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UNCHARTED TERRITORY BETWEEN RELIEF AND DEVELOPMENT
A COMMENT ON THE SOMALI EMERGENCIES

Introduction

The modalities of moving out of relief programmes into development activities, or of simply moving out without ugly withdrawal symptoms are matters of increasing relevance for which no standardized or generally agreed criteria seem to exist.

It is in the hope that experience might provide some pointers that elements of the Somali emergencies from 1979 to 1982 are being presented. Somalia has been chosen, not only on account of her newsworthiness during that period, but also because her fragile climatic and agro-economic base called for much wider range of solutions than these usually present in a monodisastrous situation. Somalia has the advantage of being virtually the only country in Africa to have a linguistically, culturally and devotionally homogenous people living under conditions of considerable diversity.

Environmental factors alone render Somalia disaster-prone. Cyclical droughts with rarely more than five years between them and recently as little as three years, together with sudden increases in human and animal populations have caused progressive ecological damage and accelerated desertification with the usual accompaniment of high winds, dust storms, water shortage, overgrazing and flash floods with more erosion when rain does fall. The north of the country is also subject to earthquakes. What many outsiders consider to be the most inhospitable parts of the land area of Somalia are the habitat of the nomadic population who make up almost two-thirds of the total and account for some 80% of Somalia's foreign exchange earnings and are the basis of her ethnic

resilience. This environment is unforgiving, the weak are not expected to survive, as is the case with nomadic societies in general, but the result is a very resilient, resourceful and independent people.

Despite these conditions, and thanks in part to some additional agricultural production in the interriverine areas initiated during the colonial periods, Somalia was able until recently to maintain a reasonable production/consumption equilibrium in foodstuff. A consequence of this has been that her transport system was not designed to handle any major inward or outward flow of goods. The serious drought that occurred in 1972 and 1973 and the volume of international assistance showed up the need for major port and road improvements. There is no existing railway system in Somalia.

In 1979 large numbers of ethnic Somalis began to cross into Somali territory from Ethiopia and to a lesser extent from Kenya, largely as a result of the conflict in the Ogaden. In April 1979 the government launched an appeal for international assistance when the numbers had already reached some 200,000. Despite the considerable improvements that had been made to the ports and the road network with various bilateral assistance programmes since 1972 the logistic system was again overburdened both due to external inputs and internal supply needs. The flow of people from the Ogaden continued through 1980 until its peak was reached just before the rains in March / April 1981 that broke the drought both in Somalia and the Ogaden. At peak there were 1.3 million persons being fed in camps and probably half as many again not in camps who were continuing their nomadic life on Somali territory. This massive influx must be seen in the light of the whole environmental fragility mentioned earlier. With a "normal" population of around 5 million, this inflow represented a 25% increase. The magnitude of the problem in Somali terms can be appreciated when one remembers that France had enough

trouble in absorbing some 500,000 returnees from Algeria in the 1950s - supposing there had been instead 12 million of them, representing 25% of France's population? This influx also accelerated the desertification of Somalia, both due to human activity, which by 1982 had made a desert of 15 km radius around many of the refugee camps and due to the extra livestock brought into the country that aggravated the overgrazing and consequent soil erosion.

Interwoven with these events Somalia had to cope with the drought that arose in late 1979 and early 1980 due to low rainfall and culminating in a failed rainy season in October / November 1980. The government had to launch a further international appeal for assistance for drought relief. At that time one could drive up one of the main riverbeds in a car and the other held only stagnant pools. The drought was broken by heavy rains that began earlier in the year than usual in the last week of March, but the rains continued longer and heavier than usual so that by mid April large tracts of the interriverine areas were subjected to some of the worst floods in living memory and the government had to launch yet another international appeal in May for flood relief.

The international response to these emergencies was generous and has been well covered in the media. It can be seen from the foregoing remarks that Somalia's own resource base could not hope to carry these extra burdens under prevailing circumstances: this factor is relevant now that it has become popular to decry external assistance, particularly massive food aid.

In order to put into perspective the problems of moving out of a relief programme designed to alleviate the foregoing emergencies, it is necessary to enumerate some of the constraints encountered and the manner in which they helped or hindered a transition to development and self-sufficiency.

