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REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Assistance to refugees in Somalia

Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

CONTENTS

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
I. INTRODUCTION	1 - 2	2
II. GENERAL SITUATION AND RECENT TRENDS	3 - 8	2
III. IMPLEMENTATION OF ASSISTANCE	9 - 15	3
IV. ASSISTANCE REQUIREMENTS	16 - 26	4

* A/41/150.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In its resolution 40/132 of 13 December 1985 on assistance to refugees in Somalia, the General Assembly appealed to Member States, international organizations and voluntary agencies to render maximum and timely material, financial and technical assistance to the Government of Somalia in its efforts to provide all necessary assistance to the refugees and appealed to the donor community to give urgent and favourable consideration to the development-related refugee projects submitted by the Government of Somalia to the Second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa and to fulfil the pledges undertaken at or after that Conference. It also requested the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, in consultation with the Secretary-General, to apprise the Economic and Social Council, at its second regular session of 1986, of the refugee situation in Somalia and to submit to the General Assembly at its forty-first session a report on the progress achieved in the implementation of the resolution.

2. In compliance with the resolution, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has consulted the Government of Somalia and representatives of a number of the donor countries, United Nations organizations and voluntary agencies involved. On the basis of the consultations, UNHCR has identified assistance requirements for 1986 and 1987.

II. GENERAL SITUATION AND RECENT TRENDS

3. During the consultations, it was observed that Somalia faces critical economic and social problems arising from a weak economic infrastructure, limited natural resources and a difficult international economic environment. The sharp decline in agriculture and animal husbandry - the economic mainstays of the country - coupled with deteriorating terms of trade have severely curtailed export earnings and imposed severe constraints on Somalia's development programmes. While making efforts to cope with this critical situation, Somalia has also had to contend with the burden of large numbers of refugees, who have had a major socio-economic impact. Because of its inadequate resources, lack of infrastructure and facilities and pressure on the land, Somalia has not been in a position to absorb the refugees as fully productive members of the community.

4. The background to the influx of refugees into Somalia, their characteristics and the arrangements made to assist them are detailed in the previous reports of the Secretary-General and of the High Commissioner (A/36/136, A/38/400 and Corr.1, A/39/402 and Add.1 and 2, A/39/433, A/40/586, E/1980/44, E/1982/40).

5. At the beginning of 1982, the Government of Somalia and the United Nations agreed on a planning figure of 700,000 Ethiopian refugees in Somalia. No formal census of the refugee population has yet taken place. In 1985, an agreement was signed by UNHCR, the Government of Somalia and the International African Institute in London for a preliminary study aimed at providing more accurate refugee population figures by the middle of 1987. An aerial survey of existing camps is expected to take place in mid-1986.

6. During the last quarter of 1984, new refugees started to arrive from the Oodan in Ethiopia and were accommodated in transit/holding centres in the North-West and Gedo regions of Somalia. By the end of 1985 and early 1986 the total number of new arrivals was 122,000 according to Government estimates. As a result of continued arrivals during the first five months of 1986, the total has increased to over 160,000 persons. In the south, a transit centre at Maqdor and one holding centre at Chabole were established for the new arrivals, while three holding centres, at Bihin, Biyaley and Darbi Hore, and one reception/transit centre at Tug Wajale, were established in the north.

7. Since 1983, the Government of Somalia has on several occasions reaffirmed its position that voluntary repatriation remains the most appropriate long-term solution for refugees in the country and has stated its readiness to facilitate the departure of refugees wishing to repatriate. It has also stated that, in the mean time, a programme of local settlement could be formulated for refugees who could not attain self-sufficiency under the conditions prevailing in the centres where they now reside. Consequently, emphasis has gradually been shifted from care and maintenance to income-generating and self-help activities, especially in the agricultural sector.

8. The period 1985-1986 had been foreseen as a period of development of post-emergency activities and self-reliance programmes, with improved planning and monitoring of operations. UNHCR was planning the implementation of a major land settlement programme, while ongoing agricultural and income-generating activities were under review. These plans, however, were deferred mainly as a result of financial difficulties experienced by UNHCR in late 1985. Although basic care and maintenance were maintained, the 1985 programme suffered delays in implementation and most planned activities leading to self-reliance were either suspended or postponed.

