

Part I: Executive Committee Summary

(i) Context and Beneficiary Populations

Yemen continues to be one of the least developed countries in the world with a Human Development Index of 148 among the 174 nations surveyed. The government of Yemen has made important efforts to modernise the management of the national economy and to bring about reforms in its structures and institutions. These efforts have been accompanied by the progressive introduction of a democratic and multi-party system including commitment to protect and promote the human rights of its citizens. Yemen still faces many development challenges: rapid rate of population growth, high rate of illiteracy, poverty and food security as well as dependence of the economy on revenues from export of oil. The recent Local Council elections have prepared the ground for decentralisation and more active people's participation in local government affairs. On the diplomatic front, Yemen has improved its ties with the Arab countries and resolved the old border conflict with Saudi Arabia.

Security situation in Yemen remained normal and UNHCR was able to maintain regular access to different refugee sites. However, tribal conflicts and occasional kidnapping of foreigners obliged the UN agencies to take precautionary measures.

Yemen's proximity to the Horn of Africa makes the country vulnerable to population flows including influx of Somali refugees and asylum seekers from other countries. As a signatory to the Geneva Convention and its Protocol, it accepts Somalis as refugees on a prima facie basis. The continuation of civil conflict combined with economic hardship and drought in the southern and central parts of Somalia has led to an annual average of 10,000 Somali new arrivals during the past three years. Yemen is also hosting asylum seekers and refugees from the Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Iraq. Authorities have expressed reservation about long term presence of non-Somali refugees in the country and consequently UNHCR is providing international protection and finding solution to their problems. The principal refugee group in Yemen is the Somalis numbering 56, 500 persons. The actual number of Somali refugees in Yemen is believed to be substantially higher than the above figure that represents those registered by UNHCR in the summer of 1999. More than 87% of the Somali refugees in Yemen originate from the southern and central parts of that country. Close to 39 % of this group is below the age of 18 and women constitute 48% of the Somali refugee population. The camp-based Somalis comprise 24% of the total registered population. Other refugee groups consist of 2,566 Eritreans, 1,203 Ethiopians, 91 Sudanese, 85 Iraqis and 45 Palestinians. The overwhelming majority of Eritreans are those who came to Yemen during the war of independence and are considered locally integrated. The Ethiopian group consists of the ex-officers/cadets of Ethiopian Navy accepted by authorities on group basis as well as individual cases recognised by UNHCR under its mandate. The Sudanese and Iraqi cases constitute mandate refugees and are mostly single males or females with only 20% as families.

Recently the government has established an inter-ministerial Committee for Refugee Affairs for the purpose of co-ordination of its policies with UNHCR; however, asylum-related national laws and administrative capacity have not yet been developed. Moreover, low level of economic development precludes direct government assistance to refugees, although a significant social cost is associated with their presence in different parts of the country. Therefore, UNHCR has been obliged to provide protection and assistance to and find durable solution for different refugee groups in Yemen. UNHCR's operations include status determination of non-Somali asylum seekers, resettlement of eligible cases, care and maintenance activities for destitute Somali refugees in the camp, social services for the urban caseload and facilitating voluntary repatriation. Another important dimension is the capacity building programme for assisting both the National Committee as well as the Immigration Authority to assume responsibility for screening and registration of Somali refugees in the country as well as development of appropriate national legislation.

With regard to the Somali refugees; asylum policy and activities related to repatriation are co-ordinated with other country offices and with the Branch Office for Somalia. Similarly for the non-Somali caseloads, access to the country of origin information combined with frequent contacts with the relevant offices in the region provides the basis for harmonisation of criteria for status determination and resettlement.

The assistance programme in Yemen is implemented by a group of seven NGOs comprising four internationals and three nationals. The World Food Programme provides substantial food resources for the refugee-feeding programme in the camp. The Common Country Assessment as the principal document setting out development framework for the UN agencies in Yemen has recognised addressing the basic needs of refugees in urban areas of the country in an integrated manner.

(ii) Principal Programme Goals and Objectives

UNHCR's operations will focus on protection, capacity building of government counterpart, repatriation and consolidation of care and maintenance assistance with a strong accent on self-sufficiency of camp-based caseload. In formulation of objectives, several parameters have been taken into account:

- . Special needs of women and children such as those related to their basic rights in the areas of health, education, training, representation in committees, participation/employment in facilities set up to serve refugees and solutions particularly voluntary repatriation and resettlement of vulnerable cases;
- . Partnership with NGOs for implementation of activities related to protection, assistance and solution for the refugees, with special emphasis on bringing additional resources to the programme by these organisations;

- . Capacity building of the government counterpart in order to enable the authorities to assume more responsibility for refugees and collaborate effectively with UNHCR in protecting and finding solutions for refugees.

Somali Refugees in Al Kharaz Camp- 10,000 persons	
Main Goal: Provide basic services and assist them to gain self-sufficiency	
Principal Objectives	Related Outputs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Protection of vulnerable refugees especially women-headed households . Health and education services for women and children comprising 74% of the camp population . Provision of safe drinking water . Production of supplementary food such as vegetables and lentils, fishing and vocational training skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Social counselling unit in the camp identifies and supports the cases . Establishment of health clinic and two schools in Somali and Arabic curriculum . Water supply system established within each shelter module provides easy access to women for collecting water . Support in form of materials, equipment and training will be provided to refugee families giving priority to women-headed households to develop a reasonable degree of self-sufficiency

Somali, Ethiopian and Eritrean Refugees – 5000 persons	
Main Goal: Facilitate repatriation to areas of origin	
Principal Objectives	Related Outputs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Harmonisation of policy and assistance in support of repatriation . Ensure voluntary nature of return . Facilitate return in safety and dignity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Tripartite mechanism between UNHCR and countries of asylum and origin . Interview and registration of applicants by UNHCR . Provide documentation, transport and cash grant assistance to returnees

Somali, Ethiopian, Eritean, Sudanese and Iraqi refugees – 38,000 persons	
Main Goal: International protection and support to government counterpart	
Principal Objectives:	Related Outputs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Status determination of non-Somali asylum seekers and finding durable solution for the recognised cases . Ensuring access to basic health care, education, social counselling and legal assistance for the urban refugees . Development of capacity to screen and register Somali refugees and develop appropriate policies and national legislation on asylum by the competent authorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Individual refugee status determination and facilitating resettlement in accordance with UNHCR's criteria . Management of facilities for the caseload with women and children comprising 68% of the population . Technical and financial support to Immigration Authority and the National Committee for Refugee Affairs