These constraints fall into the following broad categories:

The Institutional Base

In the case of long-term capital or technical assistance projects, questions of the absorptive capacity of the institutional base are examined in detail. It is often assumed that in the case of emergencies, it would be too time-consuming and possibly also irrelevant. Nevertheless, many of the snags that arise later in operations are traceable to this omission.

In the case of drought, flood relief etc. most donor agencies insist on free distribution as a pre-condition for assistance. Since it is a pre-condition, governments in urgent need of help generally acquiesce at the policy level. In many countries social welfare hand-outs to selected or limited groups are contrary to government policy, with the result that there is no administrative machinery or logistics system to handle free distribution. These difficulties are sometimes compounded by donor agencies who slough off any problems arising after discharge at port of entry as a 'government responsibility'.

In the case of the 1972/1973 drought emergency in Somalia the government had, for wider social and political reasons, set up camps for the drought victims so that a corresponding administrative and logistics system was built up which later became institutionalized as the Settlement Development Agency.

In the case of the refugee influx, a National Refugee Commission was established. This Commission, however had no financial provision under the national budget and consequently no establishment within the civil service: all its staff were borrowed from some other ministry and it had no operational funds of its own from which to pay for the various administrative expenses incurred in running the camps. In addition, final executive authority for camp administration

all of which were located in rural areas, lay with the Ministry of Local Government through their network of Regional Governors and District Commissioners. The fact that staff of the Commission continued to owe their allegiance to their parent ministry and that, as in any country, ministries do not normally give away their best staff, led to various administrative weaknesses in the operation of the Commission. This, in turn, meant that a heavy injection of external inputs both financial and administrative became necessary; these were supplied in the event by the UNHCR and voluntary organizations.

In the case of the drought emergency of early 1981, the government request for assistance consisted almost entirely of food aid, which was limited to cereals. USAID was able to allow the sale to government agencies of 40,000 tonnes of maize originally intended for refugee relief. World Food Programme (WFP) allocated further 7000 but with the usual insistence on free distribution. The cargo was unloaded in Kismayu port, being the nearest to the disaster area where no free distribution facilities existed. As result the consignment was taken in hand by the State Trading Agency (ENC), which, as their title implies, has to work on profitability basis. This meant that the ENC covered their storage, handling and transport costs by disposing of enough of the donated maize through their commercial channels, despite the fact that the government had signed an agreement with the donor stipulating free distribution. From that point onwards however the Regional Governor was able to ensure an acceptable free distribution of the remainder of the consignment using government and military transport.

In the case of the flood emergency of May 1981, the Ministry of Local Government was able to set up a flood relief committee soon after the relief supplies began arriving and was able to take over from the UN coordinating committee that handled the

initial operations. Since the greater part of those supplies were airlifted, the tonnage was relatively small and the logistics manageable.

It should be noted that in each of these cases, some special machinery had to set up to deal with the administrative and logistic components, with varying degrees of expatriate support. Furthermore, in none of these cases was any satisfactory accountability or monitoring system established at the outset, in fact one of the major external inputs into the refugee relief programme was a complete logistics system working from two ports of entry to 35 outlying camps with its own information feed-back and monitoring teams.

Government settlement policy

The government of Somalia, as mentioned earlier, established a Settlement Development Agency to handle the drought victims during the 1972/1973 'long tailed drought' resulting from failed rains during two consecutive years. Camps were established in the fertile interriverine area between the Juba and Shabelle rivers flowing from the Ethiopian highlands into the south of Somalia. The majority of the victims came down from the north where the drought had been the most severe. Out of an original influx of around 200,000 only about 50,000 remained once the worst of the drought was over, the others went back to the nomadic habitat. The settlements were run as state farms and were very costly to the economy in terms of administrative overheads and low productivity. It was not until early 1981 that the Agency agreed to an experimental change in agricultural policy whereby irrigated plots were given outright to individual families: after this production rose remarkably and indicated that self-sufficiency was feasible for the whole settlement.

Policy in respect of the refugees was different in that it was assumed that all those who crossed into Somalia during

and after the Ogaden fighting, were taking refuge temporarily pending their speedy return following upon a Somali victory. This meant that there could be no question or discussion of settlement or development projects in or around the camps established to house the refugees. In the course of time, it became clear that many of those classified as refugees were drought victims rather than refugees in the true political sense. There were also a number of families moving out of Ethiopia into Somalia, many of them with livestock who continued their nomadic life in Somalia, with assistance from the extended family/clan system; these persons were also classified as refugees although they did not move into camps.

