

برنامج
الأغذية
العالمي



Programme
Alimentaire
Mondial

World
Food
Programme

Programa
Mundial
de Alimentos

Executive Board
Third Regular Session

Rome, 19 - 22 October 1999

PROJECTS FOR EXECUTIVE BOARD APPROVAL

Agenda item 7

For approval



Distribution: GENERAL
WFP/EB.3/99/7-B/2

10 September 1999
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

PROTRACTED RELIEF AND RECOVERY OPERATION— NEPAL 6151.00

Assistance to Bhutanese Refugees in Nepal¹

Number of beneficiaries	96,500
Duration of project	Twelve months (1 January to 31 December 2000)

Cost (United States dollars) ²	
Total cost to WFP	7,012,383
Total food cost	5,957,210
Total cost	11,144,383

¹Preceded by PRO 5324.03—Food Assistance to Bhutanese Refugees in Nepal.

²One United States dollar equalled 67.7 Nepali rupees in June 1999.

ABSTRACT

Refugees from Bhutan began entering Nepal in late 1990, with the influx peaking during the first half of 1992. As of April 1999, there were 96,500 registered refugees in the seven camps established in the Jhapa and Morang districts of eastern Nepal.

Since mid-1999, the Government of Nepal has renewed efforts to resume official bilateral talks with a view to seeking a lasting solution to the refugee problem. However, there has been no real progress towards its resolution in the near future. The host Government is also maintaining its firm policy of non-integration of the refugees in Nepal.

WFP started providing food assistance to Bhutanese refugees in January 1992. From that time, WFP has committed a total of US\$52 million for food assistance through nine successive operations.

The WFP/UNHCR Joint Food Assessment Mission of June 1999 reported that the overall nutritional and health situation in the camps continued to be satisfactory and the regular provision of food and non-food assistance was adequate. The mission also recommended continuation of assistance for another year due to the lack of clear prospects for either repatriation or integration, and the actual restrictions enforced on the refugees which preclude the achievement of food self-sufficiency.

During the proposed one-year operation, WFP will distribute to all registered refugees a general food ration which will provide the recommended minimum requirement. In addition, WFP will supply fortified food commodities through a supplementary feeding programme for an average of 4,000 vulnerable persons, mainly expectant and nursing mothers.

With a view to promoting the progressive self-reliance of the refugee population, WFP has been supporting income-generating and vocational training activities, and vegetable gardening activities in favour of the most needy refugee households. These activities have been implemented mainly through refugee women's organizations.

NOTE TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

This document is submitted for approval by 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.

Regional Director: Ms. J. Cheng-Hopkins tel.: 066513-2209

Programme Coordinator: Ms. C. Ushiyama tel.: 066513-2359

Should you have any questions regarding matters of dispatch of documentation for the Executive Board, please contact the Documentation and Meetings Clerk (tel.: 066513-2641).



LIST OF ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

AMDA	Asian Medical Doctor Association
AS	Angular stomatitis
BMZ	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation
CHW	Community health workers
CMC	Camp Management Committee
DDC	District Development Committee
DSC	Direct support costs
DSM	Dried skim milk
FASREP	Food availability status report
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
JFAM	Joint Food Assessment Mission
LDC	Least developed country
LIFDC	Low-income, food-deficit country
LTSH	Landside transport, storage and handling
LWF	Lutheran World Federation
MCH	Mother and child health
NRCS	National Red Cross Society
NUCRA	National Unit for the Coordination of Refugee Affairs
RARP	Refugee-Affected Areas Rehabilitation Programme
RCU	Refugee Coordination Unit
RWF	Refugee Women's Forum
SCF	Save the Children Fund
SFP	Supplementary feeding programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
VDC	Village Development Committee



CONTEXT AND RATIONALE FOR PROVIDING ASSISTANCE

Background and Situation Analysis

1. Nepal is classified as both a least developed (LDC) and a low-income, food-deficit country (LIFDC), with a per capita income of US\$200. It ranks 152nd out of 174 countries in the 1998 UNDP Human Development Report and has a FAO Aggregate Household Food Security Index of 86.3 (1993–95). Approximately half of Nepal's 22 million citizens survive on less than one dollar a day. Real economic growth has been low and fluctuating; the per capita income rose by only 0.9 percent a year over the period 1964 to 1994. The incidence of poverty is estimated to have increased from 31 percent in 1977–78 to about 45 percent in 1996.
2. Refugees from Bhutan began entering Nepal in late 1990, with the influx peaking during the first half of 1992 when up to 1,000 persons per day were crossing the border. By July 1993, an estimated 84,000 Bhutanese refugees had already settled in camps set up in eastern Nepal. All refugees who arrived prior to mid-1993 were accepted as a group and considered *prima facie* refugees. The rate of new arrivals from Bhutan has steadily decreased since and the number accepted in the camps since 1996 has been negligible. Since the beginning of 1998 there have been no new arrivals.
3. The natural increase (births over deaths) in the refugee population has declined over time and is currently 2 percent a year. In addition, some 8,000 to 10,000 Bhutanese refugees are believed to have spontaneously settled elsewhere in the country. As of 30 April 1999, official records maintained by the Government of Nepal showed a total refugee population of 96,508 in the seven refugee camps. An average planning figure of 96,500 refugees was therefore estimated as requiring assistance for the year 2000.
4. Interviews conducted by the Government of Nepal and UNHCR have determined that the refugees, mostly ethnic Nepali-speaking groups from the southern plains of Bhutan, fled their country out of fear of harsh treatment following the Bhutanese authorities' enforcement of immigration and citizenship laws in 1985 and the "one nation, one people" policy of cultural assimilation of the late eighties.
5. Seven official ministerial-level talks have been held between the Nepal and Bhutan Governments—the last in April 1996—without any effective resolution. Renewed impetus was generated by visits of Nepali parliamentary and ministerial delegations to Bhutan in October and November 1998. Further contacts were delayed due to a change of government in Nepal in December 1998 and the announcement of general elections to be held in May 1999. The newly-elected government of Nepal made statements in June 1999 that the resolution of the refugee problem was a high priority on its agenda, and Nepali authorities renewed their invitation to Bhutan for early resumption of official talks. While efforts are being pursued in this direction, and there appears to be a more conducive political environment in both countries, as of mid-1999 there was no concrete prospect of a resolution to the refugee problem in the near future. In the meantime, the Government of Nepal has continued to reiterate its policy of non-integration of the refugees in Nepal, a policy first declared in 1995.

