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REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL  
Assistance to displaced persons in Ethiopia  
Report of the Secretary-General

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## I. INTRODUCTION

1. In its resolution 40/133 of 13 December 1985, the General Assembly requested the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to intensify his efforts in mobilizing humanitarian assistance for the relief, rehabilitation and resettlement of voluntary returnees, refugees and displaced persons in Ethiopia. The Assembly requested the Secretary-General, in co-operation with the High Commissioner, to report to the Assembly at its forty-first session on the implementation of the resolution.

## II. ASSISTANCE TO SUDANESE REFUGEES AT ITANG

2. A total of 85,319 refugees of Sudanese origin were registered in the Itang refugee camp, near Gambella, in Illubabor Province, by the end of 1985. During the year, 26,245 new arrivals were registered jointly by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC), and during the first four months of 1986 an additional 14,447 new arrivals were registered. At the end of April 1986, the number of refugees registered at Itang had increased to 100,165. The Government of Ethiopia estimates that the total refugee population in the Gambella region is now 180,000.

3. As in the past, UNHCR is providing basic relief assistance to Sudanese refugees who are registered in the Itang refugee camp, pending the implementation of durable solutions, including rural settlement schemes in the area. Measures taken to improve project implementation, especially in the fields of logistics, health and water, include the procurement of 10 truck-trailers, the construction of a 2,000-ton warehouse, repair and renovation of the Itang health centre, drilling activities and the installation of a water distribution system in the camp, construction of classrooms and the initiation of income-generating activities at the camp level. In 1985, the activities of the rural settlement project suffered major setbacks due to flooding, poor soil fertility, logistical problems and a general lack of motivation among the potential refugee settlers. This has meant that the 1985 and initial 1986 projects remained pilot schemes pending a thorough review by UNHCR and the implementing partner, the Lutheran World Federation, of the viability of the project as a whole. In 1985, the selection of suitable settlers was concluded and preparations were made for the cultivation of 600 hectares of crops and 200 hectares of grazing land.

4. In 1986 emphasis is being placed on the rural settlement project at Itang. Given the continuing influx of arrivals, however, an increased number of refugees will have to be provided with emergency relief, including care and maintenance.

5. Various income-generating projects will also promote self-sufficiency for the refugees at the camp level. The project will be implemented by the RRC-UNHCR Co-ordination Office. The health services will be provided through the Ethiopian Red Cross Society.

6. For 1986, an appropriation of \$10.2 million will cover both the care and maintenance needs and the Itang rural settlement project.

### III. RELIEF ASSISTANCE TO RETURNEES IN HARARGHE PROVINCE

7. It is estimated that some 400,000 returnees are at present in the Hararghe region of Ethiopia. Owing to a lack of rain in 1985, the national Relief and Rehabilitation Commission projects that, in addition to the returnees, a total of 1.2 million persons will require relief assistance in that region in 1986. The UNHCR relief programme in 1986 aims at assisting 155,000 of the most needy among the returnees.

8. The programme concentrates on the southern areas of the Hararghe region where large numbers of returnees have been registered - Degehabur, Gode, Gursum, Jijiga, Kebri-dehar, Kelafo and Warder. In 1985, emergency food rations were distributed and limited assistance given in health care (including supplementary feeding) and in improving water supply for both human and animal consumption.

9. The 1986 programme continues to be implemented by the World University Service of Canada (WUSC) in co-ordination with the Ethiopian Relief and Rehabilitation Commission. The programme also benefits from the co-operation of voluntary agencies such as CARE, Catholic Relief Services and Lutheran World Federation, which are active in the feeding and health programmes in the region. The programme is closely co-ordinated with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Relief Assistance in Ethiopia.

10. Under this special programme of emergency relief assistance, gains previously made are being consolidated in 1986. The supply of drinking water is being increased and nutritional surveys are being undertaken more frequently. The most needy cases are to be identified, which will lead to more effective distribution of food during 1986. During the first six months of the year, 1,150 tons of food was provided each month to an average of 115,000 returnees. It is expected that for the last six months of 1986 this will be increased to 1,500 tons monthly to 150,000 persons.

11. Under this programme, UNHCR launched a special appeal in February 1986 valued at \$13.37 million, including some \$7 million for food. The food needs for 1986 have already been covered and by mid-year some \$5.5 million had been received against the cash requirements. It is expected that the relief programme will continue until the end of the year.

### IV. REHABILITATION ASSISTANCE TO RETURNEES IN HARARGHE PROVINCE

12. Following the High Commissioner's visit to Ethiopia in June 1986, a workshop on recovery and rehabilitation in Hararghe will be organized in September in Addis Ababa. At that time it is expected that the Government will outline its priorities for the region. Based on the results and recommendations of this workshop, the nature of the recovery/rehabilitation programme, including the future input of UNHCR, will be determined.

#### V. OTHER PROGRAMMES BENEFITING REFUGEES

13. During the first four months of 1986, some 366 urban refugees received assistance, a decrease from 1985 due to a thorough review of the urban caseload and the rationalization of assistance criteria. The responsibility for the implementation of assistance to the urban caseload was transferred to the Development and Inter-Church Aid Department of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. In 1985, 12 persons were resettled, while a total of 106 persons are still awaiting resettlement. Forty-six refugees repatriated voluntarily, mostly to the Sudan.

14. Assistance for lower secondary education is provided to meet tuition costs, expenditure for books and equipment, local transportation, clothing and medical care. The increase in requirements for 1986 reflects the need to assist some 60 refugee students during the 1986/87 academic year and 80 in the following academic year.

15. Guidance to refugees is provided in fields such as education, employment, local integration and resettlement. For destitute refugees living or in transit in Addis Ababa - primarily newly arrived Sudanese - their immediate needs are assessed and met, where appropriate, with monthly allowances, lodging, medical care and internal transportation costs.

#### VI. PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

16. In 1984, UNHCR established a joint Co-ordination Office with the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission, which deals exclusively with matters related to the provision of assistance to refugees and returnees in Ethiopia. The Co-ordination Office is also responsible for the implementation of the care and maintenance project for Sudanese refugees at Itang, in addition to co-ordinating other assistance measures implemented by non-governmental organizations. UNHCR, through its field offices in Dire Dawa and Gambella, is closely monitoring the programmes of assistance to returnees and refugees in the country.

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