in May 1991. The assistance base started in 1990 will be consolidated in 1991, with particular attention paid to the promotion **of** self-reliance and local integration through agricultural and income-generating **activities, education** and health. All initiatives towards self-sufficiency will be supported. In **terms** of education, the refugees have organized schools **and are teaching on a** voluntary basis. UNHCR has provided basic school materials.