Assistance Delivered to Date

6. Between January 1992 and December 1999, WFP will have committed a total of nearly US\$52 million for food assistance to the Bhutanese refugees, through a series of



five emergency and four protracted refugee operations, with a cumulative distribution of some 138,000 tons of commodities. During the same period, UNHCR will have provided a total of US\$33.5 million for care and maintenance, plus an additional US\$3.3 million for a Refugee-Affected Areas Rehabilitation Programme (RARP) covering the period 1995 to 2001.

7. Additional NGO funding for complementary assistance programmes in the camps averaged about US\$1 million per year during the period 1993–98 but has drastically decreased to US\$400,000 in 1999. Altogether, some US\$91.9 million has been spent on direct support to the refugee population.

Local Context and Economy

8. Jhapa and Morang are the two most eastern districts in Nepal, lying on the fertile Terai plains and with an estimated population of almost 1.5 million in 1998. Agriculture is the main activity, with yearly cereal surpluses amounting to 46,851 tons in Jhapa and 22,881 tons in Morang district.¹
9. The two districts are ranked in the top ten of the country's 75 districts, according to a composite index made up of 39 key development indicators.² They are located on the Indian border and consequently have flourishing urban centres in and around the main entry points. Biratnagar in Morang has become the largest industrial city and has the second largest population after Kathmandu.
10. These two districts have also recently experienced a heavy influx of migrants from the adjoining hill areas and now face problems of accelerated urbanization, massive deforestation and lack of adequate health and sanitation facilities.

Interaction Between Refugees and the Local Context

11. There are limits to the extent to which the refugees can interact with the local economy, stemming directly from the Government's policy of not permitting refugees to undertake activities outside the camps. As already noted by the 1998 WFP/UNHCR Joint Food Assessment Mission (JFAM), operational partners as well as local individuals reported that there continues to be a significant level of informal economic interchange between the refugees and surrounding communities. Refugees do engage in economic activities in or outside the camps, although on an irregular and seasonal basis. However, full quantification of such interchange, and the level of self-reliance, is still not possible since open admission of such activities is not encouraged and could hinder such arrangements.

Overall Needs Assessment and Situation of Refugees in the Camps

12. As reported by the June 1999 JFAM conducted by UNHCR and WFP, the overall situation of the refugees continues to be adequate. With funding from UNHCR, the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) maintains and repairs all refugee dwellings and camp infrastructure. Uninterrupted and adequate supplies of chlorinated potable water (an average of 22 litres per person per day) were available in all camps throughout the year.

¹ Food Balance Data from the Ministry of Agriculture. Figure determined by district population, total edible cereals and food requirements.

² Source: *Indicators of Development* by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development/Netherlands Development Organization (ICIMOD/SNV), 1997.



This has helped maintain good personal hygiene and health, and has contributed to a reduction in the morbidity rates caused by water-borne diseases.

13. The health needs of the refugees are well catered for by Save the Children Fund (SCF)—UK through UNHCR funding. In addition to the provision of basic health services, this includes referrals to the district health facilities for those requiring special medical treatment as well as regular monitoring and reporting on the overall health situation of the refugees. All indicators show that the overall health conditions of the refugees are satisfactory and, in general, are better than those found among the population of Bhutan and Nepal.
14. The camps' sanitation, including the proper disposal of human waste and the control of vectors, was well maintained throughout the year. This also contributed to continued improvement of refugees' health status, and the number of cases of malaria and Japanese encephalitis continued to drop.
15. The supply of basic non-food items such as kerosene for fuel, stoves, cooking utensils, soap, etc. was adequate and has been regular. However, there has been a problem in the supply of clothing: in 1999, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) stopped providing clothing funds to the National Red Cross Society (NRCS). Clothing was last provided to the refugees in mid-1998. This has put more pressure on the already stretched household economic resources of the refugees.
16. During the school year 1998/99, over 36,100 students (35 percent of the overall refugee population) were registered as attending primary and secondary education courses in the camps run by CARITAS/Nepal with UNHCR funding. The standard of education provided is considered good and even better than that available in the local community. There is a continual demand for higher education. More females are also being educated to higher levels. As of 1998, refugee school leaving certificates are recognized in Bhutan, India and Nepal.

Nutritional and Health Conditions of the Refugees

17. The general nutritional and health situation in the camps continues to be satisfactory. Reports by SCF-UK show a constant and low malnutrition rate for children under 5. The most recent monthly health reports show cases of severe malnutrition continuing at low levels; for instance, an average of two cases a month were reported during the first quarter of 1999. The total overall malnutrition rate measured in the 1998 nutritional survey (for all those with weight-for-height under 80 percent, both severe and moderate) was 4.3 percent. This is a slight decrease from the previous year's rate of 4.5 percent and highlights a continuing satisfactory trend. This level of malnutrition is in stark contrast to the general rate for Nepal of 26.6 percent for all children under 3. Nearly all indicators show a satisfactory health situation that continues to improve. The mortality rate for children under 5 decreased by 13 percent, from 39 per 1,000 in 1997, to 33.8 per 1,000 in 1998; which is about 30 percent of the Nepal average and 25 percent of Bhutan's. Infant mortality for 1998 was 26.4 per 1,000, indicating a significant improvement (by 22 percent) from the 1997 rate of 34 per 1,000, significantly lower than the 1998 rates of 89 per 1,000 for Nepal and 90 per 1,000 for Bhutan. Maternal mortality rates continue to be low, with only two cases during 1998 and none reported so far in 1999. There have been no epidemics.



