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World
Food Executive Board
Program Third Regular Session

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Rome, 21 - 24 October 1996

PROTRACTED REFUGEE AND DISPLACED PERSON PROJECTS FOR EXECUTIVE BOARD APPROVAL

Agenda item 9 a)

IRAN 4161 (Exp.4)

(WIS No. IRA 041604)

Food assistance to Iraqi refugees in Iran

Duration of project	12 months
Number of beneficiaries	66 000
Total cost to WFP	5 404 295 dollars
Estimated total cost	11 124 795 dollars

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

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NOTE TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

This document contains recommendations for review and approval by the Executive Board.

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.

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.

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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 first major influx into Iran of some 50,000 Iraqi refugees began after civil disturbances in northern Iraq during 1988. The inflow of refugees continued in 1989 and 1990, and reached a level of 105,000 at the beginning of 1991. The most significant influx occurred in the aftermath of the Gulf war in 1991, as a result of the Kurdish uprising in the north, and civil strife affecting the Marsh Arabs in the south. About 1.2 million Iraqi refugees reportedly entered Iran during a period of two months.
2. Following the general amnesty announced after the war by the Government of Iraq, during the second half of 1991 the majority of the Kurd refugees voluntarily repatriated to their home country. The others, about one half of the total Iraqi refugee population in Iran, decided not to return, mainly for political and socio-economic reasons. Since then, very limited repatriation has occurred. As reported by the Government of Iran, the total number of Iraqis currently living in the country is close to 600,000, mostly of Marsh Arab origin. Of these, some 66,000 (51 percent male and 49 percent female) live in 27 camps and are receiving WFP/UNHCR assistance. In general, the camps are located far away from neighbouring villages and towns, in the following provinces: West Azerbaijan, Kurdistan, Kermanshah, Khuzestan, Lorestan, Fars, Markazi, Zanjan and Tehran.
3. The refugees living outside the camps are largely considered self-reliant, earning their livelihoods in various types of occasional trades, businesses and jobs in towns and cities. They do not receive assistance from either UNHCR or the Government, although they are entitled to buy subsidized bread from government-supported bakeries.
4. WFP has provided assistance since November 1988 to Iraqi refugees living and registered in camps in Iran through a series of three emergency operations and four protracted refugee and displaced person projects (PROs), for which a total commitment of nearly 130,000 tons of basic commodities has so far been made. A budget revision of PRO No. 4161 (Exp.3) covered assistance until the end of 1996. Apart from WFP food aid, the Iranian Red Crescent Society has also provided some food assistance to the Iraqi refugees, in collaboration with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRCS). UNHCR has customarily provided assistance for care and maintenance support, including health, sanitation, water-supply, educational infrastructure and income-generating activities.

GOVERNMENT'S REQUEST

5. The Government has requested WFP to maintain the supply of basic food commodities for Iraqi refugees for 1997.



MEASURES TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT

6. The Government has consistently pursued a liberal open-door policy in providing asylum to Iraqi and Afghan refugees. Generally speaking, all Iraqi camps are maintained in good condition. In collaboration with UNHCR, the Government has constructed concrete houses and prefabricated dwellings for the Iraqi refugees and has provided facilities for schooling, health services, electricity, sanitation and other basic infrastructure in the camps.
7. Refugee households are provided with stoves and cooking fuel (kerosene) and there is adequate provision of drinking-water. Health centres in the major camps have a registered doctor, while the others have nurses and benefit from doctors' visits two to three times a week. Clinic services include family planning. UNHCR is increasingly providing assistance in the form of medicines, since government subsidies for health services and education have been withdrawn.
8. The refugee operation is managed and implemented by the Government through national and regional structures, in cooperation with the United Nations system (UNHCR and WFP) and NGOs (Iranian Red Crescent Society). At the national level, it is coordinated by the Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants Affairs (BAFIA) within the Ministry of the Interior. In the provinces, it is coordinated by the regional offices of BAFIA.
9. In addition to the aid from WFP and the Iranian Red Crescent Society, the Government provides some complementary food and non-food items, such as soap and detergent, water containers and kitchen utensils when required.

WFP ASSESSMENT

10. After the mass repatriation of Iraqi refugees during the second half of 1991, the Iraqi refugee population in Iran has largely stabilized. A joint WFP/UNHCR refugee food assessment mission visited Iran in June 1996, in order to assess the food needs for 1997.
11. As reported by the Government and verified by UNHCR, 65,234 Iraqi refugees (as of 1 March 1996) are living in camps established by the Iranian Government; the remainder are in towns and cities, some with relatives. The table below shows the refugee population in camps by province.



