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REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Assistance to refugees in Somalia

Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

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\* A/39/150.

## I. INTRODUCTION

1. In its resolution 38/88 of 16 December 1983 on "Assistance to refugees in Somalia", 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. The Assembly requested the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to make a comprehensive review of the overall needs of refugees, taking into account those aspects relating to their rehabilitation and settlement. It also requested the High Commissioner, in consultation with the Secretary-General, to apprise the Economic and Social Council, at its second regular session of 1984, of the proposed review and to submit a report to the General Assembly at its thirty-ninth session on the progress achieved in the implementation of the resolution.

2. In response to the resolution, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees consulted with the Government of Somalia and with representatives of a number of donor countries, United Nations organizations and voluntary agencies involved. On the basis of these discussions and direct observation of the refugee situation, UNHCR has assessed the international relief effort and identified requirements for 1984 and 1985.

## II. GENERAL SITUATION

3. The Somali Democratic Republic faces critical economic and social problems arising from weak economic infrastructure, limited natural resources and a difficult international economic environment. The sharp decline in agriculture and animal husbandry - the economic mainstays of the country - coupled with deteriorating terms of trade have severely curtailed export earnings and imposed severe constraints on Somalia's development programmes. While making efforts to cope with this critical situation, Somalia has also had to contend with the burden of large numbers of refugees, who have had a major impact on many aspects of the country's economy and society. Because of its inadequate resources, lack of infrastructure and facilities and pressure on the land, Somalia has not been in a position to absorb the refugees and allow them to become fully productive members of the community.

4. 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, A/38/400 and Corr.1; E/1980/44, E/1982/40).

5. It will be recalled that, following discussions between the Government, representatives of donor countries and non-governmental organizations in 1982, a planning figure of 700,000 refugees in camps was agreed upon. The refugees are located in widely scattered camps in the four regions of Hirán, Gedo, the North-west and lower Shebelle. Recently, refugee status was accorded to the inhabitants of the camp at Shalambot and it is now recognized as the thirty-sixth refugee camp in Somalia. It is estimated that approximately 60 per cent of the refugees are children under 15 years of age, 30 per cent women and 10 per cent men.

6. In general, the camps are open with few restrictions on travel, and movement in and out of them takes place frequently. In view of population movements since 1982, the Government now proposes a review of the planning figure and fully recognizes the need for an accurate assessment of the refugee population in the camps. However, the difficulties involved in conducting a census in 36 camps spread over four regions are formidable, particularly as the actual camp population can vary considerably over short periods of time.

### III. IMPLEMENTATION OF ASSISTANCE

7. The role of the National Refugee Commission (NRC), the Government organization responsible for refugee programmes, has been described in previous reports. NRC has continued to maintain global co-ordination of assistance activities.

8. The responsibility for the co-ordination of international assistance rests with UNHCR which, jointly with the national authorities and in co-operation with other concerned United Nations bodies, draws up the overall assistance programmes for the refugee camps, establishes priorities and directs the contributions of experts and voluntary agencies. Details of UNHCR's assistance activities in Somalia in 1983 can be found in the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. 1/

9. Basic food supplies have continued to be provided by the World Food Programme (WFP), which co-ordinates both bilateral and multilateral food donations and assumes responsibility for soliciting food aid. As in previous years, UNHCR's programmes have benefited from the active support of several United Nations agencies. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is contributing to the implementation of the "Family Life" programme and other community development projects, the World Health Organization (WHO) provides assistance to the Somali Government's Refugee Health Unit and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) is helping with various income-generating activities.

10. Some 20 voluntary agencies have also been involved in the programmes. The Emergency Logistics Unit (ELU) managed by CARE has continued to be responsible for delivery of food and other relief commodities from the ports of entry to the camps and for the fuelling and maintenance of vehicles assigned to various refugee programmes. CARE has assigned a full-time training officer to prepare nationals for future take-over of key positions still occupied by expatriates.