18. During 1998, incidences of micronutrient deficiency disorders continued to be no longer significant. However, during the middle of the normal dry season (the first months of 1999), SCF-UK reported increased cases of angular stomatitis (AS), which is considered to be an indicator of possible vitamin B2 deficiency. This is not considered a major health problem but does need attention. Normally, incidences of AS rise during the dry season in the camps (possibly due to the seasonal shortage of green vegetables), but this year the rise was higher than in the last two years, although it was not uniformly experienced in all camps nor among all age groups.
19. Camps in which refugees had less opportunity to undertake supplementation activities recorded the highest incidences of AS, while those which had more opportunities to grow food and earn income had fewer problems. SCF-UK data also showed that refugee families with a member receiving incentive payments tended to have no incidences of AS. It should be noted that the supply of fresh fruit and vegetables to the camps, as part of the supplementation to the general ration, was considerably erratic and often did not include sufficient vegetables during the 1999 dry season.
20. The current ration level provides one third of the normal Recommended Daily Allowance of vitamin B2. It is supplemented by fresh vegetables, which experienced serious breaks in supply and substitution by other commodities. However, other factors may have a significant bearing on the problem. The 1999 JFAM therefore recommended that, following the yearly nutritional survey being conducted by SCF-UK in June 1999, a further survey on micronutrient deficiencies be carried out by the Center for Disease Control, Atlanta, in order to identify the specific causes of increased incidences of AS and to help focus on possible preventive strategies.

Supplementary Feeding Programme

21. In addition to the general food distribution, there is a provision for a supplementary feeding programme (SFP) for malnourished children under 5, expectant and nursing mothers, tuberculosis patients and sick elderly people. During 1999, on average 3,274 persons a month (or 3.4 percent of the total camp population) have been assisted, with expectant and nursing mothers representing 90 percent.
22. Since 1997, the nutritional status of children under one year of age in the camps has been assessed on a monthly basis. This is done at camp clinics by measuring weight-for-height. In addition, children from 1 to 5 years of age are screened at the household level every three months by community health workers (CHW). Those found to be malnourished are referred to mother and child health (MCH) clinics for weight-for-height screening and enrolment in the supplementary feeding programme, if needed, where they stay until they exceed 85 percent weight-for-height and maintain this level for at least one month.
23. In 1998, a total of 662 malnourished children were admitted for supplementary feeding, an average of 55 per month. The numbers declined by a significant 12 percent during the first four months of 1999. Similarly, the admission of expectant and nursing mothers in 1999 has also declined by 18.5 percent and 15.5 percent, respectively, compared to 1998, reportedly due to the success of a family planning programme.

Beneficiary Numbers, Registration and Demographic Characteristics

24. Of the 96,508 refugees in the seven camps officially recognized by the Nepalese authorities as of 30 April 1999, only 94,351 were actually receiving food, according to NRCS distribution rolls. Rations for an average of 2,000 refugees were suspended at



different points of time (mostly for reasons of discipline and unjustified absence, but also due to absence for studies outside the camps). An average planning figure of 94,500 refugees was therefore estimated as requiring assistance for 1999. Based on the current net population growth rate, the planning figure for 2000 would be an average of 96,500. The 1999 JFAM noted that UNHCR is continuing to refine its refugee database, and that it had undertaken a sample survey in April 1999 in order to physically verify the registration figures.

25. The present net population growth rate of 2 percent is significantly lower than that found in Bhutan and Nepal (currently 2.6 percent and 2.4 percent, respectively) and reflects continuing effective family planning action and education efforts in the camps. As regards gender breakdown, there is a predominance of males over females in all age groups, with an average of 49 percent female. Nepal is one of the few countries in the world where life expectancy for women is lower than for men, due to women's traditionally lower status and a general preference for sons. This phenomenon seems to be reflected also in the refugee population who are in fact ethnically Nepalese. The camp population is young, with 47 percent under the age of 17, and a large and growing number of up to nearly 18,000 (19 percent of the total population) who were born in the camps. A total of 5 percent are over 60 and nearly half the population is adolescent. There are 2,182 single-headed households in the current population (2.3 percent) made up mostly of women (2,020 are female-headed).
26. The camp population is mostly ethnic Nepali with a small number of Drukpas (northern Bhutanese). Apart from a few professional and skilled individuals, essentially public officials, the population was predominantly rural in nature on arrival, mostly farmers. However, this is changing as nearly half the population (youth) now have no strong experience or association with a rural lifestyle as most of the refugee families move into their ninth year in the camps and the population becomes better educated.
27. There has been a significant change in education levels within the camps. Literacy levels have increased considerably from an estimated 15 to 20 percent of the population in the early years to over 60 percent among the adult population and to almost 100 percent among the younger population. This compares strikingly with the Nepalese educational levels, as only 40 percent of the country's adult population is literate while, as regards primary schools, the net enrolment rates are 60 percent for girls and 79 percent for boys (source: Multiple Indicator Surveillance, Government of Nepal, 1995). Adults continue to attend non-formal education classes. In 1998, an additional 4,984 adults (of whom 91 percent female) underwent non-formal courses, mostly consisting of literacy education in both Nepali and English. This means that some 18,000 adults (or approximately 34.5 percent of the current adult population) have attended non-formal education classes since 1992.