Province	Number of refugees in camps
West Azerbaijan	16 324
Kurdistan	5 329
Kermanshah	5 679
Khuzestan	24 388
Lorestan	2 967
Subtotal	54 687
Fars	7 423
Markazi	2 471
Zanjan	483
Tehran	170
Subtotal	10 547
TOTAL	65 234

12. The total number of refugees in camps rose by 3.5 percent during the six months preceding the assessment mission. This was due to net population growth (births minus deaths) as well as net movements to the camps. There have been no new influxes from Iraq and only a minimal number are repatriating. However, due to the deterioration of the Iranian economy, some refugees have experienced difficulties in managing on their own and, hence, have moved from a life within Iranian society to the refugee camps, because basic food and services are provided.
13. For 1997, the joint mission recommended, as in the past, that WFP assistance be concentrated only on the 65,234 refugees living in the camps.
14. The Government's freedom-of-movement policy with regard to Iraqi refugees has allowed some access to employment opportunities, mostly as construction workers or farm-hands. It is estimated that about 30 percent of adult male refugees living in the camps work outside; of these, about 17 percent have permanent employment, and the rest occasional jobs. The typical daily wage ranges between three and five dollars. However, it is to be noted that male refugees are experiencing increasing difficulty in finding jobs because of the worsening economic situation in the country.
15. Few if any refugee women work outside the camps. Since the end of 1995, with the support of UNHCR, many camps have started to provide income-generating activities for interested women and girls, such as kilim and carpet-weaving, and clothes-making.
16. Food is distributed generally on a monthly basis through group or block representatives. Each block or group representative receives rations for a maximum of 20 families. While rice, vegetable oil and pulses are distributed direct, wheat is milled and distributed as flour or in the form of bread (three 100-gram loaves per person a day).
17. The daily food ration provides 1,921 kilocalories and 54 grams of protein. It is



composed of wheat (350 grams), rice (100 grams), edible oil (20 grams), pulses (30 grams) and sugar (15 grams).

18. Because reporting on commodity utilization has been limited, measures have recently been taken to improve the situation: a Food Committee has been established, composed of the BAFIA Deputy Director, the WFP Country Director and the UNHCR Representative. This committee meets periodically to review beneficiary figures, data entry and records, procedures, distribution mechanisms, and overall camp activities.

Repatriation to Iraq

19. The joint mission ascertained that some of the refugees living in the West Azerbaijan and Kurdistan provinces are willing to return to their homeland, on the understanding that security is guaranteed by the international community and assistance is provided in Iraq for their resettlement. The majority of the refugees have lost their houses in Iraq and have no resources to rebuild them. Some of them own agricultural land but they, too, would expect to rely on temporary food aid until the first harvest. To address this situation, WFP, together with other organizations, provides assistance for resettlement in Iraq in the form of food aid, construction materials and seeds.
20. A contingency plan for voluntary repatriation of Iraqi refugees has been prepared by UNHCR and WFP, in collaboration with the Government of Iran. WFP will provide 50 kilograms of wheat for each person repatriating, i.e., the same scheme that is used for Afghan refugees returning to their home country. UNHCR will supply plastic sheeting, blankets, first aid kits and snacks for the trip. Based on an estimated maximum number of 10,000 returnees in 1997, WFP will provide up to 500 tons of wheat for this purpose.
21. Training courses for men are being provided by UNHCR - in cooperation with the relevant technical agency of the Government of Iran - in carpentry, electrical work, brick masonry, etc. This is expected not only to help refugees rehabilitate their houses and community infrastructure, but also facilitate eventual economic self-reliance upon repatriation.

DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS

22. There are limited opportunities for refugees in camps to become self-reliant, partly due to the isolation of some of the camps and the lack of marketable skills of many of the refugees.
23. In addition to the training and employment opportunities available for men, as noted earlier, the income-generating activities introduced for young girls and women in the camps respond to the cultural restrictions on their employment mobility outside the camps. The women and girls first receive training for two to six months and receive a small cash stipend (30 cents to one dollar a day). Those who pass the test after completion of training receive a certificate from the Iranian crafts authority.
24. Having begun only in late 1995, most of these activities are still at an early stage of



implementation. Market research is currently underway to determine whether the products can be sold. When commercial production starts, the trained refugees will receive wages comparable to what they would earn in Iranian society. For each workshop there is a council comprised of representatives of the male and female refugees involved in the activity, the camp management and UNHCR. An evaluation of these activities is to be carried out shortly by UNHCR as a basis for future planning.

25. From visits to five camps inhabited by about 17,000 refugees, the June joint mission noted that there was a large difference between the number of boys and girls who attend school. On an average, boys registered at school account for 12 percent of the total camp population, and girls only for five percent. The gap becomes larger at higher grades, since very few girls attend secondary school.
26. To bring about a change, it was agreed that WFP adopt in Iran the same incentive scheme as that used successfully with refugees and others in Pakistan. The incentive scheme consists in granting one can of oil (3.6 kilograms) a month to each girl who regularly attends school. A can of oil has a high income-transfer value and is easy to carry. It can be the factor deciding whether the family will keep their daughter working at home or send her to school and give her a chance to have a life that her mother could not have.
27. During the first school year (1996/97), girls currently attending school plus those who would enter grade one (or another grade, although it is expected that most of the female increase will be in first grade) as a result of the incentive scheme, will receive the oil for nine months of the year. It is expected that in 1997 Iraqi girls attending camp schools will increase from five percent to 11 percent of the total camp population. This means that some 7,500 beneficiaries will be receiving a total of 243 tons of edible oil during the second half of the 1996/97 school year and the first half of the 1997/98 school year.

