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**Executive Board
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PROTRACTED RELIEF AND RECOVERY OPERATION— NEPAL 6151.01

Food Assistance to Bhutanese Refugees in Nepal

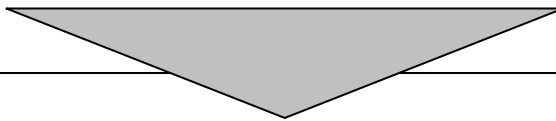
Number of beneficiaries	98,000
Duration of project	Twelve months (1 July 2001–30 June 2002)

Cost (United States dollars)¹

WFP food cost	5,178,380
Total cost to WFP	7,567,432
Total cost to UNHCR	4,000,000
Total cost	11,567,432

¹One United States dollar equalled 72.90 Nepali rupees in October 2000.

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.

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Executive Summary

Bhutanese refugees, mainly of Nepali ethnic origin, began entering eastern Nepal towards the end of 1990. By 1993, over 80,000 refugees were already in Nepal and had been granted *prima facie* refugee status. Since then, new arrivals have been limited to a few individual cases each year. By March 2000, a total of 97,940 people were registered in the seven camps. By June 2001, total WFP assistance to Bhutanese refugees will amount to about US\$62.6 million compared with overall direct assistance estimated at around US\$106 million; the latter includes UNHCR and NGO contributions.

The high degree of self-organization achieved by refugees over the years has contributed to making this operation increasingly efficient and cost-effective. Women's participation in the camp management structure has improved dramatically, especially over the last two years. Women's organizations currently manage most of the United Nations and NGO resources for supplementary activities in income generation and social services. The May 2000 joint WFP/UNHCR assessment mission reported that the overall situation of refugees, as well as their general health and nutritional status, continue to be adequate and stable. However, the level of food and non-food assistance has recently decreased, now reaching the bare minimum. Refugees are still heavily dependent on external assistance partly because the host Government continues to enforce a policy of non-integration.

After a long political stalemate and eight mostly inconclusive rounds of talks at the ministerial level, the bilateral negotiation process was revamped after the visit to both countries of the UNHCR in April/May 2000. Following this visit, both Governments expressed their official commitment to resolving this protracted refugee situation as soon as possible. This alone is a significant change from the prevailing situation and indicates a major step towards finding a durable solution. Further concrete action is essential now in order to maintain international support for this operation.

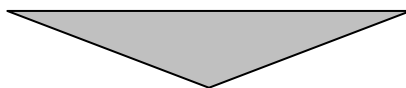
During the critical period of 2001–2002, WFP food assistance is intended both to contribute to the basic sustenance of the refugee population through general food distribution and targeted supplementary feeding programmes, and to provide a facilitating framework for repatriation or integration, thus contributing to a durable solution. Within this overall goal, WFP's additional support for complementary income-generation, vocational training and home gardening activities is expected to further strengthen the refugees' coping mechanisms and skills in view of their early return to a non-refugee situation.

This protracted relief and recovery operation (PRRO) document describes a coordinated approach aiming at facilitating the foreseen repatriation and/or



integration, and takes advantage of the current political willingness to achieve a durable solution for this long-standing refugee problem. However, a high level of flexibility needs to be built into this operation, taking into account the need to clarify many variables before a definite plan of action and time frame can be formulated and agreed upon by all parties involved.

Draft Decision



The Board approves PRRO Nepal 6151.01—Food Assistance to Bhutanese Refugees in Nepal (WFP/EB.1/2001/9-C/3).