Partnerships and Institution-building

28. Under the standard Memorandum of Understanding, WFP and UNHCR field offices have maintained close collaboration on refugee assistance during recent years at both Kathmandu and field operations level. Joint assessment missions are undertaken on a yearly basis in order to review the current status of implementation and plans for future food and non-food requirements. Other United Nations agencies, such as UNFPA, WHO and UNICEF, provide support to the refugees through the supply of family planning contraceptives, essential drugs and vaccines.
29. Partnerships with implementing national and international NGOs are effected through regular inter-agency meetings, informal consultations and information sharing. In addition



to implementing the various components of refugee assistance directly supported by UNHCR and WFP, SCF-UK, CARITAS/Nepal, NRCS, LWF, OXFAM and the Asian Medical Doctor Association (AMDA) have also been contributing to complementary activities from their own funding sources. Helen Keller International is implementing a new home-gardening project through NRCS personnel, thus expanding the role of NRCS and its technical capacity, also for future development interventions in the country.

30. Active participation of the refugee community in camp activities and management is a cornerstone of this operation and has steadily increased over the years, resulting in greater transparency and a gradual reduction of operational costs. Refugee camp management committees (CMCs) and sub-committees effectively manage the final distribution of food and non-food assistance. They also run a community service, the Refugee Women's Forum (RWF), and a health service, the Bhutanese Health Association. Almost 1,700 refugees currently work in NGO-run services under a small incentive scheme, with salaries ranging from US\$12 to 22 a month.

RATIONALE FOR PROVIDING ASSISTANCE

31. There had been no concrete progress in reaching a lasting solution to the refugee situation as of mid-1999. There are currently limited opportunities for the refugees to become self-sustaining. Taking into account the overall situation of the refugees in the camps and their degree of self-reliance, continued WFP assistance is required. Although there are neither repatriation nor integration possibilities, the current food and non-food assistance will be beneficial as it is expected to strengthen the refugees' capacity to support their livelihoods themselves once they are given the opportunity to do so, either in the host, home or a third country.
32. The proposed duration of this protracted relief and recovery operation (PRRO) is for one year only, to underline the need for a regular review and a lasting solution. It is also important to assess the degree to which the refugees are being enabled to become more self-reliant, and to evaluate the extent of the social implications of a more prolonged existence in these camps under the present stringent conditions. At the same time, it is necessary to seek and solicit any concrete openings that will further bilateral negotiations.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Goals and Objectives

33. The broad goal of WFP assistance is to contribute to sustaining the registered Bhutanese refugees in the camps while enabling them to strengthen their coping mechanisms and professional skills and, at the same time, to encourage a longer-term lasting solution, through repatriation, integration or a combination of the two. The main objectives are the following:
- a) ensure regular access to a basic food ration for the entire registered refugee population through a general distribution system;
 - b) contribute to improving and maintaining an adequate nutritional and health status for the most vulnerable groups, i.e. expectant and nursing mothers, malnourished children and sick elderly people through a supplementary feeding programme; and



- c) promote the progressive self-reliance of the refugees by supporting income-generating activities, vocational training and home-gardening production, utilizing locally-generated WFP funds; the main foci will be on the most needy families and on increasing women's participation.

Distribution System and Women's Participation in Food Management

- 34. The food and non-food management and distribution system is similar in each of the seven camps and is handled by the refugees through the distribution sub-committee of the CMC. The general distribution of WFP basic food commodities is done fortnightly on fixed days and that of fresh vegetables (procured by UNHCR through NRCS) on a weekly basis. Voluntary refugee workers transfer the food from NRCS-managed camp warehouses to adjacent distribution shelters and then weigh and distribute the household ration to each family in rotation by sector and sub-sector. The process is supervised by the distribution sub-committee along with NRCS camp staff and overseen by WFP Monitors through random checks.
- 35. The refugee volunteers involved in food distribution are selected by sub-sector heads in each camp. The number of female sub-sector heads is up to 6 percent while the overall number of female CMC members 19 percent. According to the refugees, these percentages are increasing slowly because many responsibilities of a sub-sector head are time demanding, thus attracting few female refugees who are already busy with regular household chores as well as more productive activities such as WFP-supported supplementary income-generating activities.
- 36. According to a survey conducted in early 1999 by WFP and NRCS monitors in the camps during a two-week food distribution cycle, female participation in food handling and final distribution is on average 27 percent but as high as 51 percent in terms of all food and non-food collection. However, regular monitoring and beneficiary contacts confirm that refugee women are satisfied with the degree of control they retain over food and non-food allocations and their utilization within the household.
- 37. As regards the supplementary feeding programme, the premix ration, i.e. blended food, sugar and vegetable oil, is prepared by SCF-UK in the camp health centres and is then distributed as a dry ration through trained refugee staff to the various vulnerable groups. At the same time, health education is provided. WFP commodities and UNHCR-supplied dried skim milk (DSM) (for malnourished children only) are delivered weekly to the health centre from the NRCS camp warehouse.
- 38. From direct observations and interviews with refugees and partner NGOs, the joint WFP/UNHCR mission noted that food delivery and final distribution systems for both general distribution and SFPs are managed effectively and at an acceptable cost. Proper and adequate accounting, recording and reporting systems are maintained by the implementing NGOs.

Gender Issues

- 39. Bhutanese refugee women have the same access as men to registration and are therefore entitled to receive basic food and non-food assistance and services. Some social and cultural norms may, however, limit the participation of women in certain activities such as vocational training. Bearing in mind the issue of cultural acceptance, UNHCR has emphasized the special needs of women with regard to camp lay-out. Security risks are, to some extent, diminished by maintaining the community's composition and set-up along the



lines of village of origin with a view to preserving the original social cohesion and, as far as possible, replicating the ethical checks and balances inherent in a normal community.