11. The search for durable solutions remains a top priority. The Somali Government has reaffirmed its position that voluntary repatriation remains the most appropriate long-term solution for the refugees in the country and has again stated its readiness to facilitate the departure of any group wishing to repatriate. It has, however, announced that a programme of local settlement would be formulated through which the refugees would be able, in the meantime, to attain a degree of self-sufficiency which is impossible under the conditions now prevailing in the camps.

12. To implement the local settlement programme, a new organizational structure has been established comprising a Steering Committee, a Technical Unit and

Executing Agencies. The Steering Committee will be chaired by NRC and composed of representatives of the Ministry of Planning, UNDP and UNHCR. It will be supported by a Technical Unit consisting of a rural settlements specialist, an agronomist, a water development expert and a physical planner. While the members of the Steering Committee are designated *ex officio*, it has been more difficult to recruit the members of the Technical Unit which will become fully operational only at the end of August 1984.

13. The functions of the Steering Committee are the following:

(a) To guide the implementation of the Government's policy on refugee settlement;

(b) To develop a settlement programme in the light of that policy;

(c) To steer the Technical Unit so that various settlement projects are an integral part of the Government's development programme;

(d) To assess the viability of all settlement projects and sub-projects and advise on any further studies that may be required for this assessment;

(e) To decide on project proposals submitted by the Technical Unit for inclusion in the settlement programme;

(f) To decide on priorities in light of technical review and the resources available;

(g) To initiate projects for preparation by the Technical Unit;

(h) To review quarterly all progress, evaluation, assessment and financial reports of the Technical Unit.

14. The functions of the Technical Unit are the following:

(a) To advise the Steering Committee on all operational aspects of the settlement programme; to do this, the Unit must be familiar with all the possibilities for settling refugees in Somalia and will undertake all preliminary assessments in the field with the assistance of consultants, Government ministries, United Nations agencies and voluntary agencies, where necessary;

(b) To prepare and monitor all settlement projects in close co-operation with technical staff of donors, non-governmental organizations and international agencies co-operating with the Government;

(c) To formulate specific project proposals, reviews, assessments, evaluations, etc. relating to the settlement programme for study by the Steering Committee;

(d) To evaluate other proposals for settlement projects and their implementation at the request of the Steering Committee;

(e) To prepare six-monthly progress reports and other technical reports that may be required by the Steering Committee.

15. The Steering Committee has met twice and the following two projects have been submitted by the Somali Government for examination: (a) salt production in Tokoshi village, in the North-west, for 1,000 families, and (b) agricultural land settlement in Furjano in the lower Shebelle region for 3,000 families. Following preliminary examination of the draft project proposals by the UNHCR Specialist Support Unit, one of the Technical Unit's first tasks will be to examine the projects in detail and prepare final implementation schedule.

#### IV. ASSISTANCE REQUIREMENTS

16. Assistance requirements for refugees in 1984 and the estimated needs for 1985 are described below, the major change between the 1984 programme and the proposed 1985 programme being a decrease in relief aid and the inclusion of an increased appropriation of \$11.8 million for the local settlement programme. Requirements are summarized as follows:

<u>Type of assistance</u>	<u>1984</u> (United States dollars)	<u>1985</u>
Food (150,000 tonnes approximately)	94 500 000 a/	94 500 000 a/
Water	1 843 000	475 000
Health	3 000 000	3 000 000
Shelter and domestic items	1 750 000	600 000
Transport and logistics	9 550 000	8 500 000
Communal construction	500 000	800 000
Education and community development	2 727 000	2 600 000
Lower secondary education	300 000	300 000
Support of refugee services	2 235 800	2 330 000
Self-help activities	3 000 000	2 840 000
Local integration	6 057 000	11 878 000
Counselling	203 100	265 000
Supplementary aid	80 000	88 000
Legal assistance	-	12 000
Handicapped	-	150 000
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>125 745 900</u></b>	<b><u>128 338 000</u></b>

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

17. A description of these requirements by sector is given below. This does not include submissions made to the second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa under paragraph 5 (c) of General Assembly resolution 37/197, details of which are found in paragraphs 627 to 766 of document A/CONF.125/2. Such submissions comprised 14 infrastructure projects totalling \$79.9 million.

