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REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Humanitarian assistance to refugees in Djibouti

Report of the Secretary-General

1. In its resolution 36/156 of 16 December 1981, the General Assembly requested the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to continue to ensure that adequate assistance programmes are organized for the refugees and to maintain close contact with Member States and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations concerned to mobilize the necessary assistance to the Government of Djibouti to cope effectively with the refugee situation aggravated by the debilitating effects of the drought.
2. The Secretary-General was further requested, in co-operation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, to review the present situation of refugees in Djibouti and to report to the Economic and Social Council at its first regular session of 1982 and to the General Assembly at its thirty-seventh session on the progress achieved with regard to the refugee situation in Djibouti.
3. As reported to the Economic and Social Council in April 1982, the number of refugees in Djibouti during 1981 remained stable at around 31,000 persons. The refugees live mostly in the camps of Ali Sabieh and Dikhil. Of the approximately 1,200 urban refugees in the capital, only about 500 and their dependants remain in Djibouti town, thanks to successful resettlement efforts and voluntary transfers to camps. The number of asylum-seekers who received refugee status during the early part of 1982 was 1,304.
4. Assistance programmes for the refugees continued throughout 1981 and 1982. The Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has provided tea, salt, sardines and supplementary food; other foods were donated by the World Food

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Programme and Catholic Relief Services. Soap, clothing material, blankets and tents were also provided by UNHCR.

5. A project has been established for medical assistance, including medicines and staff, fresh food and improvements in sanitation. Medical teams from a non-governmental agency are active in the camps.
6. A project for the establishment of handicrafts co-operatives has been initiated under the supervision of non-governmental technicians. This programme will occupy some 1,500 refugees.
7. The construction of refugee housing continues with the erection in 1981 of a further 600 traditional toucoules built of stone. Funds have been allocated for other self-help construction such as storage buildings and housing for technical supervisory staff. Projects for water supply and sanitation are in the planning stage.
8. Vocational/technical training at the transit centre in Ali Sabieh will commence in September 1982 with a non-governmental organization assuming responsibility for teaching initially some 100 urban refugees. Numbers will be gradually increased up to a total capacity of 500. UNHCR covers support to them and the running costs of the centre.
9. Another organization is fielding a team which will establish primary education in the refugee camps by September. Traditional education continues to be provided in Arabic.
10. UNHCR grants scholarship assistance to students accepted in local institutions. Some 40 students have been accepted in schools in Egypt for the forthcoming scholastic year and UNHCR will cover their fares.
11. The majority of UNHCR projects in Djibouti have been implemented by the Office national d'assistance aux réfugiés et sinistrés (ONARS). To enable ONARS to perform this task, UNHCR is assisting the agency with salary incentives for personnel assigned to the refugee programme and with administrative support which includes a contribution towards the provision of electricity and water on their premises. The running costs of a legal service for determining refugee status are also covered.
12. Some 1,000 refugees, mainly in Djibouti town, benefited from limited supplementary assistance in 1981. An amount of \$40,684 was allocated for this purpose. In order to meet the basic needs of an increased number of refugees in 1982, the approved appropriation of \$40,000 had to be increased to \$80,000 from the Programme Reserve.
13. In spite of the very limited agricultural possibilities in Djibouti, efforts are being made by voluntary agencies to engage refugees in small-scale agricultural projects together with Djibouti nationals.
14. In 1981, \$3,962,451 were allocated by UNHCR under its General Programmes for multi-purpose assistance against an appropriation of \$5 million. Some \$3,350,000 are earmarked for similar activities during 1982.