

# SOMALIA

## INITIAL OBJECTIVES

- Facilitate the lasting return to relatively safe areas of 71,000 Somali refugees from various countries of asylum and help them reintegrate by providing basic infrastructure and services.
- Consolidate the reintegration of returnees from previous years by implementing community-based Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) with an emphasis on long-term sustainability and self-reliance.
- Monitor the safety of all returnees through frequent visits to those areas to which refugees have returned.
- Report back, in detail, to other UNHCR offices, UN agencies, NGOs, donors and individuals involved with Somali refugees still living in exile.
- Whenever possible, ensure the protection and well being of refugees of all nationalities (e.g. Ethiopians) and seek durable solutions for them.

## MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS, PROGRESS ACHIEVED AND CONSTRAINTS

Improved security conditions, particularly in north-west and north-east Somalia, allowed the return of some 19,220 refugees from neighbouring countries in the first half of the year. Some 18,000 repatriated from camps in eastern Ethiopia, 950 from camps in Kenya and 270 from Yemen. Those who came from Yemen went back to Mogadishu. The repatriation operation from Djibouti to north-west Somalia is stalled, as tensions between the two increased. The border was closed several times and armed forces were deployed on both sides. The repatriation operation from Ethiopia has been delayed by the refugee community in Hartisheik who demanded an increase in the travel grant. UNHCR and the Administration

for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA) are reviewing the matter. Information was provided to UNHCR offices to facilitate the safe return of Somali refugees from Bangladesh, Chad, India, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic. Country of origin information was shared with UNHCR offices in Armenia, Holland, Indonesia, Ireland and Malaysia, to assist in determining the refugee status of Somalis seeking asylum in those countries. Similarly, information on areas of origin, as well as the various Somali clans and sub-clans, was provided to UNHCR offices in neighbouring countries to assist in decisions regarding asylum and repatriation.

Recognising the limited capacity of host communities to absorb additional populations, UNHCR is implementing QIPs in areas receiving large numbers of returnees. In the first months of 2000, UNHCR provided support to the authorities and people of north-west and north-east Somalia for the rehabilitation of basic facilities and services. The Office implemented projects in the key sectors of water, health, education, income-generation, crop production, livestock, and community services, including special activities for women and children. These involved training in basic skills and sensitisation against harmful traditional practices like female genital mutilation. To give authorities in the north-west and north-east as well as local communities a sense of ownership and ensure sustainability of the QIPs, a project committee, composed of representatives of Ministries, UNHCR and NGO staff, was established in both areas. The committee undertakes assessments, monitoring and evaluation to ascertain the impact and sustainability of QIPs in the communities.

Nine water projects, including on-the-job technical and management training, are being implemented in north-west Somalia, while eight water catchments are being rehabilitated in north-east Somalia. Six shallow wells were rehabilitated in the north-west and one in the north-east. Health centres were rehabilitated

and medical supplies, drugs, equipment and training materials were provided. Two primary schools are being constructed in the north-east. Moreover, training is being conducted in the use of fireless cookers. Eleven other projects, mainly to rehabilitate six schools and provide school furniture, are under implementation.

To stimulate income-generation opportunities, 125 returnees were given loans in Burao, in the north-west, as part of a micro-credit project. A similar project was started in the capital, Hargeisa, in the four new returnee settlements. It is expected that 800 returnees will benefit from this project. Furthermore, rehabilitation of Hargeisa's central market is almost complete. This will give an opportunity to returnees who are running small businesses to expand their activities. In north-east Somalia, the new market in Galkayo town was supplied with electricity.

In north-west Somalia, returnees were provided with fishing gear. Farmers were provided with agricultural tools and equipment. Other activities included the construction of a slaughterhouse and veterinary clinics, and the rehabilitation of a quarantine yard.

A special programme on the right of children to basic education was launched to provide school materials as well as technical training to teachers. This programme also builds the capacity of 15 local NGOs involved in promoting children's rights. A vocational training programme involving some 80 students, both boys and girls, in such fields as secretarial skills, carpentry, masonry, electricity and metal work is being implemented.

This year, UNHCR and UNDP launched a joint initiative aimed at minimising cross-border disparities between refugees, displaced persons and host communities in Somalia and Ethiopia, as a means to stop cross-border movements and ensure a smooth transition from emergency relief to long-term development. This initiative will facilitate the phasing out of UNHCR's assistance in Somalia.

As long as large numbers of Somali refugees are still in camps in neighbouring countries, UNHCR continues to maintain its presence in Somalia to facilitate their return and reintegration. Return is linked to an improvement of the security situation in southern Somalia, where large areas remain inaccessible. UNHCR only maintains national staff in Mogadishu and Kismayo.

The on-going reconciliation conference has raised hopes for peace, but it is not possible to predict the outcome of this process. At this stage, north-west Somalia does not support the proposal by Djibouti for a transitional government and perceives it as an obstruction to its international recognition as a sovereign state.

UNHCR continued to provide protection to refugees in Somalia, most of whom are Ethiopians. The Office intervened to secure the release of Ethiopian and Eritrean refugees who were arbitrarily arrested by the police in Hargeisa. UNHCR also continued to seek durable solutions for these refugees. As a preliminary step to identify eligible candidates for resettlement, 46 Ethiopians and three Eritreans were interviewed.

### REVISED OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITY ACTIVITIES FOR JULY - DECEMBER

UNHCR's initial objectives remain unchanged. The following are priority activities for the rest of the year:

- Persuade the authorities of north-west Somalia to reconsider their position on the repatriation of their nationals from camps in Djibouti. Should the authorities reconsider, it may be possible to repatriate some 7,000 refugees before the end of the year.
- Continue to facilitate the return of Somali refugees from camps in eastern Ethiopia as soon as an agreement on a repatriation package is reached. The Office expects that some 50,000 refugees will repatriate during the second half of the year.

- Assist the repatriation and reintegration of about 25 per cent of the Somali refugee population currently in camps in Kenya, in the event that the peace process leads to the establishment of a transitional government in Somalia.
- Continue to implement QIPs, particularly in returnee areas, in close collaboration

with Governments, other UN agencies and local NGOs. The programme will focus on the rehabilitation of the main repatriation roads, the construction and rehabilitation of schools and health clinics, and increasing water supply. In addition, assist key government departments in building and strengthening their capacity to deal with reintegration.

**FINANCIAL DATA (USD)**

	Initial Budget	Revised Budget	Total Funds Available*	Total Funds Obligated
<b>AB and TF</b>	10'592'219.00	11'128'933.00	4'254'700.00	4'254'700.00

\* Includes income from unrestricted contributions, income from contributions restricted to the region/country, opening balance and adjustments.

