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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/38/150

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In its resolution 37/174 of 17 December 1982, the General Assembly appealed to Member States, international organizations and voluntary agencies to render maximum material financial and technical assistance to the Government of Somalia in its efforts to provide all necessary assistance to the refugees and requested the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, in consultation with the Secretary-General, to make a comprehensive review of the overall needs of the refugees, including those aspects relating to their settlement and rehabilitation. The General Assembly further requested the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, in consultation with the Secretary-General, to submit the report of the proposed review to the Economic and Social Council at its second regular session of 1983 and to submit a report to the General Assembly at its thirty-eighth session on the progress achieved in the implementation of that resolution.
2. In order to comply with the above-mentioned resolution, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees arranged for a review mission to visit Somalia from 12 to 28 March 1983 to consult with the Government on the refugee situation, to assess the international relief effort and to identify the requirements of the refugees for 1983 and subsequent years. The team was led by the Deputy Director of Assistance of UNHCR and included a representative of the World Food Programme (WFP).
3. The review mission was received during its visit by the President of the Somali Democratic Republic, His Excellency Major-General Mohamed Siad Barre. The mission also met the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Agriculture and the Extraordinary Commissioner for Refugees. Meetings were also held with senior officials and technical staff concerned with the refugee programme and with economic and social development. The mission visited Gedo, Hiran, the North-West and Lower Shebelle regions and was provided with all information required to facilitate its work.
4. In addition, the team met representatives of a number of donor countries, United Nations organizations and voluntary agencies which are making a major contribution to international relief efforts in the refugee camps. Matters discussed included the preparation of the International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa (ICARA II) along the lines of General Assembly resolution 37/197.
5. The present report, like the oral presentation made by the High Commissioner to the Economic and Social Council in July 1983, is based largely upon the findings of the mission.

II. GENERAL SITUATION

6. Somalia continues to face great problems as a result of the presence of a large number of refugees in the country. The mission was informed that, in addition to refugees in the camps, many are living in the countryside or in the urban areas alongside the local population. The background to the influx of refugees into Somalia, their characteristics and arrangements made to assist them were described in detail in the previous reports of the Secretary-General

(A/36/136; E/1980/44 and E/1982/40). After discussions with the Government, representatives of donor countries and international and non-governmental organizations in Somalia, the previous mission agreed on a refugee camp population of 700,000.

7. At present, refugees are located in 35 camps spread over a wide area in the four regions, of Hiran, Gedo, the North-West and lower Shebelle. The mission visited 27 of these. In the south, 26 camps are situated on the banks of the Juba and Shebelle rivers while most of the 9 camps in the north-west are located close to seasonal water sources known as "tugs". In general, the camps are open with few restrictions on travel, and movement in and out of them takes place frequently. The refugees travel to the towns and women and children often leave the camps to join their menfolk herding livestock in the country.

8. The Government fully recognizes the need for an accurate estimate of the refugee population in the camps. However, the difficulties involved in attempting to conduct a census in 35 camps spread over four regions are considerable, particularly as the actual camp population varies erratically from day to day. It is, therefore, recommended that, for the planning of relief programmes during 1983, the refugee population of 700,000 agreed upon by the previous mission continue to be applied. It is estimated that approximately 50 per cent of this case load are children, 27 per cent women and 23 per cent men over 15 years.

9. In previous reports, the role of the National Refugee Commission (NRC), the Government organization responsible for refugee programmes, was described (see E/1980/44 paras. 41-43, A/36/136, paras. 40-41 and E/1982/40, paras. 37-42) and this organization has continued to maintain overall co-ordination of assistance activities. A Planning Unit has been established within the Commission to undertake planning, co-ordinating and monitoring of the programmes for refugees.

10. The recommendation of the previous mission that implementation of special technical projects and programmes for the refugees should as far as possible be entrusted to the respective functional Ministries of the Government has been implemented. A Refugee Agricultural Unit has been established in the Ministry of Agriculture and a Refugee Water Unit has been set up within the National Water Authority to take over water supply projects for refugees.

11. The responsibility for overall co-ordination of international assistance rests with UNHCR which, jointly with national authorities and in co-ordination with other concerned United Nations bodies, draws up the overall programme for the refugee camps, establishes priorities and directs the inputs of experts and voluntary agencies participating in the programme.