Some time elapsed before government policy could concede that there was no likelihood of a speedy Somali victory in the Ogaden, but by early 1981 it became possible to review some possible self-reliance schemes in the camps. Policy as such remained, and indeed still remains that settlement of the refugees is out of the question. Apart from the more obvious political reasons for this in the context of Somalia's confrontation with Ethiopia over the Ogaden, there are also sound economic reasons. Firstly, Somalia's land and water resources could not hope suddenly to absorb numbers of this magnitude. Secondly, the government's position on refugee relief is that this is an international responsibility. If settlement schemes for refugees were developed or developmental activities undertaken, then there would be a risk that they might become a national rather than an international responsibility. It would obviously not be in the government's interest to let this happen, for as long as they could rely on the international community to provide for the total requirements of the refugee population.

Despite these stated policies, there was some flexibility in practice. Unlike many refugee situations Somali refugees could

move in and out of the camps at will. Although there was a simple registration system by heads of family on crossing into Somalia, no identity cards or ration cards were issued, nor was any record of departures kept: to have done so would run counter to the policy of treating all refugees as ethnic Somalis.

The majority of the in-camp population consists of women and children. This means that the able bodied adults with some male adolescents were either back in the Ogaden as guerillas or out in the surrounding countryside tending their livestock. There is therefore a continuing interchange between the camp population - who are precluded from settling - and other family members outside. Since there has not been any means of providing direct relief assistance to the out-of-camp refugees, this interchange has important implications for integration and development. A sociological study carried out in one of the camps early in 1981 showed that many families had one or more established wage earners elsewhere, both in Somalia and in the Gulf States, this was not considered settlement since the other family members remained in the camp to draw on the benefits there.

One unforeseen outcome of these policies and the international response to them was that the in-camp population began to be better off than the national rural population in terms of health services, food and water supplies, and latterly in terms of education as well. This meant that there tended to be a migration into the camps rather than out of them just at a time when the donors were pressing for a reduction in camp population and the introduction of broad self-sufficiency programmes, that would reduce the burden on international support.

UNHCR

The government's settlement policy in respect to refugees

must also be seen in the light of their interaction with those of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Following upon a government request, a UNHCR Charge de Mission was appointed and an operational agreement for a relief programme signed in July 1979; by that time there were an estimated 350,000 refugees in camps. Initially there was some discussion about definitions and the possible segregation of drought victims from refugees since the former would not come under UNHCR's mandate. UNHCR's 1951 statute defines a refugee as a person who is unable or unwilling to return to his country of habitual residence due to a well-founded fear of persecution on religious, political, social or ethnic grounds. Some 3.5 million of Somalia's 5 million inhabitants are nomadic. One can add to this some 2 million more ethnic Somali nomads from the Ogaden. These people for centuries roamed this whole area in accordance with established nomadic practices and rights - nation-state boundaries were to all intents and purposes meaningless. A definition of 'his country' in that context becomes difficult.

The question of separating out refugees and drought victims arose again early 1981 when the United Nations Disaster Relief Organization following a UN-General Assembly Resolution mounted a mission to Somalia for that purpose. UNDRO's mandate covered non man-made disasters. The government objected strongly to this approach since a segregation of the two categories would have meant a severe drop in the number of refugees. This would have been not only politically inopportune but would also have resulted in a drop in UNHCR's assistance funding, which was larger than anything UNDRO could hope to raise for drought relief. The government of Djibouti on the other hand having a different political setting, was able to make the segregation, setting up camps for 'sinistrés' and for 'refugiés' and obtained assistance

for both from different sources.

There have been a few Amharic refugees coming into Somalia but these were treated as prisoners of war and did not come under UNHCR's jurisdiction.

It seems that little effort is made by UNHCR to carry out an objective assessment of the numbers of refugees in a given situation. Since their funding source is dependent largely on international donor response to given emergencies, it is obviously in their interests to go along with any figure provided in a government request. If, however, the emergency lasts for more than a few months, the donor community almost inevitably begin to ask questions and insist on monitoring registration etc. The media also often assist in this cycle by usefully highlighting the often appealing problems and encouraging assistance, then later looking for stories of mismanagement, deviation, corruption etc. to which donors are very sensitive.

