



General Assembly

Distr.
GENERALA/43/534
29 August 1988

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Forty-third session
Item 12 of the provisional agenda*

REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Situation of refugees in the SudanReport of the Secretary-General

CONTENTS

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
I. INTRODUCTION	1 - 6	2
II. BACKGROUND	7 - 8	2
III. IMPLEMENTATION OF ASSISTANCE	9 - 20	3
A. Action taken by the Secretary-General	9 - 14	3
B. Action taken by the United Nations Development Programme	15 - 18	4
C. Action taken by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	19 - 20	5
IV. CONCLUDING REMARKS	21	6

* A/43/150.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 41/139 of 4 December 1986 entitled "Situation of refugees in the Sudan", the Secretary-General arranged for an inter-agency mission to visit the Sudan in September 1987 to assess the impact of the refugees on the economy of the country, with a view to defining an operational approach that could be carried out immediately, and also with a view to preparing a comprehensive programme of international assistance.
2. The report of the mission described in particular the impact of the presence of almost 1 million refugees on the infrastructure and services of the Sudan, and the assistance and measures which are required, at the national and international levels, to strengthen the capacity of the central and local authorities to cope with the burden imposed by the presence of these refugees on the Sudanese economy.
3. The General Assembly, in its resolution 42/129 of 7 December 1987, entitled "Situation of refugees in the Sudan", inter alia, appealed to "Member States, the appropriate organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and the international institutions to provide the Government of the Sudan with the necessary resources for the implementation of development assistance projects in the regions affected by the presence of refugees".
4. In the same resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General, in following up on the reports of the inter-agency missions and furthering the integration of developmental and refugee aid, to take concrete steps, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), for the early implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the 1987 inter-agency mission and to mobilize the necessary financial and material assistance for the full implementation of the ongoing projects in the areas affected by the presence of refugees.
5. In paragraph 9 of the same resolution, the Assembly requested the High Commissioner to "continue co-ordination with the appropriate specialized agencies in order to consolidate and ensure the continuation of essential services to the refugees in their settlements".
6. Finally, in paragraph 10 of the same resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly at its forty-third session on the implementation of the resolution. The present report is submitted accordingly.

II. BACKGROUND

7. The Secretary-General's report on the situation of refugees in the Sudan, submitted to the General Assembly at its forty-second session, included the report of the inter-agency mission that visited the Sudan in September 1987 (A/42/646, annex).

8. The report of the inter-agency mission undertook an analysis of the impact of refugees on the Sudanese economy. It is pertinent to recall briefly some of the highlights in order that the problem of refugees may be seen in the proper perspective. The Sudan is classified as a least developed country by the United Nations and, in recent years, its economic situation has deteriorated as a result of a combination of factors. Agriculture, which constitutes the main productive base of the economy, has yet to recover fully from the disastrous drought of 1984-1985. The industrial sector has largely stagnated owing to shortages of skilled manpower; exports have performed poorly and at the present time the country is only able to pay for less than 50 per cent of the import requirements. The Sudan's total external debt amounts to approximately \$US 9 billion. Annual debt service payments amount to more than four to five times the nation's export earnings.

III. IMPLEMENTATION OF ASSISTANCE

A. Action taken by the Secretary-General

9. The Secretary-General, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 42/129 took steps, in co-operation with UNDP and UNHCR, for the early implementation of the recommendations of the 1987 inter-agency mission. He also launched an appeal on 21 March 1988, addressed to all States Members of the United Nations as well as non-member States with observer status at the United Nations, to provide material and financial assistance for the full implementation of ongoing projects in areas affected by the presence of refugees.

10. The Secretary-General took the opportunity, on the occasion of his visit to Addis Ababa in May 1988 to attend the Summit Conference of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), to meet with the Prime Minister of the Sudan, Mr. El Sadia El Mahdi, and discuss with him the urgent problems of refugees and displaced persons in the Sudan. The Prime Minister drew attention to the heavy burden that the refugee presence imposed on the economy and the displacement of large numbers of the population from south Sudan as a result of civil strife and famine. He also expressed concern over the inadequate level of assistance being received from the international community to help the Sudan cope with the situation.

11. As a follow-up to his discussions with the Prime Minister of the Sudan at Addis Ababa, the Secretary-General arranged for the immediate dispatch of the Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Questions, Regional, Co-operation, Decolonization and Trusteeship to the Sudan. During his mission, the Under-Secretary-General discussed with the Sudanese authorities issues related to the critical humanitarian situation prevailing in that country as a result of the continuing drought in the northern and eastern parts of the country, the civil strife in the southern region and the presence of great numbers of refugees and displaced persons in various parts of the country. Government sources indicated that there were approximately 2 million displaced persons and close to 1 million refugees in the Sudan.

12. The Under-Secretary-General discussed the problems in detail with the Prime Minister, and subsequently with the Ministers for Foreign Affairs, Social Welfare, Refugee and Relief Affairs, and Labour and Social Security. Current United Nations emergency assistance programmes were reviewed and proposals were explored for a possible expansion of those programmes designed to meet the needs of the affected people. Discussions also centred on the setting up of co-ordinating mechanisms to facilitate and enhance the response of the international donor community to the critical humanitarian situation. Operational modalities with the concerned ministries and agencies of the United Nations system were also worked out.