III. IMPLEMENTATION OF ASSISTANCE

9. Details of UNHCR assistance activities in Somalia in 1985 can be found in the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (A/41/12).

10. Food aid is being channelled through the World Food Programme (WFP), which is responsible for the co-ordination of international food assistance and assumes responsibility for seeking food aid. As in previous years, UNHCR programmes have benefited from the active support of several United Nations agencies. The United Nations Children's Fund, the World Health Organization and the International Labour Organisation contributed towards various activities within their respective spheres of competence. United Nations Volunteers are involved in agriculture and self-reliance activities.

11. At present, some 20 voluntary agencies are participating in the programmes; most of them operating in the camps. The Emergency Logistics Unit (ELU) managed by the CARE organization has continued to be responsible for the delivery of food and other relief commodities from the ports of entry to the camps and for the fuelling

and maintenance of vehicles assigned to various refugee programmes. CARE has assigned a full-time training officer to prepare nationals for the future take-over of key positions still occupied by expatriates.

12. The search for durable solutions remains one important priority. A multisectoral mission by the UNHCR Technical Support Service was undertaken in June 1986 to evaluate UNHCR activities in agriculture, income-generation, community development and family-life programmes, self-help construction, health and water supply. Concrete recommendations with regard to the local settlement of at least a portion of the refugees in Somalia are now under consideration.

13. In the last quarter of 1985, 642 persons repatriated voluntarily from Somalia to Ethiopia. By the end of June 1986, approximately 14,000 persons had applied for voluntary repatriation to Ethiopia.

14. In spite of the difficulties mentioned in paragraph 3 above, a total of some 3,000 hectares of rain-fed and irrigated land were under cultivation by an estimated 15,000 families at the end of 1985. The ongoing agricultural activities in refugee centres aim at assisting individuals and families to supplement their food rations and to improve their diet. In 1986, additional land will be allocated to some refugees on the basis of one hectare per family. Assistance to the farmers will consist mainly of equipment, basic tools, water pumps and fuel with a view to creating small, self-sufficient settlements.

15. In connection with the proposed Furjano settlement, a water survey was completed, which confirmed that sufficient potable water could be made available in the area. Discussions are under way, particularly with the World Bank, on the feasibility of including refugees in large-scale development projects in the region and on the possible integration of the Furjano project in such plans.

IV. ASSISTANCE REQUIREMENTS

16. As a result of continuing funding difficulties, only basic care and maintenance projects were implemented in the first months of 1986. It was later decided to resume normal activities on a reduced scale, which would entail reductions in staff and programmes as well as the cancellation of some long-term agricultural projects. This decision is reflected in the reduced appropriations for 1986.

17. Assistance requirements in 1986 and the estimated needs for 1987 are summarized below:

<u>Type of assistance</u>	<u>1986</u>	<u>1987</u>
	(United States dollars)	
Supplementary food <u>a/</u>	1 000 000	1 000 000
Water	1 238 030	1 238 030
Health	1 347 800	1 347 800
Shelter and domestic items	715 000	715 000
Transport and logistics	7 744 200	7 744 200
Communal construction	95 860	95 860
Education and community development	985 890	985 890
Lower secondary education	99 000	99 000
Support to refugee services	1 756 000	1 756 000
Self-help activities/local integration	472 220	4 728 220
Census	500 000	-
Counselling	50 000	65 000
Supplementary aid	42 000	44 000
Handicapped	79 000	79 000
	<u>16 125 000</u>	<u>19 898 000</u>

a/ Approximately 130,000 tons of basic food supplies are provided through the World Food Programme or other donors.

18. To meet the needs of some 122,000 refugees who arrived in 1985 and the early part of 1986, an appeal was issued under the UNHCR Special Programmes of Emergency Relief Assistance in Africa. This appeal, issued in February 1986, called for total assistance requirements of \$15,389,375 as follows:

New arrivals for the period 1 January to 31 December 1986

<u>Type of assistance</u>	(United States dollars)
Food (approximately 27,500 tons)	10 000 113
Shelter	490 000
Health	783 630
Water	386 108
Sanitation	74 000
Transport and logistics	892 003
Domestic needs	527 629
Camp operating costs	386 954
Establishment of new camps, expansion of existing activities	582 000
Small-scale income-generating and agricultural activities	300 000
Programme support	466 938
	<u>15 389 375</u>

/...