CONTEXT AND RATIONALE FOR PROVIDING ASSISTANCE

National and Local Context

1. Nepal is a least developed (LDC) and low-income, food-deficit (LIFDC) country of 22 million people. In 1998, its per capita GNP was slightly over US\$200. Half of the country's population lives in the plains of the *Terai* (along the southern borders with India), which cover only 23 percent of the national territory. Nepal is one of the world's poorest countries, ranking 144th out of 174 countries as reported in the 1999 UNDP Human Development Report.
2. According to the Government of Nepal's 1996 estimates, 42 percent of the population lives below the nutrition-based poverty line of 2,250 kcal per capita per day. Poor rural women and children are the most vulnerable and at risk. The country has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the world, at 475 per 100,000 live births and an under-5 mortality rate of 118 per 1,000; two thirds of such deaths are associated with malnutrition.
3. Jhapa and Morang, where the Bhutanese refugee camps are located, are the two most eastern districts in Nepal, lying in the fertile and agricultural surplus-producing *Terai* region. With an estimated overall population of over 1.5 million in 1999, both districts are part of the most densely populated region of Nepal. Mainly because of their proximity to the Indian border, the good road network and industrial infrastructure, the two districts rank in the top ten of the country's 75 districts, according to a composite index made up of 39 key development indicators.
4. The whole of the *Terai* remains a powerful magnet for largely unskilled waves of migrant workers coming from the impoverished hill and mountain areas of Nepal, thus adding pressure on the land and already limited employment opportunities as well as exacerbating the problem of landlessness. As a result, large pockets of extreme poverty exist in the *Terai*. The low purchasing power of a large part of the population limits their access to the surplus agricultural production, which easily finds its way to the Indian market.

Assistance Delivered to Date

5. During the period January 1992 to June 2001, WFP will have committed a total of some US\$62.6 million for food assistance, covering a total of over 165,000 tons of commodities. This also includes the budget increase for the first semester of 2001, as approved by the Executive Board in October 2000. Over the same period, UNHCR will have provided a total of approximately US\$38.1 million for care and maintenance programmes plus an additional US\$3.5 million for rehabilitation projects focusing on local communities in the refugee-affected areas.
6. Over US\$106 million has been spent since the inception of this operation as direct support to the refugee population, which includes additional NGO funding for complementary assistance schemes worth around US\$1 million per year up to 1998 and drastically reduced to US\$400,000 in 1999. Thus, direct assistance to the Bhutanese refugees has averaged US\$125 per refugee per year since 1992.

Background and Political Developments

7. Bhutanese refugees started entering eastern Nepal towards the end of 1990, following Bhutan's enforcement of restrictive immigration and citizenship laws during the



second half of the 1980s. By 1993, over 80,000 refugees were already in Nepal. Upon request of the Government of Nepal, UNHCR and WFP began a refugee operation in 1992 providing shelter, food and non-food assistance to refugees in the camps. Those who had arrived before 1993 were granted *prima facie* refugee status. Since then, new arrivals have been restricted gradually to a few individual cases each year. In March 2000, the total registered population in the seven camps amounted to 97,940 people. An estimated additional 8,000 to 10,000 Bhutanese refugees are believed to have spontaneously settled elsewhere in Nepal without being either registered or assisted.

8. Within the framework of the Joint Ministerial-Level Committee, eight rounds of talks were held between the Nepalese and Bhutanese Governments during the period from 1992 to 1999. The negotiation process was boosted by the UNHCR' visit to both countries as well as to India in April/May 2000. Following high-level consultations, it was agreed that while the solution to the refugee crisis remained to be sought bilaterally, UNHCR would act as the facilitator, playing a technical and advisory role in reaching a durable solution and providing assistance in the subsequent phases of implementation of the agreement.
9. Although notable progress was achieved during the subsequent ninth round of bilateral talks held in Thimphu, Bhutan, particularly on issues relating to the verification of refugees and the identification of those who could return to Bhutan, the two Governments could not reach agreement on the unit of verification. A further UNHCR-proposed formula, based on the international practice of setting the nuclear family as the unit of verification, was accepted by Nepal in August but not yet by Bhutan. Bilateral negotiations are currently under way to seek a mutually acceptable course to proceed with the verification process and UNHCR maintains close contact with both Governments through their respective missions in Geneva. During separate meetings held in September 2000, the High Commissioner reiterated to the highest-level representatives from both Governments the strong interest of the international community for an early solution to the refugee problem and the need for tangible results.