13. On the basis of an on-the-spot assessment of the situation, the Under-Secretary-General, in consultation with United Nations agency representatives, decided to reinstitute the United Nations Emergency Operations Group, composed of the local representatives of the organizations of the United Nations system, to ensure an effective and concerted United Nations response. In addition to meeting with local representatives of United Nations agencies, the Under-Secretary-General also met with representatives of the international donor community and non-governmental organizations.

14. In June 1988, the Secretary-General received a communication from the Prime Minister of the Sudan formally requesting the assistance and the involvement of the organizations of the United Nations system in the complex emergency problems facing the Sudan. On the basis of the request, the Secretary-General formally brought the situation to the attention of the international community as well as to the pertinent agencies and organizations of the United Nations system. Arrangements were made in July 1988 for an inter-agency team to prepare an emergency programme, in consultation with the Sudanese authorities, which would eventually form the basis of an international appeal by the Secretary-General. The appeal is expected to be launched by the end of August 1988.

B. Action taken by the United Nations Development Programme

15. In recent years, commitments in various degrees have been obtained from bilateral and multilateral donors for the funding of many of the 159 projects identified by the inter-agency mission as ongoing refugee-related projects or projects in the pipeline covering the sectors of water, food, agriculture and livestock, education, health, employment and income generation. In order to address the fact that the individual project orientation that had prevailed in the past did not generate adequate interest among donors, UNDP is now re-orienting its activities to create substantive and integrated programmes in close co-operation with bilateral and multilateral partners. A continuous and thorough review by UNDP has resulted in the identification of the necessary additional inputs needed for the projects already under implementation and the formulation and reassessment of many of the new projects proposed by the 1987 inter-agency mission. An attempt has been made to provide adequate linkages in the development processes of the different geographic regions as well as in the relevant sectors of the economy.

16. UNDP concluded that it was necessary to send missions to the field to formulate individual projects. For the purpose of facilitating this and coping

with the considerable additional work-load entailed, "Project preparation for refugee affected areas" (project SUD/88/B01) has been developed and is currently pending approval by the Government. This project will serve to set up a project development unit specifically for the purpose of developing projects for refugees and displaced persons to a level of technical and economic acceptability for presentation to donors for financing purposes. The unit will involve two international staff, one national programme officer, and adequate logistical support to assist the resident co-ordinator in his co-ordination, programme development, implementation and monitoring functions.

17. To ensure the co-ordination of donor activities and assistance within the sector, a Special Working Group on Refugees has been established with the participation of the Commissioner for Refugees, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UNHCR and UNDP. In addition, the Emergency Operations Group, involving all of the key United Nations agencies, has been reactivated under the chairmanship of the United Nations resident co-ordinator. It will co-ordinate emergency and rehabilitation assistance requested by the Government for refugees and displaced persons as well as for the stricken population in drought-affected areas.

18. Delays in the implementation of projects have been experienced because of administrative uncertainties in the Government and inadequate staffing in the UNDP field office to cope with the additional work-load. The Government has now established firm channels of communication, while UNDP has taken steps to strengthen its organizational capacity by the creation of an Emergency Unit within the UNDP office and the recruitment of appropriate international and national staff for the purpose.

C. Action taken by the Office of the United Nations
High Commissioner for Refugees

19. During the period under review, UNHCR continued to assist 400,000 of the more than 800,000 refugees estimated to be in the Sudan; 330,000 of the assisted refugees were from Ethiopia. Recent Government estimates indicate that the number of Ethiopians who are spontaneously-settled in urban and rural areas is substantially higher than those who are assisted by UNHCR in the land-based or wage-earning settlements. It is expected that the ongoing voluntary repatriation of Ugandan refugees, of whom some 40,000 returned in the first half of 1988, and of the Chadians, would substantially reduce the size of these refugee groups by the end of 1988.

20. UNHCR, along with other donors and international organizations, has begun to respond to the needs of those localities where large numbers of unassisted refugees, mostly Ethiopians, live, by providing infrastructural support to local health and educational services, water supplies, sanitation and agricultural assistance. Given the developmental nature of these needs, UNHCR seeks to mobilize the assistance of the competent organizations, while limiting direct support under its own programmes to projects that meet immediate needs pending such mobilization, or that can be subsequently incorporated in longer development schemes. A major

agriculture project planned in co-operation with the World Bank for South Kassala Province is scheduled to begin early in 1989. Discussions also continue with UNDP on the means to implement the comprehensive plan of assistance for refugee-affected areas designed by an inter-agency mission, in accordance with the General Assembly's recommendation.

IV. CONCLUDING REMARKS

21. The combined impact of drought, civil strife and refugees on the economy of the Sudan is enormous, and, in addition to the humanitarian problems, it has created insuperable obstacles to the economic and social development of the country. An urgent response is, therefore, required from the international community.