12. Food aid is channelled through WFP which is responsible for co-ordination of international food assistance and its delivery to the ports in Somalia. The United Nations Children's Fund is contributing to the implementation of family life and community development projects, while the World Health Organization (WHO) provides assistance to the Refugee Health Unit and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) is helping in various income-generating activities. In addition, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Centre for Human

Settlements (HABITAT) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) are providing advisory assistance for some components of the programme.

13. At present, some 30 voluntary agencies from a number of countries of Western Europe and from North America are engaged in the relief effort, most of them operating in the camps and providing direct assistance in a number of fields. Some agencies fund their own activities and implement projects within the overall context of the refugee programme, while others execute UNHCR-financed projects. Voluntary organizations that were involved in care and maintenance and are now withdrawing because of the phasing out of their operations should do so gradually and ensure an orderly handover to the appropriate government services. Moreover, as emphasis shifts towards self-sufficiency, it is recommended that voluntary organization with technical expertise geared to developmental projects should be involved in this second phase.

14. Since May 1981, CARE has taken over responsibility, under the Emergency Logistics Unit of NRC, for all transport and logistics related to the refugee programme with funding provided by UNHCR. It employs a staff of 58 expatriates and some 1,000 Somalis. Save the Children Fund, with partial funding by UNHCR, is responsible for a number of health and social welfare programmes, while the Ecumenical Relief and Development Group for Somalia has also been carrying out a number of activities in the health sector. The refugee programme depends heavily on the contributions made by these and other non-governmental organizations and the continuation of such programmes will be of critical importance not only in providing care and maintenance but also in developing self-help and income-earning activities.

15. Of fundamental importance in the question of refugees in Somalia is the expected length of their stay in the refugee camps, many of which are unsuitable as long-term settlements.

16. It is unanimously felt that voluntary repatriation is the best durable solution to the problems of Ethiopian refugees in the Somali Democratic Republic and, in this context, there is an obvious need to draw up basic guidelines for such an exercise involving the countries of origin and of asylum. It is hoped that UNHCR may be able to facilitate contacts between the two Governments to bring this about. Repatriation will, nevertheless, depend on a number of factors, including the conditions created for it and the trust inspired by those conditions. From discussions with refugees, it appears that such assurances as safety on return, guarantees of property and other basic human rights, and freedom to pursue traditional occupations may be prerequisites for any large-scale organized repatriation programme.

17. The Somali Government has reiterated its desire to see the refugees return to their homeland but emphasized that the return must be voluntary and carried out under an organized programme and acceptable conditions. The review mission was assured that the Government would co-operate fully in any organized programme of voluntary repatriation.

18. While voluntary repatriation remains the preferred option, the Government also took advantage of the visit by the review mission to announce that a programme of local settlement would be developed for refugees unable to attain self-sufficiency under the conditions prevailing in the camps. Since this decision is likely to give impetus to the promotion of land settlement, preliminary technical missions have been organized to identify more precisely the additional studies and surveys necessary in 1983 in order to begin implementing medium-sized agricultural settlements by 1984.

19. The shift from a programme centred on care and maintenance needs to one oriented to local settlement is already reflected in overall financial obligations and estimated needs for the period under review. Although relief needs remain high in the current year, especially with respect to health, some progress has been made in the area of agriculture, thanks to the additional land made available near the camps by the Somali Government as from 1982.

III. ASSISTANCE REQUIREMENTS

20. The assistance recommended for refugees in 1983 and the estimated needs for 1983 are as follows:

<u>Type of assistance</u>	<u>1983</u>	<u>1984</u>
	(United States dollars)	
Food (150,000 tonnes approximately)	94 500 000	94 500 000 a/
Health	2 560 000	3 200 000
Water	2 000 000	2 800 000
Communal construction	1 500 000	500 000
Transport and logistics	12 800 000	8 300 000
Shelter and domestic supplies	2 200 000	2 000 000
Education and community development	2 000 000	2 800 000
Self-help activities	4 100 000	3 000 000
Assistance to refugee services, and other assistance	2 290 000	1 440 000
Local integration	-	12 050 000
TOTAL	123 950 000	130 590 000

a/ Of which \$93.5 million provided through WFP.