The price paid in the Somali case for this lack of accountability was high. By mid-1981 major discrepancies had shown up between the refugee population figures given out by the National Refugee Commission (NRC) and assessments by health teams of voluntary organizations and by calculations of the amounts of donated food finding its way into local markets. In the end UNHCR and the government, under donor and media pressure agreed to an independent census which turned out to be an extremely messy affair, costly in terms of extra international inputs and damaging to Somalia's good name. In the process that dragged on to February 1982 many donors cut back on their support to the refugee programme and in the last round the donors by passed the UNHCR and negotiated an acceptable figure (700,000) with the government and this was the figure finally approved by the President with the UN Assistant and Secretary General for special economic and political affairs in the course of his mission to Somalia in

February. Looking back over these events, it seems curious that the UNHCR holding all the trump cards from the beginning of the operation, never played the hand. The assignment of insufficiently experienced, though dedicated staff to handle a major refugee operation may have been part of the problem, but there are clearly wider policy implications that are beyond the scope of this paper.

Technically UNHCR's mandate is limited to the camp perimeter. This becomes a major constraint when self reliance or development programmes are considered. Unfortunately in the case of Somalia there was some flexibility in this, as the government did not always strictly delineate the area allocated for camps. In fact they were in a position to requisition land according to need. The government's agreement in February 1982 to integrate national programmes with refugee development programmes and to permit the use of refugee manpower for development purposes outside the camp perimeter also made it possible for UNHCR's mandate and funding to cover refugees working outside the camp perimeter.

The Food Basket

Ration scales for emergencies are naturally predicted by the specific requirements of the situation, national stocks and external availability. In general nutritional survival can be assured with three basic commodities namely, cereals, edible oil and a protein source, usually in the form of milk powder. In the case of short term or localized emergencies it is often sufficient to allocate a cereal, particularly in the case of seasonal drought where crop failure is the principal element to remedy. In the case of the 1981 drought emergency, WFP and USAID allocated a single commodity - maize. In the case of flood relief later in the year where donor sources were more numerous, there was a wider range of commodities offered. In its coordinating role, WFP discouraged

the sending of cereals of which there were ample stocks available at the time in the country and recommended the airfreighting of higher value to bulk commodities that could be used in situations where populations cut off by floods had no available source of fuel.

The refugee emergency was a far more complex issue. As indicated earlier the government had initially distributed food to the refugees from stocks in the State Trading Agencies. The food basket at that time was largely predetermined by the availability of commodities which besides cereals contained some unusual items such as sugar, tea, rice, dates, salt and camel-meat (slaughtered in the camps). The Red Cross and voluntary agencies also contributed some milk powder. When international assistance was formally requested by the government this wide range of foodstuff was accepted by UNHCR as the basis for a ration scale for external assistance and taken as a minimum requirement, whereas the government had only given out the listed commodities on the basis of availability and not as a basic ration. After considerable discussion between government representatives, nutritionists, donors, WFP and UNHCR a modified and rationalized ration scale became effective in August 1980, consisting of 300 gr of cereals, 100 gr of wheatflour or corn soya meal, 40 gr of edible oil, 50 gr of milk powder per person per day as the essential survival ration. Additional quantities of sugar (40 gr); either beans (40 gr) or meat (10 gr); tea (3 gr); dates (10 gr) and salt (2 gr) were added as desirable but not essential. On this basis the refugees were receiving about 2250 calories per day, no diminution was made for young children. In fact the undernourished children together with pregnant and lactating women were receiving supplementary rations under the standard 'vulnerable group' programme of WFP. During the main period of influx in 1980 and 1981 the League of Red Cross Societies supplied a number of reception

centres at the border crossing points with emergency rations and rehydration services. These consisted usually of prepared milk, protein biscuits and rehydration salts. These international efforts to ensure an adequate diet for the refugees must be seen in the light of the habitual nomadic diet consisting of sheep, goat and camel meat and camel's milk with some sugar and sesame (as an oil source) and occasional seasonal inputs of sorghum. This diet is however, protein rich and energy poor which explains the high value attached to sugar and dates in the traditional diet and some health problems related to avitaminosis. It is fortunate that camels' milk has a relatively high Vitamin C content. One must also bear in mind that many of the food items imported were unknown to the majority of the refugees and there was a corresponding need for nutrition education, which regrettably did not become available on large scale until after the peak of the refugee influx had passed. Much valuable food, particularly milk powder and beans were wasted for lack of information on their proper use and purpose. Although a large proportion of those coming out of the Ogaden, particularly the children were badly undernourished on arrival, there was no nutritional disaster in the Somali camps. There may well have been overestimates of requirements which were based on European or North American nutritional standards rather than local ones. It appears that the nomadic population in their environment subsist without particular problems on about 1800 calories per day.