Overall Needs Assessment

10. As reported by the Joint Food Assessment Mission (JFAM) conducted by WFP and UNHCR in May 2000, the overall situation of refugees in camps continues to be adequate. The refugees themselves manage most services through some 3,000 volunteers and 1,650 workers paid at a minimal incentive level.
11. WFP and UNHCR fund six NGOs to implement food distribution and other sectorial activities in the camps. The Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS) supervises the distribution of both food commodities and non-food items. NRCS also operates ambulance and fire-fighting services.
12. Basic promotion, preventive and curative health services are provided by Save the Children Fund-UK (SCF-UK) to all refugees as well as to the local population residing in the camp vicinity through 377 refugee health workers and 1,774 community health volunteers. The Association of Medical Doctors for Asia (AMDA) also ensures regular monitoring and reporting on the overall health situation of the refugees.
13. AMDA manages the primary referral hospital and provides out-patient, in-patient and emergency services for both refugees and the local population.
14. The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) maintains and repairs all refugee dwellings and camp infrastructure with a team of 74 refugee workers. Over 1,000 additional family shelters were constructed in 1999 to alleviate overcrowding. The camps' sanitation,



including the proper disposal of human waste and the control of vectors, was well maintained throughout the year.

15. The supply of basic non-food items such as kerosene for fuel, stoves, cooking utensils, soap and jerry cans, among others, was adequate and has been regular. During 1999 clothing was provided by UNHCR, replacing previous assistance by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).
16. Community services and self-engagement activities are provided by OXFAM through the Refugee Women Forum.
17. During the school year 1999/2000, about 37,900 students, or 38.8 percent of the overall refugee population (up from 35 percent in the previous school year) attended primary and secondary education courses in camp schools run by CARITAS/Nepal through some 900 refugee teachers. Both girls and boys are given equal opportunity for education and there is an overall enrolment of 47 and 53 percent, respectively. However, a greater percentage of girls continue their education to a higher level.

Nutritional and Health Conditions of the Refugees

18. The overall nutritional and health situation in the camps continues to be stable and satisfactory. The monthly SCF-UK reports show a constant and low malnutrition rate for children under 5. A nutritional survey carried out in June 1999 confirmed this and showed no severe malnutrition (weight-for-height measurement (WHM) less than 70 percent). The total overall malnutrition rate as measured in the 1999 nutritional survey (WHM less than 80 percent) was 4.06 percent, a slight decrease from 1998.
19. The under-5 mortality rate is 36.1 per 1,000 live births, which is well below the level of concern in displaced populations. During 1999 there was no case of maternal mortality in camps and only one case due to medical complications was reported in April 2000. The incidence of low birth weight is less than 7 percent, which indicates very good pre-natal care. Contraceptive prevalence is high, at an annual average of 37.2 percent, and the population growth rate stands at 1.5 percent. Sanitation coverage and access to family latrines is almost complete and there has been no epidemic.
20. During the 1999 dry season, a sharp rise in numbers of angular stomatitis (AS) cases was reported. March and April have shown a seasonal peak in AS cases over the last three years, which coincides with the dry season when fresh vegetables are scarce, both in the camps and the surrounding markets.
21. In October 1999, WFP and UNHCR requested the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) of Atlanta to conduct a survey on the prevalence of low body mass index (BMI) and specific micronutrient deficiencies in refugee adolescents who fall between the ages of 10 and 19. The survey showed that AS was associated with low levels of Riboflavin (Vitamin B2) and folate. It concluded that although low BMI was common among adolescents and adults, it was not more prevalent than in other south Asian adolescent and adult populations. However, it found that about one third of the Bhutanese female refugees older than 11 years of age were anaemic. Anaemia can pose a particular health risk for females of reproductive age, because of the likeliness of developing iron deficiency during pregnancy. The biochemical findings suggested that the nutrient status of the adolescent refugees is marginal.
22. Since the study, SCF-UK has reported a significant decrease in the incidence of AS, which appears no longer to be a major health concern. Many possible reasons for this decrease have been identified. They range from increased awareness of the deficiency causes along with a better nutritional understanding of the benefits gained from food rich



in Vitamin B2 to an improvement in the regular supply of fresh vegetables by UNHCR. Also, a WFP-supported home gardening project, launched in April 1999, with a nutritional education component, as well as the increased availability of fresh vegetables and a price reduction for them in the local market, have helped.