MODE OF IMPLEMENTATION

28. Overall responsibility for implementation is assumed by BAFIA, under the Ministry of the Interior. The regional representatives of BAFIA are assisted by the provincial authorities.
29. UNHCR is to assist the camp authorities in the upgrading of refugee registration procedures and in the regular verification of beneficiary figures, ascertaining that reporting on case-loads is disaggregated by gender and age. This is also to be done for statistics on schoolchildren, to monitor properly oil distribution and increased attendance by girls.
30. ITSH costs relating to food and non-food items, except in the case of repatriation, are borne by the Government of Iran. WFP will cover ITSH costs to the border area for the 50 kilograms of wheat per person as a repatriation allocation.
31. All imported WFP food aid will be delivered to the ports of Bandar Abbas and/or Bandar Imam Khomeni, where it will be handed over to the government authorities



concerned (BAFIA). From there, it is the responsibility of BAFIA to arrange transport to provincial and district-level warehouses for ultimate delivery to the refugee camps. Bulk wheat is handled by the State Organization for Grain (SOG), which maintains an elaborate network of silos and distribution system throughout the country. Wheat is milled by the Government at its own cost and refugees are issued wheat flour or bread.

32. The Food Committee is to ensure women's participation in the block or group representation which is in charge of food distribution, and that per capita food entitlements are known to every refugee in the camps. The reporting system is being amended to reflect - for each camp - the quantities of every commodity received, the actual quantities distributed to the beneficiaries (by gender) and stock balances. Reporting will be undertaken by the camp authorities, under the guidance of UNHCR and WFP staff.
33. WFP will recruit a Junior Professional Officer (JPO), to be based in western Iran, to help improve monitoring and reporting on project implementation, for whom a driver, a vehicle and basic equipment will need to be supplied. UNHCR has agreed to provide office space in Kermanshah for this purpose.

PROJECT COSTS

34. The cost breakdown is given below. The annex provides details on direct support costs.

PROJECT COST BREAKDOWN			
	Quantity (tons)	Average cost per ton	Value (dollars)
WFP COSTS			
A. Direct operational costs			
Commodities ¹			
– Wheat	8 676 ²	216	1 874 016
– Rice	2 410	285	686 850
– Vegetable oil	725 ³	900	652 500
– Pulses	723	450	325 350
– Sugar	362	450	162 900
Subtotal commodities	12 896		3 701 616
External transport	12 896	97	1 254 304
ITSH⁴	500	65	32 500
Subtotal direct operational costs			4 988 420
B. Direct support costs (see the annex for details)			52 900



PROJECT COST BREAKDOWN		
	Quantity (tons)	Value (dollars)
Total direct costs		5 041 320
C. Indirect support costs		362 975
TOTAL WFP COSTS		5 404 295
UNHCR COSTS		
1. Programme cost for Iraqi refugees		5 245 500
2. Repatriation budget for 10,000 people		475 000
TOTAL UNHCR COSTS		5 720 500
TOTAL COSTS (WFP and UNHCR)		11 124 795
WFP costs as a percentage of total project costs: 49 percent		
<p>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.</p> <p>² Of which 500 tons for repatriation.</p> <p>³ Of which 243 tons for oil-for-schooling.</p> <p>⁴ For repatriation only.</p>		

RECOMMENDATION OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

35. The Executive Director recommends that the Board approve the continuation of WFP emergency assistance to 66,000 Iraqi refugees in Iran, over a period of 12 months, from January to December 1997, with a total food requirement of 12,896 tons and a total cost to WFP of 5,404,295 dollars.



ANNEX

DIRECT SUPPORT REQUIREMENTS (in dollars)

dollars

Staff costs

International JPO (P2)	
United Nations Volunteers	
National Professional Officers	
International consultants and SSAs	
1 local staff and temporaries	16 900
Subtotal	16 900

Technical support services

Project appraisal	
Project evaluation	
Subtotal	

Travel and DSA

International	
In-country	5 000
Subtotal	5 000

Office expenses

Rental of facility	3 500
Utilities	
Communications	1 500
Office supplies	1 000
Equipment repair and maintenance	
Subtotal	6 000

Vehicle operation

Spare parts	
Repairs	
Insurance	1 000
Maintenance	1 000
Fuel	1 000
Subtotal	3 000

Equipment

Communication equipment	500
Vehicles	20 000
Agricultural equipment	
Computer equipment	
Warehouse equipment	
Fax machine	1 000
Subtotal	21 500

Miscellaneous

500

TOTAL DIRECT SUPPORT COSTS**52 900**