Delivery of the food and other non-food items was assured through an efficient logistics system built up by the international community, operating out of Mogadishu and Berbera to 26 camps in the south and centre and 9 in the north of the country. The location of these camps had been predetermined by the government who were anxious to keep the refugee population away from the main towns but located near to water

sources and as near to the habitual crossing points as security from attack would permit.

National Development Projects

There are a number of national development projects with external capital and technical assistance, the most relevant of which in this context are the Settlement Development Agency (SDA) mentioned earlier and the National Range Agency. Both these also receive WFP food assistance.

The SDA sites in various parts of the south of the country accommodate some 50,000 settlers and would be in a position in terms of land area and water resources to accommodate a number of refugees were government policy not adamantly opposed to their settlement. After the two good rainy seasons in 1981 some 2000 settlers left the settlements to return to their original habitat in the north. These gaps could readily be filled by refugees.

The NRA covers forestry, range management and sand-dune fixation activities throughout the country. In terms of its mandate, all three types of activity undertaken anywhere in the country, including those in refugee camps now fall under their jurisdiction and implementation. The agency is a dependency of the Ministry of Livestock, not the Ministry of Agriculture as might be expected.

Emergencies of whatever kind, leave a legacy to the host country. The degree to which this legacy is positive or negative seems to determine the potential for moving out of relief into development. The net effect of an emergency operation might, in one instance, have created so many disincentives or given rise to so many administrative problems that its legacy is a negative one. In another case, it may have built up a valuable infrastructure or human resource base that the host country would not otherwise have acquired. The question, then, is to ensure a positive legacy.

The time factor is important in two ways: Firstly, the longer the emergency lasts, the deeper will its mark on the country be; secondly, rapidity of deployment of resources and implementation of programmes is vital in all cases.

In the three Somali cases described, duration was in the following ascending order - flood, drought, refugees.

The flood relief operation of April/May 1981 can be regarded as a satisfactory operation. It was of short duration; it had a specific localized purpose; its target group (villages and towns surrounded by water) were readily identifiable; there were no disincentive effects; the assistance got to where it was needed in time and there was a legacy of useful know-how and some equipment. The operation was time-limited and objective-oriented.

This success, however, was due to the availability of infrastructure that had been created to handle the refugee emergency and to the availability of commodities provided for the earlier drought relief. Three elements of this infrastructure seem to have been determinant:

- the presence of voluntary agency medical and technical personnel in the first areas to be threatened who were able to give early warning of danger;
- the existence of coordinating machinery between donors and government under UN/WFP chairmanship;
- the existence of an effective logistics and transport system built up for the refugee emergency which was operational in the first areas to be effected by the flood (Hiran region).

The additional inputs provided by the emergency assistance were airtransport of tents, solid fuel, canned meat, condensed milk, high energy flour, sugar and 45 MT of pierced steel planking for emergency airstrips or roadway construction. Logistic support in the form of short landing and take off cargo aircrafts for internal transport were provided by France, Italy, the EEC and UNHCR. Some rubber boats with outboards

were also delivered but these did not prove effective. One interesting lesson learned was that an operation of this kind could be mounted without the use of helicopters whose operational and maintenance costs are extremely high in a country with no appropriate service facilities.

Flooding in the lower reaches of the Juba river in the southern part of the country took place some two weeks after that on the Shabelle. This gave the government time to organize relief operations in an area that was not covered by the UN logistic network; most of the stock of maize donated for the drought relief in the Kismayu area was diverted for the flood relief, some of it being sent to villages for stock before the peak of the flood reached the lower reaches of the river.

The legacy of this operation was positive in the sense that it provided management experience to a number of national and expatriate staff in this type of operation: it indicated where remedial action needed to be taken to avoid future disasters and it demonstrated the practicability of mounting a quick action and effective multidonor operation.

The drought emergency 1981: The general difficulties of mounting a relief operation in drought situations, identifying real target groups and operating food delivery systems are well documented already, particularly as a result of the Sahel operations.