23. During the JFAM, refugees were offered several options to add micronutrients to the food basket by replacing part of the rice and/or sugar ration with fortified wheat or corn flour. The refugees clearly stated their preference to keep the current food basket unchanged.
24. An expanded supplementary feeding programme was, therefore, recommended as a more specific means to respond to micronutrient deficiency among adolescents during the three critical months of the dry season. An active screening of all schoolchildren to detect and treat AS will also be carried out by SCF-UK. With the specific aim to address the problem of iron deficiency, all girls between 14 and 18 should receive routine prophylaxis of iron folate through the school cycle.
25. The JFAM stressed that providing a more natural and long-lasting means of increasing refugees' micronutrient intake, especially riboflavin, should be given priority rather than relying on fortified food commodities or tablets. Indigenous food preparation practices, such as the sprouting of whole beans (*kinema*) and fermentation of green leafy vegetables (*gundruk*), are good means of obtaining more riboflavin, are well known to the refugees and reflect their original diet. As from October 2000, part of the pulse ration, usually split lentils, is being supplied as whole beans, chick or green peas, to make sprouting possible. Similarly, the home gardening project will be further expanded to provide green leafy vegetables, which are a good source of riboflavin and folate.
26. A survey carried out by SCF-UK in 1997 assessed the level of parasite infestation among children at 30 percent, of which 8 percent was hookworm. Since parasites compete actively for nutrients within the body, overall micronutrient levels will be improved by a biannual deworming campaign in the refugee schools, which will be undertaken by SCF-UK with UNHCR support.

Targeted Feeding Programmes

27. In addition to the general food distribution, a supplementary feeding programme (SFP) is ongoing for malnourished children under 5, expectant and nursing mothers, tuberculosis patients and elderly sick people. During 1999, an average of 3,215 persons per month were assisted, out of whom 86 percent were expectant and nursing mothers.
28. Since 1997 the nutritional status of children under 1 has been assessed on a monthly basis. In addition, community health workers screen children between the ages of 1 and 5 at the household level every three months. Those found to be malnourished are referred to mother and child health clinics for weight-for-height screening and enrolment in the SFP, if needed. They remain enrolled until they exceed 85 percent weight-for-height and maintain this level for at least one month.
29. In 1999 a total of 355 malnourished children were admitted for supplementary feeding at an average of 30 per month, representing around half the number of 1998. During the first four months of 2000 the number further declined by 23.6 percent compared with the same period in 1999. Similarly, the admission of expectant and nursing mothers in the first quarter of 2000 has declined by 8.3 and 1.3 percent, respectively, as compared with 1999.
30. Based on the above results and past experience, a planning figure of 3,400 persons, or approximately 3.5 percent of the projected population, will be used for SFP implementation during 2001–2002.



31. As per the JFAM recommendations and with the aim to further expand the current nutritional safety net mechanism, a school-based supplementary feeding programme is to commence in 2001. It will cover all 38,000 students enrolled in the CARITAS-run refugee camp schools, from kindergarten to grade ten, and provide a daily ration of 25 grams of fortified blended food for three months during the dry season from March to May. This expanded SFP will act as a preventive measure for tackling the seasonal incidence of AS that is predominant in adolescents due to their increased nutritional requirements.

