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REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Assistance to refugees in Somalia

Report of the Secretary-General

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* A/37/150.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Some 700,000 refugees are at present being assisted in Somalia through aid provided by the international community. Detailed background information about the influx, ethnic origin and life-style of these refugees as well as the machinery set up to assist them are given in previous reports of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly and to the Economic and Social Council (A/36/136, E/1980/44 and E/1982/40).

2. The majority of refugees are of Somali ethnic background followed closely by Oromos. While nomads are predominant, large numbers of refugees have a farming background and possess other gainful skills. A recent socio-economic survey revealed a demographic breakdown of 80 per cent women and children and 20 per cent adult men as opposed to the earlier estimates of only 10 per cent in the latter group. Refugees live in 35 camps in the four regions of Hiran, Gedo, the North-West, and Lower Shebelle.

3. International assistance is channelled through and co-ordinated mainly by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The World Food Programme (WFP) co-ordinates food assistance and delivers it to Somali ports. Other agencies within the United Nations system and over 30 non-governmental organizations have also been involved in different sectors of assistance. The National Refugee Commission is the Government body responsible for refugee affairs.

II. POLICY TRENDS

4. Towards the latter part of 1981, it had become clear that, despite existing shortcomings, the state of emergency was largely over and the refugee situation had stabilized. This assessment, which was shared by the refugee relief community in Somalia, led to the reorientation of the assistance programme with a new emphasis placed on self-reliance. Discussions held between the Government and the United Nations Inter-Agency Mission to Somalia (28 January to 3 February 1982) resulted in a new positive approach for the promotion of a durable solution. While all sides agreed that the most appropriate solution for the refugees was repatriation, the Government pledged to help in the efforts to lead the refugees towards a life of self-sustenance while they remained in Somalia. It was recognized that the new phase of the programme should more closely be associated with national development schemes and for that reason a more active involvement of various functional ministries in the implementation of refugee projects was recommended.

III. MULTI-PURPOSE ASSISTANCE

A. Food

5. Food supplies to all camps continued to flow steadily and the general nutritional situation of refugees remained satisfactory in comparative terms. Certain dietary imbalances resulted in vitamin C deficiency among a number of refugees in the Gedo region, but corrective measures were immediately undertaken.

Intensive feeding centres continued to cater to the needs of vulnerable groups (small children, elderly, pregnant and nursing mothers and tuberculosis patients). UNHCR supplemented the basic food ration by its provision of meat, sugar, tea and salt although sugar was distributed on a reduced scale and used mainly as an incentive for a food-for-work programme (see paragraph 12 below). As at August 1982, WFP reported the following position on basic food which is deemed adequate to meet needs until the end of 1982.

Stock position and firm pledges as at 1 August 1982

	<u>metric tons</u>
Cereals	75,531
Wheat flour	26,627
Milk powder	13,512
Edible oil	9,859
Beans	10,177

B. Water

6. A joint UNICEF/UNHCR well drilling project aimed at providing 20 litres of potable water per refugee per day ended in May with only partial success. A total of 39 production wells were constructed by May 1982 in Hiran and Gedo, of which 12 were fitted with pumps. Additional pumps procured under project funds are scheduled to be installed. Under current UNHCR projects the emergency water supply installations, in existence since the early stages of the programme, are being upgraded and maintained on a regular basis. In line with the recommendations of the United Nations Inter-Agency mission a Refugee Water Supply Division was created within the Water Development Agency of the Ministry of Water and Mineral Resources to take charge of all refugee water installations. The Division is receiving technical assistance and equipment under current UNHCR projects.

C. Health

7. Refugee health services are organized by the Refugee Health Unit which was created in June 1980 within the Ministry of Health. With the emphasis placed on primary and preventative health care, the Unit has trained some 2,000 community health workers and 1,000 traditional birth attendants. Preventive medicine has been stressed through mass immunization programmes which are being maintained through establishment of a cold chain system in all refugee regions. Parallel with this a referral system has been established, and is being gradually strengthened, through community health workers being the first point of contact with patients, while the more serious cases are referred to district hospitals. Malaria control programmes exist in all camps through use of cloroquine prophylactics for vulnerable groups and the spraying of refugee huts. For tuberculosis control a case detection, treatment and follow up system has been instituted in most camps. Mother and child health services feature ante-natal and post-natal care comprising a wide range of activities. A gradual programme of

self-built, private latrines, accompanied by appropriate health education is being developed. According to a recent assessment, the general health situation is considered satisfactory with the over all mortality rate (crude and infant) being well below the national average.

