



# General Assembly

Distr.  
GENERAL

A/39/445  
5 September 1984

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Thirty-ninth session  
Item 12 of the provisional agenda\*

## REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

### Situation of refugees in the Sudan

### Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

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\* A/39/150.

## I. INTRODUCTION

1. In its resolution 38/90 of 16 December 1983 on the situation of refugees in the Sudan, the General Assembly requested the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to continue co-ordination with the appropriate specialized agencies to ensure the continuation of essential services to the refugees in their settlements, and to submit to its thirty-ninth session a comprehensive report on the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations of the inter-agency technical follow-up missions as well as on the implementation of resolution 38/90.

2. In January 1984 a mission was undertaken by the Head of the UNHCR Regional Bureau for Africa to review progress in the implementation of the recommendations arising from earlier technical missions. In May 1984 a joint UNHCR/ILO mission finalized proposals for a package of income-generating activities to benefit refugees in eastern Sudan.

## II. GENERAL SITUATION

3. Refugees have continued to seek asylum in the Sudan. The Government estimated that by the end of 1983 their total number had reached 690,000, representing an increase during the year of some 53,000. During the early months of 1984 further influxes brought the estimated population to 699,700 by the end of March, of whom 498,700 were of Ethiopian origin, 195,000 from Uganda, 5,000 from Zaire and 1,000 from Chad.

4. In early 1984, increasing security problems on the southern border prompted the Government of the Sudan to request the relocation of some of the spontaneously settled Ugandan refugees. To date some 10,000 of these refugees have moved into organized settlements and an additional 20,000 might be required to relocate in the future. The influx into eastern Sudan continues, reportedly at the rate of 200 to 300 persons per day, and two new transit centres have been established for their reception and sustenance.

5. During 1983 a further 1,000 refugees repatriated to Chad. The period under review also saw the beginning of repatriation to Uganda and more than 1,600 have returned home so far. To assist in this process UNHCR has appointed a protection/repatriation officer in its sub-office at Juba and has made a provision to increase the transport fleet to cater for future repatriates.

6. The Office of the Commissioner for Refugees remains the Government's focal point for the overall co-ordination of refugee policy and assistance and is increasingly playing a more significant role in programme implementation. UNHCR continues to provide programme and finance officers to liaise with and strengthen the Commissioner's Office at Khartoum, while additional resources have been provided to upgrade the logistical and management capacity of field offices.

7. Voluntary agencies are active in programme implementation in south Sudan, where, in partnership with UNHCR and the Government, they are largely responsible

for the establishment and viability of settlements. They are also active in eastern Sudan, particularly in the field of health. Throughout the Sudan more than 30 voluntary agencies are assisting refugees and in many cases complementing resources provided by the international community through UNHCR.

### III. MAJOR TRENDS IN ASSISTANCE

8. The emphasis of the assistance programme continues to be on organized settlements where the principal economic activity is agriculture. At the time of writing there were 26 such settlements in the east and 47 in the south. Owing to the influx of spontaneous settlers, it is anticipated that additional settlements will need to be created in the south.

9. Progress is being made towards providing sufficient land and water for existing settlements, particularly in the south. In eastern Sudan, however, where the major economic activities are a combination of wage-earning and agriculture, progress has been hampered by drought which has also curtailed opportunities for refugees and Sudanese alike to secure seasonal employment. Remedial measures such as deep-well drilling had to be taken during 1983 to ensure an adequate supply of water.

10. Plans are nearing completion to implement a package of income-generating activities conceived jointly by UNHCR and ILO which are designed to reduce the dependence of many refugees on agricultural production and the vagaries of related employment. Some 15 projects will benefit about 11,000 households and will maximize the participation of female heads of household in all activities. A technical adviser for overall co-ordination has been appointed and the projects are expected to commence during the second part of 1984 and early 1985.