Although the Somali operation was a relatively simple one, with maize only provided as the relief commodity, it is of interest to illustrate the role of the unpredictable as well as the importance of the time frame.

The government appeal for assistance was made on 8 March 1981; within a few days, thanks to the UN/donor/government coordinating committee set up to handle the refugee emergency up to 8000 MT of USAID Title II maize from the refugee programme were authorized for use with drought relief and dis-

tributed through the State Trading Agency for grains after removing the Titel II restrictions on the bags. This quantity was to be repaid to the refugee programme from a further 40,000 MT of maize donated for the flood relief by USAID. WFP allocated 7000 MT of maize, unfortunately arriving at a time when the Somali main ports were congested with relief cargoes for refugees. To avoid a waiting period of some three weeks the vessel was diverted to Kismayu only to find that 7000 MT of wheatflour for the State Trading Agency and 10,000 MT of USAID maize was in the process of being discharged there and took up all the available storage capacity. Most of the WFP maize had to be moved by the State Trading Agency to rented warehouses or empty schools, entailing considerable extra expenses and time on handling. Before any meaningful distribution could be made of the Kismayu stocks, the flood emergency arose and most of the maize donated for drought was actually used for flood relief. As mentioned earlier, however, quite a large percentage was taken by the State Trading Agency to cover their handling, storage and transport costs as there was no other means of payment available.

In terms of logistics, the principal difficulties arose from lack of storage space and port congestion; flooding also made distribution outside the town of Kismayu almost impossible for several weeks. Storage and port congestion are in the Somali case interrelated. Not having had to cater for any large grain movement, she had no bulk grain handling facilities nor silo capacity. All grain had to be delivered bagged, adding to handling costs and loading and discharge time. Much time effort and frustration could have been avoided in this case if an emergency grain reserve had been set up as repeatedly recommended by the FAO. Several proposals have been put forward by donors for bulk grain handling and the siting of silo capacity also for emergency use in the port areas.

The impact of this assistance was slightly on the negative side since less than 20% of the assistance fulfilled the stated purpose of the donations. It also tended to lead the government to believe that they could rely on international assistance for this kind of generalized emergency without having to take any preventive measures such as grain reserves, watershed management, provision of drought resistant seed varieties etc.

The refugee emergency: During the period of rising numbers of refugees in the period 1979 through 1980, development centered around the creation of the necessary infrastructure for the in-camp population - such as the logistics system for supply from ports of entry, health services, clinics, water supply, sanitation and storage. It was only after there had been a considerable reduction in numbers after the March/April rains in 1981, followed by the donor/NRC confrontation over numbers and the consequent hardening of the donor position, that pressure mounted for development and self-reliance in the true sense.

On the surface, conditions for development looked ideal. Large numbers of idle yet able-bodied refugee men and women, together with a number of technically qualified and highly motivated voluntary agency personnel were available in a country whose chief developmental bottleneck since independence had been lack of manpower and middle-level management outside the main urban areas. In reality, however, there was little room for manoeuvre between the government's non-settlement policy on the one hand and lack of motivation among the refugees on the other.

Initially attempts were made to develop some of the agricultural potential in the camps, but a survey undertaken early in 1982 showed that not more than 5% of the total food requirements could be met, even with sizeable external inputs and always provided that an already well-fed refugee population

could be motivated to undertake the work. A further constraint was that there was no standard approach to payment for services; some voluntary organizations were able to motivate people to work for nothing, others paid cash wages greatly in excess of Somali norms, while other refugees managed to have their services paid for in the form of extra food rations.

Some enduring success was achieved in respect of the training of community health workers and the establishment of an efficient Refugee Health Unit within the Ministry of Health with support from the Centre for Communicable Diseases. Over 2000 Community Health Workers were trained in little over a year, but it took a considerable time before the UNHCR could be persuaded to provide a cash wages for them rather than the use of an ad hoc allocation of extra food rations, to which donors and WFP objected strongly.

Although an allocation of rations is axiomatic in any food-for-work project, there were serious objections to this ad hoc use of rations for payment of services in camps. Since full rations were already being distributed to all refugees including full rations for children as well as supplementary feeding for the vulnerable groups, it is evident the extra rations issued or services rendered would be for sale rather than consumption. This meant that these rations that had been hauled up to the camp sites from the port at considerable effort and expense would be driven back by someone else for sale, which is ludicrous. It was also found that extra rations were given for salary type payments (storekeepers, guards, watchmen, etc.) which is not food-for-work in any developmental sense. Various complaints arose in the camps on account of this lack of standardization and ad hoc practices.

