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REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ON OPERATIONAL MATTERS

Agenda item 9

For information



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PROTRACTED RELIEF AND RECOVERY OPERATION APPROVED BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (1 JANUARY–30 JUNE 2000)— BANGLADESH 6155.01

Assistance to Refugees from Myanmar

Number of beneficiaries	21,400 refugees
Women	10,935
Men	10,465
Duration of project	Twelve months (1 January–31 December 2000)

Cost (United States dollars)	
Total food cost	1,092,110
Total cost to WFP	1,791,973
Total cost to UNHCR	2,867,284
Total cost	4,659,257

Note to the Executive Board

This document is submitted for information to the Executive Board.

The Secretariat invites members of the Board who may have questions of a technical nature with regard to this document, to contact the WFP staff focal points indicated below, preferably well in advance of the Board's meeting.

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Should you have any questions regarding matters of dispatch of documentation for the Executive Board, please contact the Supervisor, Meeting Servicing and Distribution Unit (tel.: 066513-2328).



1. Between November 1991 and April 1992, there was a mass exodus of minority Muslims from the Rakhine State of Myanmar, with refugees crossing into southern Bangladesh. In September 1992, a census confirmed a refugee population of some 250,877 persons. A gradual repatriation of the refugees began in late 1992; this was formalized in May 1993 through a Memorandum of Understanding with UNHCR. Repatriation was suspended in mid-1997, with some 23,000 refugees remaining in Bangladesh. A partial resumption of repatriation was agreed in November 1998 but progress remained slow due to procedural restrictions. As of December 1999, about 21,400 refugees remained in Bangladesh; of these, 7,000 had earlier been cleared for repatriation by the Government of Myanmar, 5,000 are considered as political cases and the remaining 9,000 are not recognized as residents of Myanmar.
2. Under the expansion phase PRRO 6155.01, WFP approved assistance valued at a total of US\$1,791,973 to supply 3,451 tons of rice, 312 of blended food, 240 of pulses, 134 of vegetable oil, 99 of sugar and 78 of salt to meet the needs of 21,400 refugees for a period of 12 months, to December 2000. A general food ration is provided to the refugees, together with a supplementary feeding programme for 800 expectant and nursing mothers and 600 malnourished children in the form of an on-site food distribution. An average of 214 children under 5 years of age suffering from severe malnutrition also receive on-site therapeutic feeding. Preferential treatment is given to refugee women at food distribution sites.
3. The refugees are living in two camps located at Kutupalong and Nayapara in the Bangladesh district of Cox's Bazaar. Donor assistance to the refugees is coordinated by the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief and channelled through the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC) in Cox's Bazaar. The Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BRCS) is responsible for storage, distribution and reporting of food commodities at the camp level. NGOs supported by the Department of Health and UNHCR provide family planning activities, pre-natal care and counselling to expectant and nursing mothers on nutrition and sanitation in the camps. Regular coordination meetings are held with camp officials, United Nations partners, government agencies and NGOs under the chairmanship of RRRC. A Food Management Committee composed of the RRRC, UNHCR and WFP, the District Controller of Food and BRCS also meets regularly to review the implementation of the refugee feeding operation.
4. An effective agreement leading to the early return of the refugees remains elusive, while the Government of Bangladesh's policy of not allowing refugees to seek employment in or outside the camps has reduced the scope for development activities. However, UNHCR is supporting an education programme for refugee children and negotiations are continuing with the Government of Bangladesh on the introduction of food-assisted development activities in areas in and around the camps that support greater refugee self-reliance and assist the surrounding host population. Further negotiations are taking place between UNHCR and the Governments of Myanmar and Bangladesh on the early repatriation of the refugees.

