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Executive Board
Second Regular Session

Rome, 22 - 24 May 1996

PROTRACTED REFUGEE AND DISPLACED PERSON PROJECTS APPROVED BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Agenda item 4 a)

PROJECT SRI LANKA 5346 (Exp.2)

(WIS No. SRL 00534602)

Assistance to displaced persons

Duration of project	12 months
Total cost to WFP	3 258 713 dollars
Estimated total cost	4 366 713 dollars

All monetary values are expressed in United States dollars, unless otherwise stated.

For relevant statistical data, please consult the WFP country profile for Sri Lanka, which is available on request.

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1. This document is submitted for information to the Executive Board.
2. Pursuant to the decisions taken on the methods of work by the Executive Board at its First Regular Session, the documentation prepared by the Secretariat for the Board has been kept brief and decision-oriented. The meetings of the Executive Board are to be conducted in a business-like manner, with increased dialogue and exchanges between delegations and the Secretariat. Efforts to promote these guiding principles will continue to be pursued by the Secretariat.
3. The Secretariat therefore invites members of the Board who may have questions of a technical nature with regard to this document, to contact the WFP staff member(s) listed below, preferably well in advance of the Board's meeting. This procedure is designed to facilitate the Board's consideration of the document in the plenary.
4. The WFP staff dealing with this document are:

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5. Should you have any questions regarding matters of dispatch of documentation for the Executive Board, please contact the Documents Clerk (tel.: 5228-2641).

BACKGROUND

1. The long period of civil strife in the north and east of Sri Lanka, which dates from 1983, was marked by an escalation in fighting in April 1995. It is estimated that the conflict has affected 1.7 million persons to date and initially displaced about 800,000 farmers, fishermen and small businessmen. Affected persons currently account for approximately 10 percent of the population of Sri Lanka. Before fleeing from their original places of residence in the north and eastern provinces, the majority of the displaced people were already living at or below the poverty line. Many internally displaced persons (IDPs) have since sought refuge in welfare centres outside the conflict zones.
2. However, due to the concerted efforts of the Government, approximately 250,000 of the IDPs have been resettled in their own homes. Nevertheless, more than 522,500 persons, comprising 124,750 families, remain in welfare centres or with friends and relatives as they are unable to return to their original villages because of the ongoing conflict. In particular, the civil strife has forced large Muslim communities, whose traditional homes are in the north and eastern parts of the country, to seek refuge in other provinces.
3. Since mid-February 1992, WFP has provided emergency food aid under emergency operation Sri Lanka 4923 and protracted refugee and displaced person operation (PDPO) project Sri Lanka 5346 to as many as 55,000 displaced persons living in 147 welfare centres outside the conflict zone.
4. The ongoing phase of PDPO 5346 (Exp.1), at present assisting an average of 52,000 persons living in 120 welfare centres outside the conflict zone, commenced on 1 October 1994 and is due to terminate in September 1995. In addition, the Government is providing dry rations, with its own resources, to another 110,000 IDPs living in 375 welfare centres inside the conflict zone, as well as to about 360,000 IDPs living with friends and relatives both inside and out of the conflict zone.
5. Welfare centres supported by WFP are concentrated in the districts of Anuradhapura, Kurunegala, Polonnaruwa, Puttalam, Matale and Colombo. The conflict - the root cause of the displacements - remains unresolved and in view of the recent upsurge in fighting after 19 April 1995, no significant improvement in the situation is expected in the near future.
6. During the two-month period from mid-April until mid-June, more than 500 families (about 2,500 persons) have fled the conflict zone, mainly to the Puttalam area. These people are temporarily receiving assistance direct from the Government while their circumstances are being reviewed. Many of these newly-registered IDPs will transfer to WFP-supported welfare centres in the coming weeks.