A. Food

18. During a Food Aid Meeting of representatives of donor countries, UNHCR and WFP which took place in Somalia in July 1983, the Government's request for 120,000 tonnes of food was accepted as a planning figure for 1984. In spite of this decision, basic food supply to the refugees has been irregular owing to the delay in fulfilling pledges. If food supplies do not arrive as planned before the end of the year, the food situation in the camps will become critical. A breakdown by commodity of the requested 120,000 tonnes follows.

<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	62 600	54 654	7 946
Flour	20 870	13 373	7 497
Oil	8 350	6 350	2 000
Milk	8 350	6 204	2 146
Corn soya milk (CSM)	8 350	6 085	2 265
Beans	8 350	8 502	(152)
Dates	3 130	1 229	1 901
<b>Total</b>	<u>120 000</u>	<u>96 397</u>	<u>23 603</u>

19. WFP acts as a channel for basic food supplies such as cereals, wheatflour, edible oil, milk, CSM, beans and dates. UNHCR provides supplementary food to combat protein deficiency, particularly among vulnerable groups such as children and pregnant women. In order to ensure that every refugee receives food rations, distribution of food within the camps is organized by ELU/CARE through the newly-established system of ration shops where food is handed out to individual families only on presentation of a ration card.

B. Water

20. An extensive programme for the regular supply of potable water has been implemented, with varying degrees of success, by voluntary agencies, UNICEF and the Refugee Water Supply Division with the objective of providing each refugee with 10 to 15 litres of purified water per day. Although this has been achieved in many locations, in some areas, particularly in the North-West, the situation continues to be critical. The overall situation has, nevertheless, improved.

C. Health

21. Overall health services in the refugee camps are organized by the Refugee Health Unit within the Ministry of Health, with the assistance of voluntary agencies. The general health situation in the camps is satisfactory. Funds have been budgeted by UNHCR in the current year to continue to maintain and improve further the existing health situation, to upgrade the technical skills of community

health workers and traditional birth attendants through on-the-job training, to train nationals replacing expatriates, to improve sanitation and to provide medicines and equipment.

D. Shelter and domestic items

22. The objective of this assistance is to provide refugees with basic domestic items such as soap, blankets, kitchen utensils, lamps, buckets and tarpaulins. Most of these items are distributed in the refugee camps as needed, while others are handed out to refugees as incentives whenever they participate in any of the self-reliance activities undertaken in their respective camps.

23. In view of the fact that refugees are remaining in the camps longer than expected, it is proposed to improve their shelters by building huts with mud bricks. This proposal is being considered under the local settlement programme.

E. Transport and logistics

24. Funds have been budgeted by UNHCR in the current year to continue all services provided through the Emergency Logistics Unit (ELU) managed by CARE. These include leasing and operation of a light aircraft used to ensure medical evacuation and speedy transport of personnel, medicines and urgently required relief items, fuel and administrative costs of CARE.

F. Communal construction

25. In 1983, 120 prefabricated classrooms were erected, 20 food stores and 35 community centres constructed and existing communal facilities such as workshops repaired and maintained. All activities have now been completed in the North-west region despite initial delays in the shipment of timber which slowed down implementation. For 1984, it is planned to construct 34 more classrooms and four community centres in the North-west, Gedo and lower Shebelle regions. Three airstrips in Garbahare, Jalalaqsi and Qorioley will be upgraded and efforts will continue to repair and maintain existing communal facilities.