11. In south Sudan a programme of assistance has been drawn up to be jointly undertaken by UNHCR and UNDP on the West Bank of the Nile in Equatoria province. In the context of this programme an aerial survey of the refugee-affected area is to be conducted, partly to facilitate the extension of existing agricultural settlements and to assist in the location of new sites, and partly to provide basic topographical data for the longer-term economic development of the region. Certain key activities such as borehole and road maintenance will be implemented in the short term to benefit both refugees and local communities throughout the refugee-affected area. An Integrated Development Planning Adviser will be appointed whose terms of reference will include investigation of current or planned assistance programmes for nationals; he will also make recommendations for the co-ordination of refugee programmes with national development plans. In the longer term, this co-operation is aimed at the integrated development of the refugee-affected region for the benefit of both refugees and local inhabitants.

12. The Government of the Sudanese is at present finalizing the elaboration of its requirements for the registration of refugees and the issue of identity cards to them. UNHCR will assist with the registration under what is expected to be a two-year to three-year programme. Registration will include data on refugees' skills and work experience for matching against vacancies to be recorded on computer by the Ministry of Labour of the Sudan.

13. That education and health services provided to refugees should be compatible and, as far as possible, integrated with government services is an agreed principle in the Sudan. One approach towards achieving this is the progressive involvement of technical/sectoral ministries in refugee programmes. UNHCR has made specific proposals in this respect, including the location of refugee health and education units within the regional technical ministries in eastern Sudan. These are under consideration by the Government.

14. The Sudan is host to UNHCR's largest education programme for refugees. Currently some 6,000 students are being assisted in academic, vocational and technical fields at post-primary level. Assistance is also being provided to construct, upgrade or maintain eight new intermediate schools (seven in the south and one in the east). Two refugee teacher-training programmes have been set up in the eastern region, one in English and one in Arabic.

15. In Port Sudan, the objective of assistance has been to help meet the basic needs of refugees in the unplanned sections of the town and to ease the burden on the town itself by establishing a suburban settlement at Asotriba. The construction work for 600 housing units was virtually completed in 1983, though work on the water supply system continues in 1984. Refugees should be able to move to the settlement late this year. A programme has been developed in 1984 to support the general and public health sectors in the refugee-affected areas of the town.

16. Most missions to the Sudan have stressed the need for greater refugee participation in the development of activities designed to lead to their integration as self-sufficient members of the Sudanese society and to the eventual phasing out of assistance. The number of refugees employed within refugee programmes has already increased and stress is now being laid on their involvement in managerial positions. Thus, the organizational arrangements for the development of the UNHCR/ILO income-generating programmes make specific provision for refugee participation in management and co-operative development.

17. Nevertheless, the issue of phasing out assistance is a complex one in a situation where the economic problems of the host country make it difficult for it to provide and maintain basic services for nationals. It is expected that the UNDP/UNHCR co-operation referred to above will address this issue with respect to assistance on the West Bank of the Nile. The refugee programme on the East Bank in south Sudan is approaching the stage where the basic infrastructural requirements and other needs related to the emergency and relief phase have almost been met; budgets planned for UNHCR's contribution on the East Bank in 1985-1986 reflect this. However, Norwegian Church Aid (NCA), the implementing agency concerned, has indicated that the possibility of full integration of refugee developmental needs within the NCA's country programme must continue to be closely monitored.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

18. UNHCR's programme of assistance to refugees in the Sudan is summarized as follows:

	<u>1983</u>	<u>1984</u> (revised)	<u>1985</u> (proposed)
	(United States dollars)		
Local settlement	25 298.1	32 841.0	31 644.0
Other programmes	<u>3 504.7</u>	<u>4 315.7</u>	<u>5 759.0</u>
Total	<u>28 802.8</u>	<u>37 156.7</u>	<u>37 403.0</u>

In addition, the Government of the Sudan presented a programme of 30 projects totalling \$92.6 million to the second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa.

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