Beneficiary Numbers, Registration and Demographic Characteristics

32. The total registered refugee caseload as of March 2000 is 97,940 in seven camps. The natural net growth rate (births over deaths) in this population has declined over the years and is currently at 1.5 percent, down from last year's 2 percent, which is significantly lower than the growth rates in both Bhutan (2.6 percent) and Nepal (2.4 percent). This reflects the effectiveness of the family planning programmes. There continues to be a predominance of males over females in all age groups (the ratio was 51 percent to 49 percent). The majority of refugees are of ethnic Nepalese origin. They come from the southern districts of Bhutan, primarily from the rural areas.
33. The camp population consists of a total of 15,035 families. Generally, the camp population is young, with 47 percent under 18 years of age. The 1999 JFAM already pointed out that there is a large and growing number of young people, now around 19,800 or 20 percent of the camp population, who were born in the camps. Only 5 percent of the population are over 60.
34. Education continues to be a major activity. Previous missions have highlighted the changing nature of the population in this regard. More than 80 percent of the population is now literate as compared with the estimated 15 to 20 percent in the early years. Almost 100 percent of the youths are literate. Adult non-formal education programmes continue. More students remain in the school system and continue on to higher grades.
35. All these demographic features will need to be taken into consideration when repatriation is organized. The nature of the population has changed significantly over the last nine years. The first aspect is that about 30,000 persons, representing one third of the camp population, have little memory of life other than that in the camps. It should also be noted that while most refugees were farmers upon arrival, the majority now lack rural experience.

Partnerships and Institution-building

36. The WFP and UNHCR country offices in Nepal have maintained close collaboration during the past years within the framework of the standard Memorandum of Understanding. Other United Nations agencies, such as the UNFPA, WHO and UNICEF support the refugees through the Ministry of Health by providing family planning services, contraceptives, essential drugs and vaccines.
37. In addition to the close collaboration on the ground between United Nations agencies and NGO implementing partners, the cost-effectiveness and efficiency of this operation is largely due to its participatory focus, with direct involvement of the refugees themselves in all camp activities, and to the well-established camp management structure.
38. A notable example is the Refugee Women Forum (RWF) which was initiated in the early 1990s. RWF has evolved over the years into a voluntary organization with over 2,000 active members who have been instrumental in addressing the special needs of women



through gender sensitization, literacy and skills training, income-generation activities and promotion of women's participation at all levels of the management structure.

39. The high degree of self-organization attained and the good levels of general education reached by a large proportion of the refugee population, especially amongst the younger generations, will enable them to organize their social and economic life once they leave the refugee camps.

RATIONALE FOR PROVIDING ASSISTANCE: A RESOLUTION— FACILITATING FRAMEWORK

40. As a result of the visit by the UNHCR in April/May 2000, a commitment to establish a basis for repatriation of the refugees has been made by both Nepal and Bhutan. For the first time, the Government of Bhutan officially stated its willingness to receive back "the people who meet the requirements". At the same time, it showed unprecedented flexibility by announcing a liberal interpretation of its citizenship laws based on residency, which would make a greater number of refugees eligible for repatriation. This alone is a major change from the prevalent situation and indicates a major step towards finding a durable solution. Further concrete and positive action is essential now in order to maintain international support for this operation.
41. A basis for supporting and facilitating this process needs to be provided. This PRRO document outlines a coordinated approach and aims at facilitating the foreseen repatriation and/or integration. However, a high level of flexibility in pursuing the above-mentioned goals is built into this operation, taking into account the necessity to clarify many variables before a definite plan of action can be formulated and agreed upon by all parties involved.
42. Although it is too early to have clear indications on the actual time frame, the next 12 months represent the most critical period for solving this refugee crisis and for durable solutions to be identified and implemented. Therefore, this next assistance phase will certainly offer a 'facilitating framework', taking into account the current political willingness to settle the refugee situation. Food and non-food assistance are required during this critical period, as the host country has no capacity to effectively support such a large refugee population. During this period, WFP food aid should enable refugees both to supplement their current efforts to meet needs and enhance their skills for return to a non-refugee situation.
43. The current population figure considers net growth rates and the suspension at different times of food rations for an average of 2,000 refugees (mostly for reasons of discipline, study leave or unjustified absence from the camps). Hence, it is used as a planning figure for continued support over the next 12 months. Once refugee movement commences, food assistance will be adapted as incentive packages to encourage repatriation and/or reintegration. It is premature to propose what a package might consist of, but in other operations support is usually provided to ensure that refugees can cover their essential food needs during the period of transition. These incentive packages are considered an integral part of this operation, although actual details will have to be worked out at a later stage in liaison with UNHCR and depending on the support programmes to be implemented during the transition and rehabilitation phases.
44. The results of the verification exercise, once agreed upon by both Governments, will be used to update the UNHCR population database and will be the basis for all programme interventions, including setting food requirements. Without such an exercise, the UNHCR



sample spot-checking system will need to be continued and improved so as to refine the population database.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Goals and Objectives