40. Following election of CMC members in March 1999, the number of female representatives in all seven camps increased from 14 percent to 19 percent. In addition to having a women's focal point in every CMC, female representation is high in social service sub-committees (58 percent), project service sub-committees (44 percent) and the Counselling Board (43 percent), which is an area of crucial interest since most of the issues resolved here are marital and domestic problems. Female representation is, however, below average or low in distribution sub-committees (30 percent), camp secretariats (14 percent), sector heads (13 percent) and administrative sub-committees (11 percent). WFP aims at further encouraging the overall female participation in CMCs by expanding and improving the gender awareness training programmes.
41. RWF acts as a voluntary organization through a network of about 2,000 volunteer members in all camps dedicated to uplifting the living conditions and social participation of female refugees as well as other vulnerable groups. In recent years, with support from UNHCR, RWF has been conducting numerous training courses to enhance the role of women and empower refugee women in the camps, as well as offering gender training for both men and women to minimize domestic violence and promote women's rights. With WFP funding from mid-1999, RWF and OXFAM will be carrying out gender and community-awareness training for refugee women with the aim of improving women's awareness and confidence in participating in community and camp management activities. As part of the needs assessment for the training, RWF and OXFAM will be asked to study what limits women's participation in some of the CMCs but not in others. The training will be designed to address these constraints.
42. In April 1999, WFP conducted a four-day Training of Trainers course on gender sensitization and monitoring for some 23 staff from RWF and CMC secretariats to enhance the understanding of gender concepts and develop a gender-sensitized monitoring system. Following the interest expressed by the participants, follow-up training courses are planned during the course of the year for other CMC members, Home Ministry staff, camp supervisors and NRCS camp relief coordinators.
43. However, the greatest opportunity for more gender equity lies in the potential of the educational sector, since full gender balance has already been achieved already up to Grade 4, and the percentage of girls continuing their studies up to Grade 8 and above has been continuously increasing to the present 30 percent. Out of the total 36,000 students enrolled in the CARITAS educational programme, from pre-primary to Grade 10, girls represent 47 percent of the total. WFP and UNHCR's overall strategy in this operation is to improve the social and economic conditions of refugee women as per the support activities detailed in the following section. Indirectly, these activities provide a strong incentive for parents to keep their girl children at school throughout the higher grades so as to take advantage of the opportunities created.

WFP-Supported Self-reliance Activities

44. Using funds generated locally from the sale of empty food aid containers and sacks, WFP has been sponsoring supplementary income-generating-activities and vocational training since early 1998. The main objectives are to promote progressive self-reliance of the refugees by providing them with professional skills, with the focus on targeting the most needy families and on women's participation.



45. Between 1998 and early 1999, RWF implemented several supplementary income-generating activities in all camps, for which a total of US\$58,000 from the above-described locally-generated funds have been allocated. These activities are: multi-cloth production (i.e. quilt covers, bed sheets, towels, etc.) through the setting up of a hand-loom cottage factory; mushroom cultivation; individual loan schemes for small enterprises (i.e. spice preparation, hat and jute bag weaving, bamboo stools, etc.). Given its success and increasing demand, the latter could be expanded to 870 refugees during 1999–2000 (from 80 during 1998–99). Additionally, a camp-based project supervisor will be appointed to closely supervise and assist the beneficiaries in acquiring basic business skills.
46. As regards selection criteria, a list of “most vulnerable refugees” has been used. This list, which includes 1,388 refugees, mainly from single female-headed households, was created by RWF and cross-checked with other agencies, for instance SCF-UK. A gender breakdown for the currently implemented supplementary income-generating activities shows that female involvement is on average 73 percent, out of some 120 participants.
47. CARITAS is WFP’s implementing partner for vocational training: welding, electrical wiring, electronic goods servicing and automobile mechanics courses are conducted in two centres established outside the camps, for a duration of three to five months. The trainees comprise 75 percent refugees and 25 percent local youth, selected by CARITAS and WFP, essentially school dropouts from the most needy families. The participation of refugees and local youth in the same courses has contributed to mutual understanding and provided the best conditions for further collaboration after the training period.
48. Between March 1998 and May 1999, 213 youth were enrolled in the vocational training programme, of whom 96 percent completed the course. Despite the rigid social and cultural structure, the percentage of female trainees has increased to almost one fourth of the total enrolment. Special efforts are being made in close coordination by WFP, CARITAS and refugee women’s organizations to identify culturally acceptable and separate activities for female trainees so as to eventually raise their participation to a target of 50 percent. A loan scheme will also be introduced to enable trainees to set up their own activities in the camps and continue to use the technical skills acquired.
49. The budget for the first year of vocational training (1998–99), which was also generated locally through the sale of empty food aid containers, was approximately US\$21,000. It is being increased to some US\$37,000 for the next 1999–2000 phase. An additional programme, i.e. computer training for Grade 12 students (some 300 divided in batches of three months each) is under preparation. The training should increase the confidence of beneficiaries with the computer environment and thus improve their future professional opportunities.
50. In April 1999, a new project was launched for growing fresh vegetables in the refugee camps as a means of increasing the household availability of food rich in beta carotene and other micronutrients throughout the year. Helen Keller International is implementing this activity through NRCS staff by providing the overall supervision and technical assistance for procuring and supplying locally-adapted high quality seeds, establishing central and sector nurseries in the camps and training refugee group members on improved and sustainable gardening as well as nutritional practices, including infant feeding. Some 1,200 to 1,400 households in two camps are being covered during 1999 with possible expansion to a further two or three camps during 2000. A total yield value increase from 350 to 600 rupees per month/household is expected to be achieved over the period June-September. The total cost for the first year of implementation has been calculated at US\$36,000.