G. Education and community development

26. In 1983, funds were provided to continue primary education for some 50,000 refugee children between the ages of 7 and 15, with each pupil receiving a minimum of supplies and materials. Family life training, vocational training and a functional adult literacy programme have also been continued.

27. As a result of six months' vocational training, 150 refugees have been trained in various skills. The Family Life Programme was expanded in 1983 to train some 10,000 women in basic household skills and income-generating activities. In 1984, 8,000 women will be similarly trained. Training in basic literacy for refugees is

provided through the Functional Literacy Programme, which is directed at community health workers, traditional birth attendants and family life assistant teachers. In 1983, this programme reached 2,000 beneficiaries.

28. The teacher training programme, run by the In-service Institute for Teacher Training (IITT) for primary school teachers from among the refugee population, benefited 900 first-year and 500 second-year trainees in 1983/84. In 1984, 75,000 refugee children will be receiving primary education despite a continuing lack of permanent school premises in many camps.

29. The problem of the capacity of national secondary schools to absorb refugee students will become very acute in 1985. An increasing number of refugee children are becoming eligible for secondary education. Some 250 are expected to enrol in secondary schools in 1984 and over 1,000 in 1985. Since this trend is expected to continue, it may be wise to consider other means of providing secondary education for children than the award of individual scholarships to study in national schools.

30. At post-secondary level, there are at present 100 beneficiaries studying in various faculties of the Somali National University. It is anticipated that this number will increase marginally in 1985.

#### H. Support of refugee services

31. As in previous years, funds continue to be required to assist NRC with the payment of office rent, vehicles, transport and general administrative support. In addition, United Nations Volunteers will continue to be assigned to NRC.

#### I. Self-help activities

32. A number of activities have been undertaken to increase levels of self-reliance. Small-scale family farming and fruit growing schemes have progressed.

33. The development of agricultural activities within and around refugee camps and the dissemination of improved farming methods are essential to promote a certain measure of self-reliance among the refugees. Agricultural projects have been implemented with the assistance of voluntary agencies under the co-ordination and monitoring of the Refugee Agricultural Unit (RAU) established within the Ministry of Agriculture. Projects are organized on the basis of family plots varying in size from one tenth of a hectare to 1 hectare, and assistance is provided for land development, irrigation, and agricultural inputs and extension.

34. Agricultural development will be a major element of the planned settlement projects. Nevertheless, further improvement of existing farms will be essential, particularly in camps where land availability does not require relocation of refugees. The main emphasis of the ongoing agricultural projects should be placed on intensive training of refugee farmers so that they are able to continue successful farming after outside technical and material assistance ceases.



#### J. Local integration

35. Shortly after the Somali Government announced that a programme of rural settlement would be formulated to enable refugees to attain self-sufficiency pending their eventual repatriation, technical missions were sent to Somalia to undertake preliminary studies and topographical surveys. Two projects are now ready to be implemented, one in the Tokoshi village and the other in the Furjano area.

#### K. Counselling

36. The Counselling Section of NRC and UNHCR Social Services assist some 1,300 urban refugees, arranging short-term assistance when necessary, and deciding upon appropriate long-term solutions. Eight para-social workers have been trained and are now employed by NRC.

#### L. Supplementary aid

37. Assistance in the form of food and shelter for a period of up to six months or of special one-time financial assistance pending a durable solution is provided to refugees who have no other source of income.

#### M. Legal assistance

38. A legal adviser has been appointed in NRC. The funds allocated for 1985 will cover the administrative costs and other expenses of this adviser.

#### Conclusion

39. While refugees remain in Somalia, greater emphasis must be given in international aid programmes to measures that will encourage self-reliance. Small-scale industries and handicrafts should be developed in such a way as to match existing resources with the needs of the refugees. The Government fully shares the view that the refugees should be productive and appreciates the help of the international community in furthering this aim.

#### Notes

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 12 (A/39/12), paras. 80, 84 and 119; see also A/AC.96/639, paras. 214-252.

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