21. The major change between the revised 1983 Programme and the proposed 1984 Programme is the decrease in the relief aspects and the inclusion in the 1984 Programme of an appropriation of \$12 million to start implementing the local settlement programme. In addition, the Somali Government has the possibility of submitting projects to ICARA II for assistance to refugees or to strengthen the social and economic infrastructure in order to cope with the burden of large numbers of refugees.

22. Details of assistance requirements by sector are given below.

A. Food

23. Based on an estimated average population in the camps of about 700,000, and the Government-approved ration scale of 595 grammes per person per day, 1/ the total food requirements for 1983 are some 148,680 tonnes at an estimated cost of \$94.5 million. Sufficient quantities will need to be provided to serve as the initial stock for 1984 and to provide some reserves. The 1983 food situation is detailed in the following table:

<u>Commodity</u>	<u>Rations requirement based on Government figures</u>	<u>Stocks in hand or in pipeline</u>	<u>Negative balance</u>
	(metric tonnes)		
Cereals	75 600	60 822	14 778
Flour	25 200	15 198	10 002
Oil	10 080	6 132	3 948
Milk	10 080	10 080	NIL
Beans	10 080	4 444	5 636
Sugar	10 080	1 533	8 547
Dates	3 780	2 000	1 780
Meat	2 520	NIL	2 520
Tea	756	NIL	756
Salt	504	504	NIL
TOTAL	148 680	100 713	47 967

24. Additional commodities will be required for supplementary/intensive feeding of vulnerable groups consisting of 150,000 persons. It is hoped that this need will be met by donations in kind.

25. WFP acts as a channel for such food aid as cereals, wheat flour, edible oil, dried skimmed milk, beans and dates. The possibility of WFP's undertaking the supply of supplementary food, such as meat, salt and sugar, is also under consideration. Moreover, in view of its expertise, WFP should be entrusted with the responsibility of deciding, in consultation with NRC and UNHCR, the scaling down of food supplies in accordance with the rate at which refugees reach self-sufficiency in food production.

26. In order to ensure that every refugee receives his/her share of food rations, it is recommended that NRC should speed up the establishment of distribution centres and the issuance of ration cards to each refugee.

B. Health

27. Refugee health services are organized by the Refugee Health Unit (RHU) in the Ministry of Health and also involve 13 voluntary agencies and 21 health teams working in the camps. The previous reports of the Secretary-General noted that the refugee population suffered from malnutrition and disease. Maintenance of the health of the refugees is now seen to be satisfactory, but this improvement needs to be constantly sustained by support for the primary health care programme provided under the co-ordination of the Refugee Health Unit. More health centres also need to be constructed and the supply of medicines and equipment stepped up. Moreover, adequate secondary health services should be made available to refugees by ensuring that Government health facilities in refugee-affected areas are given more supplies and personnel.

28. In January 1983 the number of people, excluding Community Health Workers, providing health services to the refugees was as follows:

<u>Nationals</u>		<u>Expatriates</u>	
Doctors	12	Doctors	40
Nurses	125	Nurses	100
Sanitarians	10		
Assistant pharmacists	10		
Laboratory technicians	10		
	<hr/>		<hr/>
TOTAL	167		140
	<hr/> <hr/>		<hr/> <hr/>

29. An estimated \$2.6 million, made up of payments to health personnel, supply of medicines and vaccination programmes, etc., will be needed during 1983 to provide basic health care to the refugees in the camps. In addition, living quarters for national health workers need to be constructed.

30. In order to avoid disparity between the health services for refugees and nationals, the World Health Organization should be approached to assist the Government in strengthening primary health care services for nationals in the rural areas, particularly those affected by influx of refugees.

31. Every effort should be made to strengthen the Refugee Health Unit by way of personnel and equipment to enable it to take over gradually from the expatriate voluntary organizations that operate health services in the camps, and which will gradually wind up their activities in the Somali Democratic Republic.