GOVERNMENT'S REQUEST

7. The Government has requested WFP food assistance for 55,000 persons for 12 months commencing 1 October 1995.

MEASURES TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT

8. The Government is making every endeavour to resettle people in their places of origin as and when these areas become safe for resettlement and rehabilitation, and until recently some progress had been made in this regard. Attempts are also being made to relocate some of the displaced persons to State lands until their places of origin are safe. However, in view of the recent upsurge in fighting, the average population of the 120 welfare centres assisted by WFP is expected to increase to well over 55,000 in the next 12 months. In view of the resource constraints experienced by WFP, the Government will assist a large portion of these new IDPs. It will also continue to supplement WFP daily food rations to all displaced persons with 25 grams of coconut oil. The Government is spending an estimated four percent of GDP on the conflict situation.

WFP ASSESSMENT

9. The only realistic durable solution to the plight of the displaced population lies in the final resolution of the civil conflict, enabling people to return to their places of origin. This goal, however, has proved so far to be elusive. Various attempts made over the last four years to resolve the conflict have not been successful, although there was a slight decline over the past years in the number of displaced persons living in welfare centres outside the north and east, due to periodic resettlement in the eastern region of the country. With the breakdown of peace negotiations and subsequent escalation of fresh hostilities in the conflict area in April 1995, the security situation in the east has deteriorated significantly. Indeed, recent attacks on civilians in the eastern region have caused a new exodus of people towards welfare centres outside the north-eastern region. It is likely that more civilians will leave their villages for safe areas in the coming months, thus causing an additional burden on an already strained government budget.
10. Resettlement of displaced persons in areas outside the conflict zone is not possible on a significant scale due to the unavailability of land. Although most of the people have been able to find some casual employment from time to time, opportunities for regular employment are almost non-existent. The language of the entire displaced population is Tamil, whereas the welfare centres being assisted by WFP are in primarily Sinhala-speaking areas. This language problem is an added constraint in the already limited job market and it also reduces the possibility of any integration with the local population.



11. WFP food aid is the primary source of nutritional support and sustenance for the displaced persons living in the welfare centres outside the conflict zone, and assistance ensures food security in the basic food commodities. Any income they earn through casual work is used to purchase other essential food ingredients, including vegetables, and basic non-food needs such as fuelwood, kerosene and soap.
12. During a local assessment exercise in May 1995, it was confirmed that there are approximately 52,000 persons in the welfare centres assisted by WFP. A planning figure of 55,000 is proposed for the current phase of the project, taking into consideration the limited number of people returning to their places of origin as well as an expected increase in WFP's case-load caused by the recent intensification of the conflict.

NUTRITIONAL ASPECTS

13. During PDPO 5346 (Exp.1), the targeted displaced population received per capita daily rations of 400 grams of rice, 50 of pulses, 20 of sugar from WFP and 25 of coconut oil from the Government. The nutritional value of this ration is equal to 1,909 kilocalories, 39 grams of protein and 28 grams of fat, and is considered nutritionally adequate. In view of the stable nutritional status of the population, supplementary feeding is not required. The situation is monitored periodically by the Sri Lankan Red Cross, local government officials and WFP during monitoring visits.

FOOD RATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

14. The following food commodities are requested on the basis of an average population of 55,000 displaced persons for 365 days.

Commodity	Per capita daily rations (grams)	Total (tons)
Rice	400	8 030
Pulses	50	1 004
Sugar	20	402

The Government will supply 502 tons of coconut oil from its own resources at the rate of 25 grams per person a day.



DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS

15. More than 90 percent of the 522,500 displaced persons are being assisted with food provided by the Government. The remaining 10 percent are assisted by WFP and the Government.
16. The scarcity of available land on the island is the primary constraint for any long-term settlement programme outside the conflict zone. The Government, however, is encouraging the resettlement of displaced persons in their places of origin as soon as these areas become safe. All displaced families opting to return to their place of origin are given a repatriation package of assistance for resettlement, including monetary grants, as well as loans to reconstruct houses and restart businesses. Each family leaving the WFP-assisted welfare centres for resettlement is also provided a food package to tide them over the first three months.
17. While working towards a durable solution to the plight of the displaced through a negotiated settlement of the conflict, the Government aims at bringing the populations affected by the ethnic violence back to productive life. It provides basic amenities and pays compensation for the losses and damages sustained. Displaced persons who cannot resettle in their original places of residence or where the prospects of resettlement in the near future are bleak will be given small plots of land and assistance for resettlement. Land donated by well-wishers and State lands are also utilized for this purpose. Relocating displaced people in suitable areas has become an integral, if limited, part of the Government's resettlement policy.
18. The Government encourages the involvement of NGOs and some have provided assistance to health, education and hygiene facilities as well as some income-generating activities. However, as the majority of the IDPs have agricultural or fishing backgrounds, there is limited possibility of employment in other professions in the areas around the welfare camps.
19. The entire displaced population has the same access to free health services as the local population. Similarly, free education facilities, including provision of school uniforms and books, are available to the children of the displaced families, although these facilities are very often overburdened.