45. In line with the standard Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between WFP and UNHCR, the broad goal of WFP food assistance is to contribute to the basic sustenance of registered Bhutanese refugees in the camps and to promote their progressive self-reliance. The main objectives are the following:
- a) to ensure regular access to a basic food ration for all registered refugees;
 - b) to improve and maintain an adequate nutritional and health status for the most vulnerable groups through targeted supplementary feeding programmes; and
 - c) to strengthen their coping mechanisms and enhance their skills and capabilities through income-generating and other activities.

Food Distribution System

46. Every camp consists of four to 12 sectors, which are further divided into sub-sectors each comprising 80 to 110 families, or around 500 persons. A sub-sector is a de facto distribution unit for both food and non-food assistance. Sub-sector heads and their assistants are elected among adult refugees, under the general supervision of the Refugee Coordination Unit (RCU) Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) camp officials. They are responsible for distributing of basic rations to all families under their authority.
47. The general distribution of WFP basic food commodities is handled directly by refugees and carried out fortnightly on set days. Fresh vegetables supplied by UNHCR through NRCS are distributed weekly. The process is supervised by the Distribution Subcommittee along with NRCS camp staff and monitored by WFP. A system of verification allows for a family not receiving the right entitlement to appeal either to the CMC (Camp Management Committee) structure or directly to WFP and UNHCR through NRCS staff.
48. As regards the ongoing supplementary feeding programme, the blended food premix ration, sugar and vegetable oil, are prepared by SCF-UK in camp health centres and then distributed as a dry take-home ration through trained refugee staff to various vulnerable groups. At the same time, health education is provided.
49. The newly introduced school-based supplementary feeding programme will be implemented through the existing school system in all camps. The CMCs have committed full support to this programme, including availability of refugee volunteers for reconstituting blended food as drinks and distribution to students. Cooking equipment, stoves and fuel will be provided by WFP and UNHCR. CARITAS will supervise the programme implementation and ensure that it does not disrupt regular school sessions.
50. Direct observations and interviews with refugees and partner NGOs led the JFAM to note that the food delivery and final distribution system for both general distribution and targeted feeding are managed efficiently and in a cost-effective manner. Adequate accounting, recording and reporting systems are maintained by implementing NGOs.



Women's Participation in Camp Management

51. After the elections of January 2000, the overall number of female members in CMCs went up from 19 to 36 percent. The number of female sub-sector heads has doubled to 14 percent compared with 1999, in spite of this function further adding to women's workload. Many women are discouraged from participating fully in camp organization since they often have little time left after completing their regular household chores and participating in income-generating activities.
52. On average women are well represented in all seven camps within the respective CMC bodies as follows: women focal points (100 percent), social service subcommittees (71 percent), the counselling board (63 percent) and the distribution subcommittee (50 percent). A slight under-representation of women is noted among assistant sub-sector heads (47 percent), project service subcommittees (46 percent) and deputy camp secretaries (43 percent). Women still remain under-represented among camp secretaries (one out of seven).
53. Continuous efforts by RWF in the field of gender-sensitization training and empowerment of women are actively supported by OXFAM, UNHCR and WFP, which have contributed to increasing women's representation in the camp management structure. The consolidation of women's public representation and their active participation will remain the focus of RWF's future interventions.
54. Following a training of trainers programme on gender sensitization, monitoring and evaluation conducted by the WFP field office in March 1999, RWF conducted a similar training cycle with funding from WFP in the course of 1999. In total, 750 refugees (350 women and 400 men) from RWF sections and CMCs of all camps participated in the training. Participants gained a clear understanding of gender concepts, different dimensions of discrimination, domestic violence, and gender sensitization. RWF plans to continue similar training cycles to further improve and consolidate the status of refugee women with a specific focus on their active participation in the decision-making process at all levels.
55. The current WFP Gender Action Plan for refugees concentrates on continued gender awareness training programmes, increasing the number of female sub sector heads and other positions, increasing the number of female distribution volunteers, increasing the number of self-reliance activities targeting women, and formulating new female-oriented vocational training courses.