C. Water

32. Safe water supply is indispensable to health; hence the existing temporary facilities should be expanded and the water supply system for the refugee camps strengthened. In providing safe water, a combination of alternative technologies could possibly be tried. Meanwhile, the creation of a Refugee Water Supply Division within the National Water Authority is seen as a positive step towards

coming to terms with problems of water supply and it is recommended that this department gradually take over the co-ordination of water supply projects for refugees. In 1983, UNHCR expenditure on water is estimated as follows:

	<u>United States dollars</u>
Refugee Water Supply Division	
(Administrative Support)	190 000
Maintenance, upgrading and expansion of water facilities in the North-West	560 000
Maintenance, upgrading and expansion of water facilities in the southern regions	990 000
Water development for new refugee sites	
North-West	100 000
South	160 000
	<hr/>
TOTAL	2 000 000
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33. In addition to the above, financial inputs from implementing agencies (ERDGS and OXFAM) total \$US 820,000.

D. Communal construction

34. Considerable progress has been made in constructing temporary communal facilities in and around the camps, including food stores, health posts and feeding centres. Some 450 prefabricated units have been donated while six large regional warehouses and seven workshops have been constructed with external assistance. However, only very limited progress has been achieved in the construction of classrooms.

35. The minimum requirements for 1983 consist of the construction of 500 classrooms and 9 workshops. Maintenance and repairs will also have to be provided to the existing structures on a self-help basis. UNHCR has earmarked a sum of \$1.5 million for this purpose including income-generating and self-help components.

E. Transport and logistics

36. The camps should be provided with adequate transportation to enable emergency cases to be taken to the nearest hospitals without delay.

37. An Emergency Logistics Unit (ELU) was created in April 1981 within the framework of the National Refugee Commission (NRC) to organize and manage the transport of relief supplies, and a contract was subsequently signed between ELU and CARE, which implements this sector of assistance. While the Government has provided office accommodation and storage facilities to ELU/CARE, UNHCR has funded all administrative costs and support facilities, with CARE charging administrative fees on a non-profit basis. During 1982, ELU/CARE operated 215 trucks,

174 trailers, 18 water tankers, 2 fuel tankers and 11 tractors, and employed a staff of 1,000 Somalis and 58 expatriates.

38. During 1983, over 90,000 tonnes of food-stuffs, supplementary food items and relief supplies will have to be transported to the camps. Furthermore, water tankers will have to be used to supply water to a number of locations. For this purpose, maintenance and repair facilities as well as replacements are provided for the present vehicle fleet run by ELU/CARE, while additional regional warehouses have been constructed. It is recommended that ELU/CARE should, henceforth, reduce the truck fleet to only one standard model, so as to facilitate maintenance and the procurement of spare parts. It is estimated that some \$12.8 million will be needed to cover expenditure on transport during the year.

39. It is also recommended that ELU/CARE's role should be confined to transport and logistics functions, while the maintenance and service workshop should limit its operation to ELU/CARE and NRC vehicles. Moreover, with a view to achieving maximum efficiency, NRC, UNHCR and WFP should undertake a study of the advantages and inconveniences of having two distinct agencies, one responsible for the reception, transport, storage, distribution and monitoring of goods, the other for the maintenance of the fleet of vehicles.

F. Domestic supplies

40. During 1983, UNHCR has undertaken to provide the following items:

<u>Item</u>		<u>United States dollars</u>
Blankets	60 000 units	300 000
Cloth	200 000 yards	200 000
Shoes	25 000 pairs	75 000
Utensils	15 000 sets	375 000
Soap	1 000 MT	400 000
Lamps	20 000 units	80 000
Metal buckets	5 000 units	40 000
Miscellaneous		80 000
	TOTAL	<u>1 550 000</u>

G. Shelter

41. Refugee dwellings consist mainly of huts constructed from brush, thatched with grass and covered with old cloth and blankets, etc. Local construction materials such as brush, grass and trees, have already disappeared within a radius of 40 kilometres around the camps. Partly to meet this shortage, plastic and metal sheets, wire and other construction materials were made available to the refugees last year. For 1983, it has been recommended that some 50,000 tarpaulins, at an estimated cost of \$650,000, should be made available. Moreover, since the refugees may have to stay in Somalia for some time, consideration should be given to providing them with semi-permanent shelter built of local material.

