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SPECIAL ECONOMIC AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE: SPECIAL PROGRAMMES OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE

Assistance to Democratic Yemen*

Report of the Secretary-General

INTRODUCTION

1. The General Assembly at its forty-fourth session, adopted resolution 44/179 on 19 December 1989, in which it expressed deep concern at the extensive and unprecedented damage and devastation in Democratic Yemen caused by torrential rains and floods twice in the present decade, in March 1982 and April 1989 and extreme concern about the destruction of the country's infrastructure, and further expressed concern that tens of thousands of hectares of cultivated land were inundated and that hundreds of villages had completely disappeared, leaving tens of thousands of persons without shelter or food.

2. The General Assembly, considering that Democratic Yemen, being one of the least developed countries, was unable to sustain rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes in spite of the efforts made by its Government, called upon all States to contribute generously and to respond urgently and effectively to the rehabilitation and reconstruction needs of the country, and requested the Secretary-General to co-ordinate, in close co-operation with the Government of Democratic Yemen, the efforts of the United Nations system to help Democratic Yemen to mobilize resources for the implementation of its rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes and to keep the international community informed of its needs.

* On 22 May 1990 Democratic Yemen and Yemen merged to form a single State. Since that date they have been represented as one Member with the name "Yemen".

3. The present report updates and complements information contained in the report of the Secretary-General (A/45/358 and Add.1) related to activities carried out by UNICEF, ESCWA and UNDR0 in furtherance to General Assembly resolution 44/179. It contains further information on resources provided and activities carried out to date, by other organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, by non-Governmental organizations and Member States, in response to the rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes of the Government of Yemen.

1. Background

4. In March 1982, torrential rains and floods caused unprecedented damage and devastation to Democratic Yemen's infrastructure, to thousands of hectares of cultivated land and hundreds of villages, leaving a large number of persons without shelter or food.

5. The damage, as reported in document A/42/442, was estimated by the Government at \$US 950 million, 482 dead, 12,000 scattered families (about 50,000 persons), 25,000 houses destroyed by the floods and 50,000 animals killed.

6. In March/April 1989, a similar disaster struck the country causing heavy destruction and leaving 100,000 killed or homeless. A number of rehabilitation projects implemented following the 1982 flood were also destroyed.

7. These two disasters compelled the Government to re-direct a substantial part of its limited financial resources from development objectives to reconstruction work, impairing the implementation of the objectives of the second five-year plan and incurring delays in the implementation of the third five-year plan (1986-1990).

2. Political changes

8. On 22 May 1990, the Republic of Yemen was established through the unification of the Yemen Arab Republic and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen.

9. The rehabilitation and reconstruction requirements deriving from the 1982 and 1989 floods which affected the southern region represented a major additional cost to the Republic of Yemen particularly in the economic field as it pursues a complex unification process. These developments have also brought to the fore Yemen's needs to build up a national capacity to manage both development and disasters.

3. Economy

10. Despite the ongoing rigid procedures constraining expenditure of hard currency, imports increased in 1987 by 24 per cent compared to 1986, while the value of the exported non-oil products have decreased by 13 per cent within the same period. Furthermore, the financial transfer of expatriate Yemenis remained the same in 1987 as 1986, i.e. \$US 282 million. Hard currency earnings decreased in recent years for three consecutive years to \$104 million, representing less than

two thirds the external debt interest payments due in 1988. Although these constitute the latest official figures available, it is obvious that the situation has worsened in recent months.

11. The preliminary note dated 13 September 1990 from the Government of Yemen, referred to in the Secretary-General's report on the economic impact on Yemen of the Gulf crisis, indicates an initial loss of \$1,684 million, not taking into account economic and social impact of some 35,000 Yemeni workers returning from Kuwait. The Government of Yemen has further informed that this has been compounded in September and the first half of October 1990 by 400,000 Yemeni workers returning from Saudi Arabia.

4. Relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes

12. Rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes, carried out in the framework of multilateral and bilateral assistance, in the aftermath of the 1982 flood relief, have been completed, as indicated in previous relevant reports.

13. In view of the heavy destruction incurred by the 1989 flood, further assistance is required. The Republic of Yemen, created through the unification of two least developed countries, is unable to sustain rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes in spite of the efforts made by the Government. This is clearly reflected in General Assembly resolution 44/179.

14. Pursuant to resolution 44/179, information on UNICEF, ESCWA and UNDRO channelled emergency relief assistance from multilateral and bilateral sources is provided in addendum 1 to the report of the Secretary-General (A/45/358/Add.1).

15. Information provided in relevant parts of the report of the Secretary-General (A/45/358), and additional information updating this report referred to above, desegregated, show the following situation in relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction assistance provided to Yemen to date:

(a) Rehabilitation and reconstruction assistance

1. UNDP: PDY/89/020 Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Flood Damage -
\$US 1,016,500

16. Approved in February 1989 through a Special Programme Resources (SPR) allocation. This project is to assist the Government of the Republic of Yemen in managing and implementing a flood reconstruction programme aimed at restoring vital physical infrastructure following the 1989 floods. It will strengthen the national capacity to manage disaster recovery programmes by providing technical assistance and training for the Ministry of Planning and Development and related line ministries through the establishment of an Emergency Reconstruction Unit.

2. IDA/World Bank: Emergency Flood Reconstruction Project - SDR 7.9 million

17. A six-months flood mitigation and preparedness study funded under an IDA credit will commence early in 1991. Based on the findings of the study, in-service training programmes are planned for staff of the Emergency Reconstruction Unit referred to in the preceding paragraph, in order to build national capacity for reconstruction programme management which may be drawn upon in future flood emergencies.

3. Islamic Development Bank

18. The Bank contributes also to this multi-sectoral reconstruction effort underway in four Governorates at the level of \$US 2 million.

(b) International contributions to the relief efforts and rehabilitation of flood victims

	<u>\$US</u>
United Nations system (UNDP/UNICEF/UNDRO/WFP/WHO)	1 140 000
Bilateral sources (Australia, Bahrain, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Norway, Oman, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, USSR)	1 900 106
Other intergovernmental and non-governmental sources	<u>647 158</u>
Total	<u>3 687 264</u>

(c) Aid co-ordination

19. At the request of the Government, preparations for a Round Table Conference for the Republic of Yemen to take place in 1991 have recently been launched. Such a process will encompass the country's requirements for further assistance in strengthening its capacity to manage disaster recovery programmes.

20. Although unification of the former People's Democratic Republic of Yemen and the Yemen Arab Republic is expected to result progressively in stronger political and economic structures, the damage to the southern region of the country resulting from the heavy rains and flooding in March 1989 must be further addressed. There also remains a concomitant need to build up national capacity to manage disaster recovery programmes in the country as a whole.

21. Further generosity and expeditious assistance of the international community to the Government of Yemen could contribute to alleviating the burden of reported natural disasters.