UNHCR-supported Refugee Affected Areas Rehabilitation Programme (RARP)—Phase II

51. Phase I of RARP was completed during 1994–95 with a US\$348,000 grant from the United Nations High Commissioner’s Special Trust Fund supported by the Japan Committee for Refugee Relief and the Government of Canada. Phase II, with a contribution of US\$1,380,000 for 1995–98 and US\$1,648,045 for 1998–2001, is being funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation (BMZ). In 1998, US\$256,600 was spent on forest rehabilitation, road construction and improvement, flood protection works, construction of sub-health posts and construction of classrooms in selected local schools in Jhapa and Morang districts.
52. RARP projects are jointly identified through the participation of the respective district development committees (DDCs), village development committees (VDCs) and UNHCR, and implemented through the Ministry of Home, the Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation, LWF and NRCS, while UNHCR ensures overall coordination.
53. In 1999, a provision of US\$373,530 has been allocated to carry out similar activities in the refugee affected areas. This will include installation of drinking water systems, improvement of small irrigation canals and the construction of latrines in local villages, as well as the provision of furniture to local schools. These microprojects will benefit some 200,000 inhabitants in the two districts. Since its inception in 1994, the overall impact of RARP on the local communities has been very positive and this has been further confirmed by the congenial and good relations fostered among the refugees, the hosting communities and the Nepalese authorities.

Environmental Concerns and Corrective Measures

54. The continued presence over the last seven years of a large refugee population in two of the most densely populated districts of Nepal could have had a significant impact on an already fragile environment due to intensive farming and increasing demographic pressure. The vast majority of the people of the local communities in this area are smallholder farmers who rely on wood as their primary source of energy and on unprotected water sources for their daily needs.
55. In order to minimize possible negative impact in and around the camps, UNHCR has continued efforts to manage human waste and waste water, vector control and domestic hygiene; deep ground water systems have been set up in the camps for drinking water supply, thus avoiding potential depletion of shallow ground water used by the surrounding communities; regular distribution of kerosene for cooking purposes was introduced in 1992 with the aim of preventing refugees from collecting firewood in nearby forests; and construction materials for shelter maintenance in the camps have been provided.
56. Under RARP, afforestation projects have been implemented through community forestry committees, central nurseries for sapling production have been set up, and production activities for improvement of drainage and access roads around the camps have been carried out.

Coordination Mechanisms and Government Policy

57. The Government of Nepal has overall responsibility for administration of the camps, for maintaining law and order and for registration of refugees and screening of new arrivals.



58. The Home Ministry is the Government's main implementing agency for the refugee operation and for maintaining inter-agency and inter-ministerial coordination through its National Unit for the Coordination of Refugee Affairs (NUCRA) at the central level and the Refugee Coordination Unit (RCU) at the district level, chaired by the Joint Secretary and by the Chief District Officer, respectively. RCU camp supervisors and police check-points have been established in each camp. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for coordination of policy issues, including repatriation.
59. Since the 1996/97 phase of the refugee operation, the Government has made a yearly cash commitment of US\$100,000 to WFP, for a total amount of US\$400,000 during the period 1996–99, which has been used to complement the purchase of food commodities. The Government also routinely grants WFP exemption on tax and duties for both locally-purchased and imported food commodities.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

60. The joint WFP/UNCHR mission noted that recording and reporting systems are adequately maintained by the various implementing partners for each specific sector of assistance: detailed data on camp population and movements, births and deaths, school enrolment and new arrivals, etc. are available on a gender disaggregated basis and constantly updated.
61. In close liaison with the WFP Damak field office, NRCS issues a monthly situation report detailing the refugee population in all the camps; actual distribution and shortfalls, commodity-wise, for food and non-food allocations; and stock balances in each warehouse. The field office prepares monthly projections of requirements and supply schedules on the basis of which deliveries are planned and tracked. This information is then consolidated in a monthly food availability status report (FASREP) for food pipeline projections and procurement action over the following six-month period.
62. In coordination with UNHCR, SCF-UK monitors the health and nutrition situation through primary health care services in all camps and issues a monthly health and nutrition situation report on morbidity and mortality rates; nutritional screening of children under the age of 5; reproductive health and family planning services; and implementation of the supplementary feeding programme. In addition, a survey is conducted each year in June to assess the nutritional status of children under the age of 5.
63. As regards supplementary income-generating activities and vocational training activities supported by the proceeds of sales of food aid sacks and containers, regular impact assessments are conducted by WFP and implementing NGOs; two female refugee supervisors have been employed at the WFP field office to specifically monitor project activities and accounts. The newly-launched home gardening project has a built-in comprehensive seasonal monitoring component three times a year to evaluate changes in household vegetable production and consumption patterns against the start-up baseline survey.
64. SCF-UK is now conducting regular food basket monitoring at distribution sites and WFP, UNHCR and NRCS teams are carrying out systematic post-distribution monitoring on the utilization of food and non-food allocations by households. Constant efforts are being made to improve qualitative data collection.



EXIT STRATEGY

65. Given that no lasting solution to the Bhutanese refugee problem has yet been found, WFP food assistance is foreseen during 2000. A basic level of support is now being provided. Under these conditions, the strategy for future exit is to continue to improve refugees' coping mechanisms by continuing to work on a realistic approach through increasing supplementary activities and self-reliance opportunities.