H. Domestic fuel

42. The use of wood to meet the domestic fuel requirements of refugees has already led to severe ecological damage. The search for alternatives should be intensified and, for long-term supply, priority should be given to the expansion of afforestation programmes.

I. Education and community development

43. There has been only a modest improvement in educational facilities. Many classes are still conducted in the open air under a solitary tree left standing for this purpose. Progress has been slow in the construction of the planned 600 classrooms. Other makeshift classrooms have been built with mud walls and roofs of brush and grass. Practically no matting, benches or desks are available and children squat on the ground using empty tins as seats. Broken pieces of black coloured wood serve as blackboards. Books are shared among a number of students and exercise books are non-existent.

44. In order to train more primary teachers, an In-service Institute for Teacher Training (IITr) has been established jointly by the Somali and Danish Governments and, during the 1982-1983 academic year, 900 primary school leavers were selected from among the refugee children for a two-year training programme. It is planned to train 400 new teachers every year at this institute.

45. A plan has been drawn up for a modest education programme for 1983 which will aim at providing primary education to 70,000 children and in-service training to 900 additional primary school teachers. It is also planned to construct 600 classrooms with a maximum use of local material and labour. Furthermore, it is proposed to provide 1,644 post-primary students with scholarships for secondary education in Somali schools and 162 scholarships to post-secondary students for advanced studies. In addition, assistance will be provided for the expansion of the family-life programme, a functional literacy programme for adults and vocational training for 310 students.

46. UNHCR has earmarked \$2 million for education/community development, including income-generating and self-help components, in its programme of assistance for 1983.

47. Current efforts notwithstanding, it has been noted that post-primary educational institutions in refugee affected areas need expansion to admit qualified refugees for secondary and vocational education. Conversely a problem also exists with large numbers of refugee primary school leavers, who are not sufficiently qualified to enter such schools. A study of the situation should be made with a view to setting up intermediate level facilities, such as trade schools, to solve this problem.

J. Self-help activities

48. A number of activities have been undertaken to increase levels of self-reliance. Refugees have, for example, been trained to work as health aides,

social workers and teachers. Limited progress has also been achieved in organizing non-formal education and simple vocational training for women. Small-scale family farming and fruit growing schemes have also progressed. In some camps, refugees are encouraged to grow vegetables in small patches near their dwellings and to raise poultry.

49. Workshops and training courses are being organized in the camps to teach appropriate skills to the refugees, especially the women. Training will cover soap and leather-ware production, pottery, tailoring and the making of utensils and baskets. Particular attention will be paid to encouraging the participation of the elderly and the handicapped.

50. In order to meet some of the needs for domestic fuel and shelter, a reforestation programme is to be expanded to some 240 hectares and will provide employment to about 250 refugee families.

51. It is recommended that in the future planning of agricultural projects consideration should be given to the attainment of self-sufficiency. The area of land allotted for farming should be sufficient to enable the farmers to produce enough crops to live on. In order to ensure sufficient basic food production and a surplus to provide the means of purchasing essential non-food items, the area of agricultural land in camps where the possibility of expansion exists should therefore be increased and each family allotted 4 to 5 hectares of dry land, 0.5 hectares of irrigated land, or a combination of the two. Furthermore, to ensure effective implementation of agricultural projects, it is preferable to relocate any additional population to sites where suitable agricultural land is available.

52. An amount of \$4.1 million has been budgeted for self-help projects in 1983 as follows:

	<u>United States dollars</u>
Farming and poultry	2 200 000
Irrigation scheme	1 200 000
Other projects	700 000
TOTAL	<u><u>4 100 000</u></u>

K. Support to refugee services

53. Funds continue to be required as in 1982 to support the NRC through the secondment of Government officials, payment of office rent, vehicles, transport and related administrative costs, including the purchase and replacement of office equipment. In view of the magnitude of the administrative task assumed by NRC, its staff has numbered 484 employees. It is anticipated that needs in 1983 will amount to \$2,290,000, a small part of which will be used to organize a seminar for camp commandants on matters relating to refugee assistance. In addition, a new telephone exchange is needed by NRC. An amount of \$1,440,000 is budgeted for 1984 which, in addition to cost mentioned above, will cover the services of United Nations volunteers seconded to NRC.

