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SPECIAL ECONOMIC AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE:  
SPECIAL PROGRAMMES OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE

Assistance to Democratic Yemen

Report of the Secretary-General

1. In paragraph 7 of its resolution 37/150 of 17 December 1982, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Assembly at its thirty-eighth session a progress report on assistance to Democratic Yemen. The present report is submitted in response to the request.
2. As reported by the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator at the Second Committee of the General Assembly on 2 November 1982, 1/ unprecedented heavy rains in March 1982 resulted in serious flooding throughout Democratic Yemen, causing loss of life and considerable damage to the irrigation system, farmlands, roads, bridges, housing and livestock. The floods affected 300,000 people, of whom 482 were killed, while damage and losses were estimated at some \$US 975 million. In response to the appeal made by the Office of the Co-ordinator, relief totalling \$US 11 million was provided by United Nations agencies, the European Economic Community (EEC), 13 Governments and 18 non-governmental organizations.
3. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1982/6 of 28 April 1982, requested donors to assist the Government in its relief operations and also in the subsequent rehabilitation and reconstruction phase. In particular, hope was expressed that the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank and other international financial institutions would give favourable consideration to any request for assistance submitted by the Government under its rehabilitation, reconstruction and development programmes as well as to improving the existing disaster warning and protection systems.

\* A/38/50/Rev.1.

4. The Economic Commission for Western Asia, in its resolution 107 (IX) of May 1982, called for the urgent establishment of a programme for rehabilitation and reconstruction within the framework of the Substantial New Programme of Action for the 1980s for the Least Developed Countries.

5. The General Assembly, in its resolution 37/150, requested the Secretary-General to mobilize the necessary resources for a comprehensive and effective programme of assistance to Democratic Yemen in order to mitigate the damage and implement rehabilitation and reconstruction plans. It also requested organizations and programmes of the United Nations system to maintain and expand their programmes of assistance and to co-operate closely with the Secretary-General in organizing such a programme.

6. The international donor community responded promptly to the Government's request for assistance during the rehabilitation and reconstruction phase. Some donors provided technical and/or financial assistance; others sent missions to identify areas of possible assistance and draw up aid programmes.

7. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) fielded a joint FAO/WFP mission in April 1982. The mission was assigned to assess damage and destruction to the food and agriculture sector of the country and to make proposals for specific relief aid. The report of the mission contained proposals on the objectives, requirements and financial implications of 11 projects which would cover the most urgent needs for crop recovery, rehabilitation and protection of irrigation networks. As a follow-up to this report, the Director-General of FAO sent a letter to potential donors urging them to support the Government of Democratic Yemen in its rehabilitation efforts as outlined in the report.

8. Under its technical co-operation programme, FAO provided water pumps and engines (26 units each), technical assistance (an irrigation engineer, a surveyor and two mechanical engineers), workshop equipment, and spare parts worth \$US 55,000 in total. This assistance was intended to cover part of the requirement under project proposals for the Abyan Delta drawn on by the FAO/WFP mission.

9. The United Nations Capital Development Fund contributed \$US 500,000 for a seed development project in support of the rehabilitation of crop production in Abyan Delta.

10. EEC approved assistance worth \$US 2.5 million for rehabilitation works in the Dhalla district. This consisted of equipment for repairing wells, land reclamation and flood warning systems, technical assistance and administrative operations.

11. UNDP approved \$US 200,000 for the establishment of a flood warning system for the Abyan Delta.

12. In order to encourage and facilitate the population's participation in the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the country, WFP agreed to the proposal of the Government to direct assistance available under the ongoing "Quick Action and Development" projects to the flood rehabilitation programme. The balance of work-days of 767,714 under Project 2638 Q was utilized for work on the Batais Weir

to repair the related irrigation scheme, to rehabilitate farmland, as well as the construction of low-cost houses and the repair of roads. Project 2265 Expansion (Multi-Sectoral project for agricultural, social and rural community development, June 1982-May 1986) has been amended so as to divert 58 per cent of total project cost of \$US 17,275,700 (97,732,900 work-days) to flood rehabilitation. It should also be noted that working tools and equipment are not provided by these projects but should be covered by the Government.

