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REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Humanitarian assistance to refugees in the Sudan

Report of the Secretary-General

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1980/10 of 28 April 1980, requested the Secretary-General, in co-operation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, to send an interagency mission to the Sudan to assess the needs and the magnitude of assistance required for the financing of the programmes for the relief and settlement of refugees, and to report to the Council on this matter at its first regular session in 1981.
2. In its resolution 35/181 of 15 December 1980, the General Assembly endorsed the report of the United Nations interagency mission to the Sudan (A/35/410, annex) and the recommendations contained therein. The Assembly requested the Secretary-General, in co-operation with the High Commissioner, to send, as a matter of urgency, follow-up missions to carry out feasibility studies with a view to strengthening the capacity of the Government of the Sudan to pursue cost-effective strategies and to plan and locate new settlements as an integral part of over-all rural and urban development, on the basis of the recommendations of the mission.
3. In its report, the interagency mission had recommended that a series of sectoral technical missions should be sent to the Sudan to complete work on the planning, feasibility and final project design work on a number of Government proposals for dealing with the refugees. The following seven technical feasibility missions were recommended:

- (a) TFM-1 Regional development
Planning for new settlements;
- (b) TFM-2 Development of integrated housing programmes;
- (c) TFM-3 Planning and project design for other social development/welfare services;
- (d) TFM-4 Planning for a strengthened educational system;
- (e) TFM-5 Planning for a strengthened health-delivery system;
- (f) TFM-6 Planning for a strengthened training system;
- (g) TFM-7 Planning and project design for agricultural programmes in refugee zones.

4. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 35/181, the Secretary-General, in co-operation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, has completed arrangements for carrying out the seven technical feasibility missions.

5. In its resolution 1982/1, the Economic and Social Council requested the Secretary-General to submit, in co-operation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, a comprehensive report to the General Assembly at its thirty-seventh session on the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations of the various interagency follow-up missions.

6. The mission on planning for a strengthened health-delivery system for refugees in the Sudan (TFM-5) was undertaken by the World Health Organization in April and May 1981 (see para. 18).

7. Three technical feasibility studies relate to planning for social development and welfare services the educational system and to training (TFM-3, TFM-4 and TFM-6). The Economic Commission for Africa agreed to organize an interagency mission to cover those three areas. The interagency mission which visited the Sudan from 21 January to 19 February 1982 included representatives of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The findings and recommendations of the mission were contained in a report dated 15 April 1982 (A/37/178), which was endorsed by the Economic and Social Council at its first regular session in 1982 (resolution 1982/1).

8. Those missions which concerned the planning for new settlements (TFM-1), the development of integrated housing programmes (TFM-2) and planning and project design for agricultural programmes in refugee zones (TFM-7) were organized by UNHCR and were completed in early 1981.

II. GENERAL SITUATION

9. UNHCR has continued to provide assistance to a large refugee population in the Sudan. By the end of 1981, the Government of the Sudan estimated that there were 550,000 refugees in the country. This number included 419,000 Ethiopians, 110,000 Ugandans, 16,000 refugees from Chad, and 5,000 Zairians. During the first months of 1982, there was a new influx of refugees from Uganda, estimated by the Government at 20,000 persons. This brought the total estimated population to 570,000 by mid year.

10. The Government pursued its policy of relocating unemployed refugees in urban areas and newly arrived refugees to organized settlements, where opportunities for them to achieve self-sufficiency would be created. Three new settlements were established in eastern Sudan and six new settlements in southern Sudan, bringing the total number of assisted refugees in settlements at mid-1982 to 102,000 in the east and 75,000 in the south. One of the major problems encountered in eastern Sudan is that of water supply, and UNHCR engaged the services of rural water consultants while the Sudanese Government requested assistance from the Federal Republic of Germany for bilateral assistance in the same field.

11. During 1981, the Office of the Commissioner for Refugees was the main implementing partner of UNHCR for all assistance programmes. In view of the expanded number of refugee settlements, the Government has agreed to use voluntary agencies to assist in the implementation of projects in southern Sudan during 1982, while the involvement of voluntary agencies in the implementation of the UNHCR Programme in eastern Sudan may start in 1983. The Office of the Commissioner for Refugees has been strengthened and UNHCR seconded to it a Programme Officer and a Finance Officer during the first half of 1982.

III. NEW SETTLEMENTS AND AGRICULTURAL PROGRAMMES

12. A combined mission dealt with regional development for new settlements and project design for agricultural programmes in refugee zones (TFM-1 and TFM-7). The composition of the mission, its terms of reference and findings were included in document A/36/216, paragraphs 8 to 10.

IV. ACTION ON THE MISSION'S FINDINGS

13. In accordance with the mission's findings and in consultation with the Government of the Sudan, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has taken the following steps:

(a) New settlements have been established in Abuda, Umm Ali, Tenedba and El Hawata as sufficient land could be allocated to the refugees, i.e. 8,500 feddans in Abuda, 3,000 feddans in Umm Ali, 10,000 feddans in Tenedba and 10,000 feddans in El Hawata. Although during the implementation of the settlements some problems arose over the land use right in the allocated plots of land, the problems have now been solved by and large;

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(b) In view of the particularity of the composition of the soil in eastern Sudan, the mission recommended strongly the use of mechanized agriculture and identified the number of tractors needed at each settlement; each settlement received the recommended number of tractors by July 1981;

(c) In order to monitor closely the use of the tractors and related equipment, UNHCR arranged for another mission, through the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and requested further advice on:

- (i) Future mechanization practices and future machinery requirement, if any;
- (ii) Future need for manpower input requirements, particularly those related to spare parts, organization and management;
- (iii) Future need for training requirements for operators and mechanics;

As a result of this mission, the continued use of wide level disc harrows and 80 horsepower tractors was confirmed. Moreover, the setting up of a spare part storage system, centralized and decentralized workshops and the training of mechanics and tractor drivers from among the refugees was highly recommended;

(d) Therefore UNHCR engaged, through FAO, the consulting services of a spare part expert, in order to establish, in co-operation with the Sudanese competent authorities, a blueprint for spare part storage, workshop needs and training of refugees. His report became available in March 1982 and UNHCR immediately started implementing the recommendations, which consisted of giving expert advice in the setting up of a workable storage system and the training of refugees in running such a system, as well as the provision of a mobile workshop, small hovercraft and an adequate supply of spare parts. Refugees were also trained in the maintenance and operation of the tractors;

(e) The follow-up interagency mission identified the El Hawata-Qala en Nahal area as most suitable for the establishment of some five refugee settlements, provided an extensive water supply system would be set up. UNHCR engaged the services of a consultancy firm for further advice, in close co-operation with the Sudan National Water Authority. Since the project is basically of a developmental nature, the bilateral assistance programme of the Federal Republic of Germany became interested in the project and is at present studying their undertaking the implementation of the project. In the meantime, pending the outcome of the bilateral negotiations, UNHCR is financing the construction of a water supply system directly benefiting the refugees at present in El Hawata settlement;

(f) Since agricultural schemes in the refugee settlements may not lead to total self-sufficiency of the refugee settlements, the Sudanese Government, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and UNHCR started a number of studies related to skills among the refugees, a labour market study in eastern and central Sudan and a commodity market study in order to promote additional self-help and income-generating projects. The results of these studies are expected to be known during the first quarter of 1983.

V. DEVELOPMENT OF INTEGRATED HOUSING PROGRAMMES

14. In line with the recommendations contained in the report of the United Nations interagency mission (A/35/410, annex), the High Commissioner organized a sectoral mission on the development of integrated housing programmes. The United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) was requested to advise on proposals which had been submitted for a housing project for the refugees in Port Sudan, and if necessary, to recommend possible alternative proposals.

15. It was noted in the report of the United Nations interagency mission that the plight of the urban refugee could not be treated separately from that of the host population. The mission felt that the desired objective of reducing potential social tensions in Port Sudan would not be achieved by creating semi-urban settlements for 30,000 refugees outside the town. Owing to local conditions, the refugees would be provided with houses and infrastructure of a higher standard than that enjoyed by the Sudanese people. Further, the refugees would be settled too far away from employment opportunities in the town.

16. The mission therefore made the following recommendations:

(a) As an alternative to the proposed project for resettling refugees, the squatter and lower-class housing areas of Port Sudan should be made the subject of a planned upgrading scheme, whereby both refugees and Sudanese would be provided with access to better services and infrastructure;

(b) Essentially, the proposal is to provide the Port Sudan Regional Planning Office with expertise and funds to improve, expand and speed up its programme for the improvement and upgrading of slums;

(c) As a first step, a small team of experts (architect-planner, infrastructure engineer, social planner and economist), should be sent on a one-month mission to prepare an outline plan of action for Port Sudan, in particular to identify the areas to be upgraded and to establish basic standards and procedures. As part of that exercise, one of the areas identified by the team should be selected for immediate upgrading and a detailed plan should be drawn up for it. After discussions with the competent Sudanese authorities and in line with the Sudan's regulations with regard to the planning of towns, an area on the outskirts of the town but within the town boundaries was allocated for the construction of houses for refugees. UNHCR will contribute up to \$US 2,800,000 for the construction of a maximum of 700 houses in this area. The Government of the United States of America has contributed bilaterally towards this project for the construction of a water supply system in the new housing area.

VI. SOCIAL WELFARE AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES

17. Three technical feasibility studies relating to education, training and planning for social development and welfare services were organized by the Economic Commission for Africa during early 1982. In its report, the mission identified three substantive problem areas related to the education of refugees which require

immediate attention. These are the production of adequate numbers of suitable textbooks, curriculum development and the promotion of adequate pedagogical training for the majority of teachers in refugee primary schools. Steps towards implementation are being elaborated by UNESCO and UNHCR. In the section of social development welfare services, the mission recommended the launching of a series of systematic socio-economic surveys of all the settlements and their respective environments using technical and professional inputs from refugees, Government, United Nations and voluntary agencies. UNHCR and the ILO are already jointly undertaking such studies.

VII. HEALTH CARE

18. A WHO mission visited the Sudan between 28 April and 20 May 1981 to assess the emergency health needs of refugees. The mission sought to identify more accurately the needs of the health sector arising from the added refugee burden carried by existing services, giving priority to the eastern region where most of the refugees are.

19. An important conclusion of the mission report is that health conditions in organized settlements are often better than those prevailing amongst "spontaneously" settled refugees and the local population. In order to rectify this problem the report recommends that increased health assistance should be aimed at improving local health services as well as those provided in the camps themselves. The types of assistance envisaged include expenditures on re-equipping, maintenance and repair of health service amenities, improved transport arrangements, additional training, drugs supply and the improvement of environmental health programmes.

20. WHO has presented the conclusions of the report to the Ministry of Health for further follow-up and action.