Risk Assessment

66. Pending a political resolution, the effective implementation and expansion of the self-reliance strategy will depend on full support from the host Government's authorities at both central and local level. The Home Ministry of the Government of Nepal now officially accepts WFP's activities in promoting refugee self-reliance. However, the Government's policy of non-integration stipulates that these activities be carried out only within the camps and no products can be sold in the local markets. This limits refugees' ability to carry out supplementary activities. WFP will seek further relaxation in the restrictive camp rules; this would certainly help allow increased access of refugees to external resources.
67. The joint WFP/UNHCR mission noted the social change taking place in the refugee population, the negative social consequences within families of an artificially-sustained community, and the lack of prospects for an active life faced by a relatively highly educated youth. These trends are raising growing concern among the humanitarian agencies working in the camps and, even more so, within refugee families. The potential danger of growing frustration and subsequent social unrest cannot be underestimated.
68. While 90 percent of the WFP supply of food requirements for the current year had been already resourced as of mid-1999, overall levels of aid appear to be declining. Should any component in current assistance levels—either food, non-food items or general services—be further reduced without being compensated by a corresponding increase in refugee self-supplementation, the overall situation of the refugee population could seriously deteriorate.

INPUT REQUIREMENTS

Food Aid Requirements

69. The joint WFP/UNHCR mission recommended maintaining the daily per capita ration for general distribution to 96,500 refugees and for supplementary feeding in favour of an average of 4,000 members of vulnerable groups, including complementary food commodities to be supplied by UNHCR for general rations (i.e. fresh vegetables) and supplementary feeding and DSM (for malnourished children only).
70. The basic food ration, including fresh vegetables, provides 2,022 Kcal per person/day, which is close to the 2,100 Kcal recommended minimum requirement, considering that this refugee population is not entirely dependent on external food assistance. An additional 456 Kcal and 13.4 grams of proteins per person per day are supplied in the form of a pre-mix, i.e. fortified blended food with sugar and vegetable oil (increased to an extra 600 Kcal and 27.8 grams of proteins with the addition of 40 grams per person/day of DSM, for



malnourished children only) under the supplementary feeding programme in support of vulnerable groups.

TABLE 1: BREAKDOWN OF BASIC RATION (grams)

Commodity	General ration	Supplementary ration	Supplementary extra ration for vulnerable persons
Rice (parboiled)	410	-	
Pulses	60	-	
Vegetable oil	25	10	
Blended food (fortified)	-	80	
Sugar	20	15	
Salt (iodized)	7.5	-	
Fresh vegetables	100	-	
DSM (UNHCR-supplied)	-	-	40
Nutritional value of ration			
Kcal	2 022	456	144
Protein (grams)	41	13	14
Fat (grams)	27	15	-

71. The total food requirements for the one-year assistance during 2000 are outlined in Table 2 below.

TABLE 2: TOTAL FOOD REQUIREMENTS (tons)

Commodity	General ration	Supplementary ration
Rice (parboiled)	14 441	-
Pulses	2 113	-
Vegetable oil	881	14
Blended food (fortified)	-	112
Sugar	704	21
Salt (iodized)	264	-
Fresh vegetables (UNHCR-supplied)	3 552	-
DSM (UNHCR-supplied)	-	11

For WFP only, the total requirements are 18,550 tons of basic and supplementary food commodities.



Local Procurement

72. Since the early stages of WFP assistance, there has been a well-established practice of local or regional food procurement. During 1999, almost 96 percent of all food commodities have been thus procured, the only exception being vegetable oil due to the high fluctuations in prices in regional markets. Local purchases have proved to ensure timely and regular delivery, acceptability of staple foods produced locally, and cost-effectiveness since the purchase prices are on average lower or at least on par with the international prices at c.i.f. (cost, insurance, freight) delivery to Nepal. No negative impact on local markets has been recorded so far given the relatively large agricultural production capacity in the Terai regions. Local supply, which includes food transport to each camp warehouse, has the added advantage of reducing intermediate losses (for instance, food losses were recorded as low as 0.025 percent on average during 1998). It is therefore recommended that current procurement arrangements continue during 2000.

Landside Transport, Storage and Handling (LTSH)

73. Taking into account logistic costs, i.e. food internal transportation and handling, maintenance of camp warehouses, Birtamod central warehouse rent and insurance coverage, as well as NRCS staffing and related costs for food management and distribution, the LTSH cost for the year 2000 has been calculated at US\$12 per ton.

Staffing

74. Staffing requirements are detailed under the Direct Support Costs (DSC) in Annex II. WFP staff directly supervising the implementation of the refugee assistance are based at Damak Field Office and at Birtamod central warehouse: a national field officer is in charge of the operations on the ground and assisted by three food monitors and other support staff. Since mid-1997, one United Nations Volunteer has been assigned to the field office for specifically formulating and implementing, in coordination with UNHCR and partner NGOs, the income-generating and vocational training activities funded by WFP.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

75. The PRRO is recommended for approval by the Executive Board, within the budget provided in Annexes I and II.



ANNEX I

PROJECT COST BREAKDOWN			
	Quantity (tons)	Average cost per ton	Value (dollars)
WFP COSTS			
A. Direct operational costs			
Commodity ¹			
– Rice	14 441	280	4 043 480
– Pulses	2 113	400	845 200
– Vegetable oil	895	840	751 800
– Blended food	112	350	39 200
– Sugar	725	330	239 250
– Salt, iodized	264	145	38 280
Total commodities	18 550		5 957 210
Ocean transport	895	35	31 325
Superintendence	18 550	2.5	46 375
Landside Transport	18 550	5	92 750
ITSH		7	129 850
Total LTSH		12	222 660
Subtotal direct operational costs			6 257 510
B. Direct support costs (see Annex II for details)			
Subtotal direct support costs			290 000
Total direct costs			6 547 510
C. Indirect support costs (7.1 percent of total direct costs)			
Subtotal indirect support costs			464 873
TOTAL WFP COSTS			7 012 383
TOTAL PROJECT COSTS			11 144 383²

¹ This is a notional food basket used for budgeting and approval purposes. The precise mix and actual quantities of commodities to be supplied to the project, as in all WFP-assisted projects, may vary over time depending on the availability of commodities to WFP and domestically within the recipient country.