19. A description of the requirements by sector is given below. These requirements do not include submissions made to the Second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa under paragraph 5 (c) of General Assembly resolution 37/197, details of which are found in paragraphs 627 to 766 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/CONF.125/2). Such submissions comprised 14 infrastructure projects totalling \$79.9 million.

Food

20. In general, the food situation has improved since 1984. The minimum food requirement for 1986 recommended by the joint WFP/UNHCR mission to Somalia was estimated at some 130,000 metric tons. (See tables 1 and 2 below.) The contribution of UNHCR to this sector has mainly consisted of supplementary food items. A joint WFP/UNHCR food assessment mission will visit Somalia in July 1986 to review ongoing food requirements under the General and Emergency Programmes.

21. As in previous years, basic food supplies continued to be provided from bilateral sources and by multilateral food donations through WFP. UNHCR provides supplementary food to combat protein deficiency among young children and pregnant or lactating women. Every refugee receives food rations through the system of ration shops recently established by ELU/CARE, whereby food is distributed to individual families only on presentation of a ration card.

Water

22. The Refugee Water Supply Division, with the assistance of voluntary agencies, implements the programme of regular supply of potable water in the camps. The aim of providing each refugee with 10 to 15 litres of purified water per day was achieved in a number of locations; in other parts of Somalia, particularly in some of the camps in the North-West region, the situation continues to be critical. Water had to be delivered by truck in many places in the south due to the drying-out of rivers and in the north because of lack of good quality ground water. An overall expansion of storage and distribution systems in centres is currently being carried out. Additional concrete storage tanks are being constructed to replace older tanks and to create more distribution points. Water trucking continued to be undertaken on a regular basis to centres in the North-West that do not have their own source.

Health

23. The Refugee Health Unit (RHU) of the Ministry of Health is responsible for health care in refugee centres. It is investigating possible ways of adding a vitamin C fortified component to the ration as scurvy continues to be a significant problem. Outbreaks of cholera in early 1986 were satisfactorily controlled. Relapsing fever and hepatitis among new arrivals have caused concern.

Shelter and domestic items

24. The objective of this assistance is to provide refugees with basic domestic items such as soap, blankets, kitchen utensils, lamps, buckets and tarpaulins.

Most of these items are distributed in the refugee camps as needed, while others are used as incentives to participation in any of the self-reliance activities undertaken in the camps.

Transport and logistics

25. Funds have been budgeted by UNHCR in the current year to continue all services provided through the Emergency Logistics Unit. These include the leasing and operation of a light aircraft used for medical evacuation and the speedy transport of personnel, medicines and urgently required relief items.

Other activities

26. Other activities concern the ongoing programme of primary education, family-life training for women (literacy, nutrition, hygiene and income-generating skills), repair of classrooms and community centres and support to the National Refugee Commission. As a result of a combination of financial, organizational and monitoring problems, it was not possible to implement a lower secondary education project in 1986.

Table 1. Somalia: Regular food programme, 1986
(metric tons)

Commodity	Rations requirement based on government figures	Stocks in hand or pledges <u>a/</u>	Balance (deficit)
Cereals	53 061	58 507	5 446
Wheat flour	26 531	25 884	(647)
Maize meal/corn soya milk	26 531	20 829	(5 702)
Dried skim milk	10 612	8 745	(1 867)
Oil	7 959	7 936	(23)
Dates	5 306	5 339	33
Total	130 000	127 240	(2 760)

a/ Source: WFP/UNHCR.

Table 2. Somalia: Emergency appeal
(metric tons)

Commodity	Ration requirement	Stocks in hand or pledges <u>a/</u>	Balance
Cereals (maize)	8 813	13 013	4 200
Yellow maize flour	4 406	6 206	1 800
Wheat flour	4 406	4 406	-
Dried skim milk	1 763	2 750	987
Corn soya milk	1 322	1 322	-
Oil	1 322	1 970	648
Sugar	176	176	-
Dates	881	881	-
Total	<u>23 089</u>	<u>30 724</u>	<u>7 635</u>

a/ Source: WFP.