A solution was sought within the framework of the WFP chaired foodaid committee that would satisfy the need to provide a motivational element, save transport costs, reduce

market sales of donated food aid and allow for standardization of remuneration for services rendered. The formula decided upon was to remove sugar from the refugee ration and reserve this commodity exclusively for payment in kind for services. Such services had to have a developmental dimension, that is to say objective-oriented and time limited. On-going administrative and supervisory personnel would be paid a cash wage rather than a wage in kind. Sugar is a highly prized commodity in Somalia, even in the nomadic society.

This decision provoked some waves of protest from various quarters, however no hardship resulted since the sugar that had previously been written into the rations scale as a desirable but not essential item, was almost never available from donors in 1980 and 1981, but a large consignment was received at the very end of 1981 which enabled the change to be made effective 1 January 1982. The most important consideration was that it provided the sought for motivational element and continued to be distributed in the vulnerable groups feeding programme so that no nutritional damage resulted.

After some experimentation to find the correct balance between various wage scales and an attempt (later discarded) to equate sugar to a monetary value, sugar was issued at 1 kg per man-day of unskilled labour. Although there were some local variations in the free market value of the commodity this meant that the ration was worth slightly more in most areas than the government daily cash wage rate and quite a lot less than the free market job rate - if a job could be found. In many instances this payment in kind was more attractive than cash since sugar could not always be obtained for cash. Somalia produces about one quarter of domestic requirements and imports are severely restricted. In addition to the advantage of motivation and standardization, transport costs were reduced as it was no longer necessary to move the high bulk

low sale value components of the extra rations - that is to say cereals and wheatflour.

These decisions led to a spurt of development activity within the camps, such as tree nurseries, building of classrooms and stores, large scale production of fuel savings stoves made from local materials, sub-surface weirs in seasonal riverbeds (wadis) for water retention, etc. The next more difficult step was to find means of moving outside camp perimeters and coordinating with national schemes. Fortunately, concurrent with these developments the donor group known as the 'Concerted Action for Development in Africa' (CADA) had singled out Somalia as a priority area for reforestation in which manpower was of prime importance and the United Nations Sahelian Office (UNSO) had been publishing various mission reports that highlighted the urgent need for massive ecological restoration measures, including sanddune fixation. These various strands were woven into a quite effective slogan to the effect that the refugees had a moral obligation to restore the ecological damage that they had done to the country. To do this, the refugees would of course be allowed to work on projects in the vicinity of camps as well as those within the camps, particularly those areas near the camps where water control and reforestation were possible.

The matter was raised at the highest policy level on the occasion of the mission led by the Assistant UN Under-Secretary General for Special Economic and Political Affairs in February 1982. He had already led two previous missions to Somalia in 1979 and 1980 to make recommendations to the General Assembly about assistance to Somalia's refugees. This last mission resulted in a policy agreement that all developmental activities in refugee camps, or those using refugee manpower elsewhere, should be the responsibility of the sectoral

ministries concerned or their regional representatives in the offices of the Regional Governors and District Commissioners. It was also agreed by the President that for assistance purposes the ceiling figure of 700,000 refugees remained valid. An important side effect of these decisions was that for the first time UNHCR funding and facilities could be used for development activities undertaken by refugees outside the perimeter of the camps.

A number of experimental reforestation, nursery development, horticultural and watershed management projects were quickly implemented in collaboration with representatives of sectoral ministries and the NRA. A steering committee has been established in January 1982 to work out a pro forma for project submission and scrutiny and to approve the issue of the sugar ration to the worksites through the UN logistics under CARE management. The committee was composed of representatives from the NRC, UNHCR, the Refugee Health Unit, CARE, voluntary organizations concerned with the projects and the Food Aid Directorate of the Ministry of Local Government, chaired by WFP. When a planning unit was set up within the NRC, it was able to take over much of the initial screening of projects, the principal purpose of which was to ensure that the project was a genuine development one and to provide additional technical backstopping if required. In practice projects were elaborated and implemented at the camp level in collaboration with one of the voluntary organizations operating in the areas concerned or in the camp itself. This provided an efficient means of preparation, implementation and supervision.