² Costs to other donors comprise US\$4,032,000 to UNHCR and US\$100,000 to the Government.



ANNEX II

DIRECT SUPPORT REQUIREMENTS (<i>dollars</i>)

Staff costs

International	146 000
United Nations Volunteers	20 000
National professional officers	10 000
Local staff and temporaries	37 500
Subtotal	214 500

Technical support services

Project monitoring and evaluation	15 000
Training	4 000
Subtotal	19 000

Travel and DSA

Blanket travel	5 000
In-country	10 000
Subtotal	329 600

Office expenses

Rental of facility	9 000
Utilities	2 000
Communications	8 500
Office supplies	2 500
Equipment repair and maintenance	2 500
Subtotal	15 000

Vehicle operations

Vehicle fuel and maintenance	11 000
Subtotal	11 000

Equipment

Computer equipment	3 000
Furniture and equipment	1 000
Subtotal	4 000

Miscellaneous and contingencies

Subtotal	2 000
-----------------	--------------

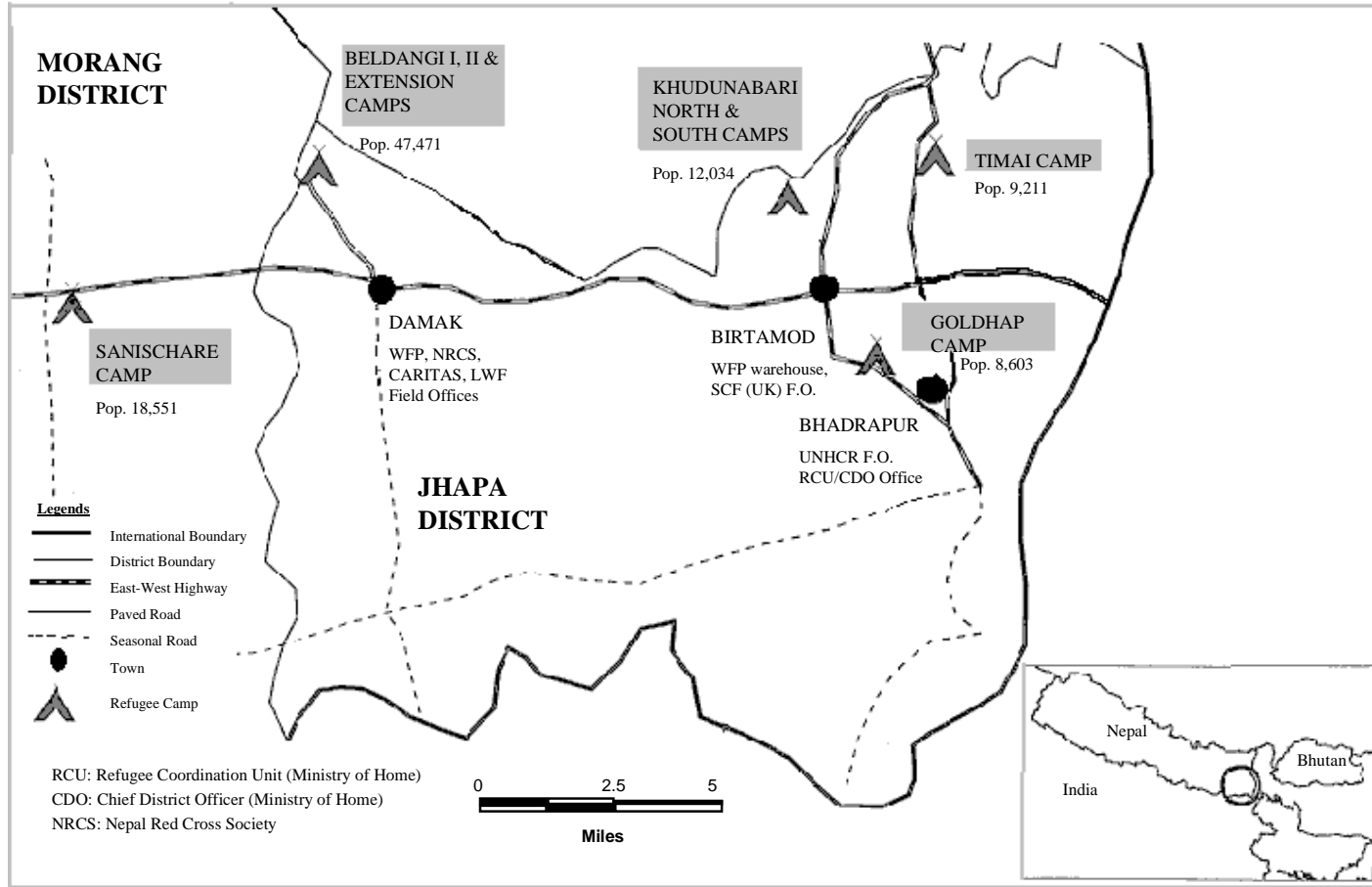
TOTAL DIRECT SUPPORT COSTS	290 000
-----------------------------------	----------------



ANNEX III



**PRRO 6151.00-ASSISTANCE TO BHUTANESE REFUGEES IN NEPAL
 LOCATION OF REFUGEE CAMPS IN MORANG AND JHAPA DISTRICTS, EASTERN NEPAL
 AND REGISTERED POPULATION AS OF JANUARY 1999 (UNHCR SOURCES)**



The designations employed and the presentation of material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the World Food Programme (WFP) concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its frontiers or boundaries