MODE OF IMPLEMENTATION

20. The Director-General of the External Resources Department of the Ministry of Finance will be the channel of communication on matters of policy. The Ministry of Shipping, Ports, Reconstruction and Rehabilitation will have overall responsibility for coordination of the project. The Additional Secretary to the Ministry will head a project steering committee which will meet at least once every two months to oversee implementation of the project.



21. The project will be implemented by the Department of Social Services under the Ministry of Health. The Director of Social Services will be the project manager and will be responsible for the overall management of the project. He will be assisted by a full-time project coordinator. At the field level, the project will be supervised by divisional secretaries, under whom social services officers and village-level officers will be responsible for the day-to-day administration of the welfare centres in their areas and coordination with the local multi-purpose cooperative societies (MPCS) outlet. The project coordinator will undertake frequent field trips and carry out project-related coordination at the divisional and welfare-centre level. A comprehensive system of ration cards, check-lists and reporting formats is already in place and is being effectively used. It is intended that the existing reporting and monitoring system will be utilized in the new phase of this project.
22. All welfare centres being assisted by WFP have five-member "camp committees" elected by camp residents. A local government official acts as camp officer to coordinate assistance to the centre. A census of the welfare centres is carried out periodically and the food rations are distributed on the basis of actual family size. Welfare centre lists are kept up to date on the basis of frequent field visits by the officials and with the support of the NGOs.
23. WFP commodities will be shipped to the port of Colombo. The rice shipments received will be stored in the Food Commissioner's (FC) stores, while pulses, sugar and the government-supplied coconut oil will be stored by the Cooperative Wholesale Establishment (CWE). Food will be distributed to the beneficiaries through the established network of the MPCS, which will draw food requirements from the FC and CWE district stores and distribute to the displaced persons through retail outlets nearest to the respective welfare centres.

PROJECT COSTS

24. The estimated costs of the project are as follows:

PROJECT COST BREAKDOWN

	Quantity (tons)	Value (dollars)
WFP COSTS		
a) Food cost		
Food for distribution ¹		
- rice	8 030	2 248 400
- pulses (lentils)	1 004	381 520
- sugar	402	168 840
Subtotal	9 436	2 798 760



PROJECT COST BREAKDOWN

	Quantity (tons)	Value (dollars)
b) Cash cost		
External transport, insurance and superintendence costs		338 653
c) Monitoring and logistics support (see Annex) (13 dollars a ton)		121 300
Total WFP costs		3 258 713
GOVERNMENT COSTS		
d) Non-WFP food (coconut oil)	502	808 000
e) Staff for food assistance		50 000
f) Unloading, clearance, storage, handling and internal transport		200 000
g) Miscellaneous		50 000
Total Government costs		1 108 000
TOTAL PROJECT COSTS (WFP and others)		4 366 713

Total cost to WFP as percentage of total project costs: 75 percent.

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.

DATE OF APPROVAL BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

25. The project was approved by the Executive Director on 17 July 1995.



ANNEX

MONITORING AND LOGISTICS SUPPORT COSTS (*in dollars*)

Staff salaries for emergency/logistics officers and food aid monitors	
- International	80 600
- National	24 000
Travel and DSA	8 000
Office rental and utilities	2 100
Office equipment and supplies (including data processing equipment)	1 700
Vehicles, fuel and maintenance	3 500
Communications, equipment	1 400
Total	121 300

Note: Figures include a provision for headquarters support costs.

