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REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL
Assistance to displaced persons in Ethiopia
Report of the Secretary-General

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* A/39/150.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In its resolution 38/91 of 16 December 1983, the General Assembly again requested the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to intensify his efforts in mobilizing humanitarian assistance for the relief, rehabilitation and resettlement of voluntary returnees, as well as for displaced persons in Ethiopia.
2. The Secretary-General was requested, in co-operation with the High Commissioner, to apprise the Economic and Social Council, at its second regular session of 1984 of the implementation of the resolution and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its thirty-ninth session.

II. VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION FROM DJIBOUTI

3. Following the establishment of a Tripartite Commission composed of the Governments of Djibouti and Ethiopia and UNHCR, several meetings were held in early 1983 and culminated in an agreement concerning the voluntary repatriation of Ethiopian refugees in Djibouti. It was also agreed that those refugees who wished to remain in Djibouti could do so while other durable solutions were explored by UNHCR, the Government of Djibouti and the international community. In June 1983 the High Commissioner launched an appeal in support of a 12-month Special Programme for Assistance to Ethiopian Refugees who wished to repatriate from Djibouti. The programme, budgeted at \$8.2 million, included \$2.2 million for basic food provided through the World Food Programme. It was designed to provide both basic relief assistance and self-sufficiency packages for agriculturalists and pastoralists (including livestock) and initial support for small-scale cottage industries together with the improvement of two small irrigated agricultural sites.
4. The first voluntary repatriation movement occurred in September 1983 and to date there have been some 14,340 registered repatriations, 6,497 persons having returned spontaneously and 7,846 under the organized voluntary repatriation programme. All registered repatriates, whether they returned spontaneously or under the UNHCR-organized programme, are eligible to receive reintegration and rehabilitation assistance for a period of one year from the date of arrival in Ethiopia. Fourteen focal points have been designated along the Dire Dawa-Dewele railway and at the time of their registration the returnees are able to choose their destination. Nineteen groups of repatriates have been moved to date. The number of people who have chosen to repatriate indicates the success of the close co-operation between the Governments involved as well as of the returnees' wish to return to their homes. An amnesty for the returnees, which had been proclaimed for the duration of 1983, has been extended until the end of 1984.

III. ASSISTANCE TO OTHER RETURNEES TO ETHIOPIA

5. A Special Programme of Assistance to Ethiopian Returnees was commenced by UNHCR in September 1982. Budgeted at \$20 million, including a \$6 million contribution of wheat from the Government of Australia, the programme has provided basic relief assistance such as food, blankets, soap and kitchen utensils for 105,100 refugees who had spontaneously returned to the Hararge and Eritrea regions of Ethiopia. Within this group, some 30,285 returnees have benefited from the receipt of

additional rehabilitation assistance such as seeds, fertilizer, agricultural tools and livestock. Overall responsibility for implementation has rested with the Government's Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC). The League of Red Cross Societies (LRCS), UNHCR's operational partner for all but two components of the programme, completed its activities in April of 1984 and UNHCR has now closed its sub-office in Asmara. The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) has been providing significant assistance for earlier returnees in the Kelafo/Mustahil area, concentrating on agricultural rehabilitation projects. As at 30 June 1984, \$10,499,208 has been obligated in support of this programme. LWF expects to complete its work as UNHCR's operational partner in the Massawa fishing and Kelafo/Mustahil agricultural rehabilitation projects on 30 September and 31 December 1984 respectively. A primary goal of these programmes has been to assist in the creation of an environment conducive to the further voluntary repatriation of Ethiopian refugees from neighbouring countries.

6. Since March 1983, a sizeable new influx of people into the Oqaden has been reported, comprising a mix of returnees and some refugees. Following a UNHCR fact-finding mission to the region, LRCS is completing registration of this group. An emergency assistance programme has been developed for persons identified as being in critical need, and a comprehensive reintegration and rehabilitation programme will be developed based on the results of the LRCS registration.

IV. REFUGEES IN THE GAMBELA/ITANG AREA

7. Since May 1983, there has been an influx into the Gambela/Itang area, which is currently estimated to total 47,000 refugees. UNHCR has established a programme of basic relief assistance for this new case-load. Detailed assessments are being made of suitable sites for agricultural projects and a limited local settlement programme is being developed for this group. Access roads to what is a remote area have been upgraded by the Government as a matter of urgency with some financial assistance from UNHCR. An emergency assistance programme was initiated in November 1983 to the value of \$1,087,000 and renewed with an additional \$2.8 million to cover the period from April to December 1984 inclusive. This programme has already made significant progress in bringing the nutritional and health standards of the refugee population to a satisfactory level. In addition to basic relief assistance, seeds and agricultural tools are being distributed and improvements are being made in water supply, sanitation, communications and logistics in order to provide the refugees with some measure of local self-sufficiency prior to the establishment of a local settlement project, tentatively scheduled for April 1985.

V. PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

8. In addition to the direct programme monitoring and control by UNHCR in close co-operation with RRC which has been made possible through the establishment of new field offices, a number of other measures have been taken to ensure further improvement in the effective and speedy delivery of services to the refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Ethiopia. By way of examples, the number of UNHCR staff in Ethiopia has increased from 15 to 38 people between 1981 and 1984, and RRC is in the process of establishing a task force to co-ordinate further its refugee- and returnee-related responsibilities.