D. Shelter and domestic needs

8. A total of \$US 2,500,000 has been earmarked in 1982 for this sector of assistance and the following items have either been delivered or are in the pipeline:

<u>Item</u>	<u>Quantity</u>
1. Blankets	70,000 units
2. Mats	50,000 "
3. Clothing	125,000 "
4. Cloth	225,000 yards
5. Shoes	60,000 pairs
6. Kitchen utensils	10,000 sets
7. Soap	244,680 bars
8. Tarpaulins	40,000 units

E. Transport and logistics

9. To ensure the satisfactory delivery of food and other relief commodities to all camps, a vast network of logistical facilities comprising 236 trucks/trailers, water and fuel tankers, light personnel transport vehicles, five mechanical workshops, an independent fuel supply and distribution system, a team of food monitors for all camps and six regional warehouses have been established. The Emergency Logistics Unit in charge of this sector is linked to the National Refugee Commission and is at present, managed, under UNHCR funding, by CARE, a non-governmental organization. Since the beginning of 1982, concrete measures have been taken to improve some of the more intractable segments of the feeder roads in the Lower Shebelle, Gedo and Hiran regions. As a result of these measures, problems associated with the commodity delivery to camps have been largely overcome. While refugees regularly receive their assigned rations in all camps, the distribution arrangements at camp level require further improvement.

F. Education and community development

10. The main thrust of the programme in this sector has been the training of primary school teachers with a view to extending basic education to an increasing number of school age refugee children. Satisfactory progress has been registered following the establishment of the Institute for In-Service Teachers' Training in 1981 and an initial intake of 500 teacher trainees. An additional 900 trainees are being recruited from among refugee primary school graduates to start training in November 1982. The planned construction of 600 classrooms, however, has undergone delays with only 250 classrooms expected to be completed by the end of 1982.

Other features of the programme include the granting of scholarships to some 1,344 lower secondary refugee students in 1981, vocational training for 150 students as well as provision of classroom material and supplies. UNHCR has earmarked \$US 3 million for the 1982 programme which, in addition to the elements referred to above, would feature a functional literacy training programme for some 6,000 refugees.

G. Agriculture

11. Close to 3,000 hectares of land, placed at the disposal of the refugees by the Government, are now being cultivated by over 6,000 refugee families in six districts of Qoriolei, Garba Hare, Luuq, Jalalaqsi, Belet Weyne and Tug Wajale (near Hargeisa). However, to develop a food production capability for refugees, far more acreage of arable land, better access to water and more technical personnel are needed. An agricultural workshop, held at Mogadishu in March 1982, has identified on a district by district basis the nature of problems encountered for expanded crop farming by refugees and has made recommendations to meet them. In spite of the existing difficulties, UNHCR is intent on providing significant financial support to this sector. Other governmental and non-governmental aid or relief agencies have similar plans and machinery is being created to co-ordinate action in this field. At present, development of an additional 1,000 hectares of farming land close to Jalalaqsi camp is being considered for financing by UNHCR. Together with crop growing, forestry is being emphasized. The depletion of forests around refugee camps coupled with the problem of land erosion make reafforestation an urgent necessity. UNHCR is at present implementing two reafforestation projects in Qoriolei and Belet Weyne (Lebow and Qooqane camps) for a total of 240 hectares. A poultry farm project in Qoriolei is planned but not yet implemented. However, the ILO and UNHCR have sponsored the existing projects for children rearing by refugees in camps.

H. Other income-generating activities

12. Following a study of income-generating skills conducted in 1981, a range of gainful activities and skills in non-agricultural fields were identified. It was also recognized that if the refugees were to attain a measure of self-sufficiency, non-farming activities must be developed on a wide scale to complement the farming sector which cannot alone respond to that need. The agricultural workshop held at Mogadishu in March dealt also with non-farming schemes and voluntary organizations were encouraged to initiate projects in these fields. A food-for-work programme, with sugar supplies as the incentive, was introduced in all camps to involve the refugees in self-help projects mainly in the field of construction. A co-ordinator for income-generating activities was appointed at the National Refugee Commission and plans call for the assignment of six appropriate technology experts to each of the refugee camp districts to provide an institutional framework for the launching of a full-scale programme.

13. Current UNHCR programmes for 1982 call for the implementation of projects at a total cost of \$US 34,882,800. The planned figure for 1983 is \$US 39,071,000. The following is the breakdown of 1982 and 1983 budget requirements:

(Thousand United States dollars)

<u>Sector of assistance</u>	<u>1982</u>	<u>1983</u>
	<u>Estimated total requirements</u>	
Food	3,000	3,000
Water	2,000	3,000
Health	3,000	2,560
Shelter and domestic needs	2,500	2,500
Transport and logistics	10,600	12,000
Communal construction	1,400	2,800
Education and community development	3,000	3,330
Agriculture	6,849	6,500
Other income-generating activities	1,000	1,200
Support to refugee services	1,533.8	2,181
TOTAL	34,882.8	39,071