These developments opened the way for larger scale programmes to assist national development. The Ministry of Planning was the first to issue an official request for up to 1000 refugee workers to assist in a sanddune fixation project under UNSO aegis in the neighbourhood of one of the refugee

camps south of Mogadishu. The intention would be to set up worksite canteens and on-site accommodation under canvas on a ten day or two week rotational basis.

The potential use of refugee manpower has already been taken as an element in some of the larger bilateral reforestation proposals under the CADA initiative which would be carried out in conjunction with the NRA and would be on a food-for-work basis, similar to the development programmes already operational nationally with the NRA and WFP.

Pending any new agreement the burden still remains, however, on the international community to provide food and other inputs to care for 700,000 refugees. Those other inputs include for instance the logistics unit whose operating costs alone in 1982 will likely run up to \$15 million. Several avenues are open and proposals have been made to lighten this burden, some of which could be applied concurrently:

- intensification of the functional literacy programmes for refugees. The positive results obtained from the training of Community Health Workers from among the refugee population shows the potential of this approach. The World Bank Education projects have included nomadic education and the construction of nomadic educational centres. These have not had much success because of the very mobility of the target population. Functional literacy for the in-camp and basically nomadic population by origin provides an opportunity for considerable expansion of this concept with particular emphasis on making them more efficient in their own habitat rather than embarking on settlement schemes. Programme proposals have already been worked out between UNHCR and UNESCO;
- substitution of some of the imported commodities in the relief programme with local products. Camel's milk, for instance, is a highly prized product at all levels of society and has a correspondingly high market value. It is

estimated that over 200,000 tons are produced every year by the herds - the camel population of Somalia being about 1.5 times the human population. Yet much of this production goes to waste due to lack of marketing outlets and transport facilities in the remote rural areas and the short conservation period of the milk. This happens particularly during the peak season when the nomads drink greatly in excess of their needs. A research project was begun to document availability, quality, conservation improvement and marketing but had to be abandoned for lack of funding. Although the Swedish International Development Agency has shown some interest in general research in this area, there is little expertise on camels among the major donors so there has been scant response to government requests for assistance in this field;

- progressive reduction of relief inputs both in variety and quantity in respect of food items and the setting aside of further commodities and quantities for exclusive use in food-for-work programmes following the precedent of eliminating sugar from the general free distribution;
- provision of a cash wage for all camp administrative personnel and total elimination of the use of extra rations as salary for such personnel. Progress has already been made along these lines but it remains necessary to convince the NRC to make a corresponding reduction in official refugee numbers since these include the rations given out as payment for services;
- break-down of camps into smaller units in those areas that offer a greater chance of self-sufficiency through agricultural or artisanal activities;
- encouragement to those with agricultural background or experience to assist in the development of various government agricultural schemes now opening up in the Juba valley region in the south of the country as a result of an

apparent go-ahead on the construction of the dam at Bardhere under EEC and other funding. The question of 'settlement' could be avoided perhaps by technically creating a sub-refugee camp there for the purpose;

- encouragement of the development of a kind of closed market system between the camps and the surrounding farmers where agricultural land exists in order to reverse the desertification process and provide a ready market for local farmers in exchange for refugee commodities - for instance sugar, which could become available from joint food-for-work programmes.

From previous experience in connection with the 1972/1973 drought emergency and related settlement schemes, it would seem likely that only a part of the refugee population now in camps would return once there is an agreed settlement of the confrontation with Ethiopia. Many refugees have now found a modus vivendi in and around the camps and would be reluctant to leave. Infrastructure in the camps would still be better than that outside. In the 1972/1973 events, it was what might be called the nomadic core that returned to their habitat once the worst of the drought had passed, while those that stayed were those who had either had some agricultural background or who were already partially settled before the drought. The same pattern began to occur again with the departure from the camps of many families once the good rains of early 1981 took place, the process is likely to continue especially with a reduction in external relief. This would have the advantage of reducing camp size and making self-sufficiency from surrounding land more likely. The amount of relief then required would be no greater than that granted for the general population.

The achievement of this goal will depend largely on continuing provision of guidance and coordination by donors, international

and voluntary organizations. Though this will certainly involve some longer term costs and inputs, it would be far less costly than to permit a relapse into relief.