13. The road network has been a major instrument in the country's progress in unifying its poorer regions, mobilizing its productive resources and improving the economy on a national scale. Quick restoration of roads is essential both to combat the adverse economic impact of the floods and to avoid delaying long-term reconstruction and development.

14. Taking into account the urgency of the situation, the Government designed a two-year programme of reconstruction of the road network consisting of the following projects: (a) strengthening of the Highway Authority of the Ministry of Construction through technical assistance under the ongoing Third Highway Project; (b) reconstruction of the Zingibar Bridge with the assistance of the Government of China; (c) extension of construction projects to include repair works of the Aden-Taiz and Al Mukalla-Wadi Hadramwat roads with the assistance of the Arab and Kuwait Funds respectively; (d) reconstruction of roads in the Abyan and the Aden Governorates. The total cost of the programme is approximately \$US 22 million.

15. In May 1982, the Government of Switzerland sent an engineering team, in response to the appeal made by UNDR0 on behalf of the Government for technical assistance in the preparation of road reconstruction projects. The team's proposals formed the basis for projects under (b) and (d) mentioned above.

16. The Government of China has agreed to assist the Government of Democratic Yemen in the reconstruction of the Zingibar Bridge under (b) above. The bridge was the largest in the country connecting Aden with 80 per cent of the country. The cost has been estimated at approximately \$US 4 million.

17. In May 1982, a highway mission of the International Development Association (IDA) identified item (d) of the programme as the most suitable for financing by IDA and other international agencies. As a result of negotiations among the agencies concerned, arrangements have been made to start the project with the assistance of IDA (\$US 7 million), the Arab Fund (\$US 3 million) and UNDP (\$US 8 million). The project components are: (a) reconstruction of roads in the Aden and Abyan Governorates, including flood protection works near the international airport; (b) strengthening of the Abyan Road Reconstruction and Maintenance Unit (RRHU); (c) technical assistance to the Highway Authority for project supervision and monitoring; and (d) a transport sector study. The project is scheduled to start in the second quarter of 1983 and to be completed by the end of 1984.

18. At the request of the Government, an International Labour Organisation (ILO) mission was fielded in June 1982 to identify the kind of technical assistance needed, and to assist in overcoming both immediate and long-term problems falling

within the ILO's field of competence. The mission proposed a project, bearing in mind the roles played by various United Nations agencies and others, to provide assistance to the Ministry of Construction to strengthen the Design and Survey Department to meet its increased work-load arising from extensive damage by the floods and the necessity to reconstruct the minor roads in the Abyan Governorate.

19. The health care activities also constitute an important part of the overall rehabilitation programme of Democratic Yemen. As reported by the Disaster Relief Co-ordinator last year, the thirty-fifth World Health Assembly, at its May 1982 session, adopted a resolution in which it requested the Director-General of WHO to consult the Government of Democratic Yemen with a view to establishing a health and medical programme on a long-term basis. Within the framework of the resolution the Government has submitted to the Director-General a list of requirements to be included in the programme covering medical equipment, drugs and civil works for maintenance and repair of damaged health units, which should be implemented over a period of five years.

20. Recently, the Government of France offered to provide APT (satellite picture receiving equipment) to Democratic Yemen. The need for improving weather forecasting in Democratic Yemen has always been considered essential in order to mitigate damage caused by adverse weather conditions similar to that of the 1982 event. This equipment will no doubt be of great help. In September 1982, the Government of Democratic Yemen submitted a formal request to the Director-General of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) for international assistance under the Voluntary Co-operation Programme of WMO. The offer of the Government of France was in response to this request.

21. In addition, bilateral assistance is also being provided and planned for rehabilitation and reconstruction.

22. The majority of the assistance projects are still in the initial stages of implementation. Donors already participating in the reconstruction projects have been requested to make every effort to ensure early and effective implementation of these projects.

23. In conclusion, despite the generous assistance to date from the international donor community, the mounting burden of rehabilitation and reconstruction is still far beyond the capacity of the Government. It is requested that donors should again consider providing further assistance to Democratic Yemen to overcome the impact of the disaster and to carry out development plans in the future.

Notes

1/ See A/C.2/37/SR.27.

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