L. Local settlement

54. In accordance with the decision of the Somali Government to facilitate a programme of local settlement, preliminary studies, including a hydrological and geophysical survey, are being undertaken in the current year. The initial aim is to establish rural settlements to accommodate up to 40,000 refugees. An initial 1,000 hectares of land outside the confines of existing camps have been tentatively reserved by the Government for this purpose. A technical inter-agency mission is scheduled to visit Somalia in the latter part of 1983 in order to review with the Government a comprehensive settlement programme. Pending the outcome of the mission, a provision of \$12 million has been made for the establishment of these settlements, which will also require the creation of adequate infrastructure in the areas chosen.

IV. FUTURE PLANNING

55. While the initial burden of the influx of refugees was borne by the Somali Government, the international community subsequently responded generously to various appeals for assistance. At present, most of the basic care and maintenance needs of the refugees are being met with external assistance. As refugees are likely to remain in Somalia for the present, the problem of providing assistance to them on a long-term basis needs consideration. In such circumstances, much greater emphasis needs to be given to self-help activities and land settlement.

56. Refugees in general have expressed a desire to be usefully employed on their own relief programmes and on other projects. Representatives of donor countries and voluntary agencies also favour greater self-reliance and self-help by the refugees. Government officials fully share this view that the refugees should be allowed to be productive but, in view of the limited resources available to the Government, they have expressed concern that such schemes should not result in more of the refugee burden being shifted from the international community to the Government and people of Somalia.

57. The international effort to make refugees self-reliant has to be concentrated on opening up and developing fresh tracts of land receiving adequate rainfall or near the rivers and areas where there are good prospects of finding underground water. Furthermore, carefully designed livestock rearing by the refugees should be encouraged and additional wells and boreholes should be developed to allow some refugees to enter the pastoral sector. Small-scale industry and handicrafts could also be developed. All these activities must be designed to match the availability of resources in the neighbourhood of the camps and take into account the interests and skills of the host population. Furthermore, all such plans should aim to meet some of the needs of the host population as well, so as to avoid discrimination and conflict and ensure equitable burden sharing.

58. Within these guidelines, however, it should be possible to design and implement programmes to assist the refugees to become more self-supporting. In this connection, the Government recognizes that, as the programme proceeds, some camps may need relocation.

59. Particular importance is attached to the identification and development of opportunities which will enable the refugees to work and earn an income through projects which could contribute to the economic progress of the area in which they live. To this effect, and in line with the recommendations of the previous mission, consideration could be given to transferring the Planning Unit recently established within the National Refugee Commission (NRC) to the Ministry of Planning where it could act as the Refugee Planning Unit. It would thus work under the overall co-ordination of NRC like the other refugee technical units established within the functional ministries, and would ensure that the new policy for rural settlement is implemented in accordance with the national plan and the development objectives of the country.

60. It is further recommended that the assistance of the United Nations specialized agencies, particularly the International Labour Organisation and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations should be sought:

(a) In conducting a socio-economic survey to identify skills possessed by refugees;

(b) In making a survey on marketing possibilities;

(c) In the identification, preparation, appraisal and supervision of projects which would generate income opportunities for the refugees in agriculture and other fields, while contributing to Somalia's economic development, particularly in areas affected by the presence of refugees.

61. The Government of Somalia also needs international assistance to continue its own programme of assistance for the refugees in and outside the camps. Furthermore, considerable material and financial help is required to sustain and strengthen the fragile economic infrastructure of the country, particularly in refugee-affected areas, to enable it to support such a large increase in population. The Somali Government may formulate projects covering part of these additional needs to be submitted to the International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa (ICARA II) in 1984. This procedure would be in line with General Assembly resolution 37/197. The review mission discussed at length with the Government the two types of projects to be submitted to this Conference. Those to provide additional assistance to refugees, will be worked out by NRC with UNHCR assistance on the basis of the mission's findings, while projects aimed at strengthening the social and economic infrastructure are under discussion with UNDP which will assist the competent authorities in their formulation.

Notes

1/ Daily basic rations per person (in grammes): cereals - 300; wheat flour - 100; oil - 40; dried skimmed milk - 40; beans - 40; dates/dry fruits - 20; meat - 10; tea - 3; salt - 2; and sugar - 40.