WFP-Supported Supplementary Activities

56. Empty sacks and containers are collected after each food distribution and sold by WFP through public auction. Financial audits are carried out on a yearly basis by WFP through independent private accounting firms. As of March 2000, the closing balance was US\$269,118.
57. In agreement with the Government and in coordination with UNHCR, WFP has been using these funds for sponsoring supplementary income-generating activities (SIGAs) and vocational training (VT) since early 1998. In April 1999, a pilot home gardening project (HGP) was launched in two camps. The main objective is to promote self-reliance through skills development, with particular emphasis on targeting the neediest families and encouraging greater female participation.
58. Following renewed discussions during the recent JFAM, Government authorities, both at the local and central levels, share the view that these supplementary activities need to be expanded further. There was also an agreement to carry out a joint review of current camp rules.



✧ **Supplementary Income-generating Activities (SIGAs)**

59. WFP's main implementing partner is RWF, which has a central office in Sanishare camp and representatives in each camp. For selecting recipients of SIGAs, a list of "most vulnerable refugees" is established by RWF and cross-checked with other agencies. At present, the list includes a total of 1,812 vulnerable persons. Special efforts have been made to reach as many women and girls as possible.
60. During 1999, some 120 refugees have been allocated funding through RWF under individual loan schemes for spice preparation and packing, hat weaving, bamboo seat making, jute bag weaving, etc. as well as cloth production (i.e. quilt covers, bed sheets, towels and blankets). A total amount of US\$40,000 has been earmarked for these activities during 2000.

✧ **Vocational Training (VT)**

61. CARITAS implements this programme, the first cycle of which was completed in 1999 with 205 students successfully trained in welding, house-wiring, electronic goods servicing and automobile mechanics. Two training centres were established outside the camps. In August 1999, a second cycle of VT was started with new courses added to attract female participation.
62. Seventy-five percent of the trainees consist of refugees, while the remaining 25 percent are from the local population living in the vicinity. The selection criteria have been fixed and interviews conducted jointly by WFP and CARITAS. The collaboration between refugee and local beneficiaries has contributed to a mutual understanding and created conditions for further partnerships.
63. So far 218 trainees have enrolled in the second cycle of VT; of these, 35 percent are female, compared with 22 percent only during the first cycle. The budget earmarked for the second phase is twice that of the previous year, at US\$45,000.

✧ **Home Gardening Project (HGP)**

64. In April 1999, an HGP was launched in two camps with technical assistance from Helen Keller International (HKI). A total of 2,371 households were covered under the project. After the selection of participants and the formation of usergroups, these were trained in growing different varieties of year-round vegetables and fruits.
65. According to SCF-UK, there is strong evidence that vegetable gardening has contributed to reducing the incidence of micronutrient deficiencies during the dry season. Building on the renewed interest and commitment expressed by all the CMCs, expansion of the HGP was started in April/May 2000 with the aim of covering most camps by the end of the year. The current integrated training programme includes nutrition education, food preparation and vegetable preservation techniques.

UNHCR-supported Refugee-affected Areas Rehabilitation Programme (RAARP)

66. Since its inception in 1994, the overall impact of RAARP has been very positive in promoting a harmonious relationship between refugees and local communities in affected districts by contributing to sustainable development and creating employment opportunities. Some 300,000 local people have continued to benefit from these activities in 1999.



67. A total budget of US\$3.5 million has been allocated for the period 1994 to 2001. Phase I of RAARP was completed during 1994–1995, with a grant from UNHCR's Special Trust Fund. The German Ministry for Economic Cooperation has contributed US\$3.1 million for the second phase (1995–2001). In 1999 alone, a little over US\$400,000 was spent on forest and environmental protection, road and latrine construction, irrigation, water supply and basic infrastructure such as school buildings and health posts.
68. RAARP projects are identified jointly by district development committees and UNHCR, and implemented through the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation, LWF and NRCS, while UNHCR ensures overall coordination and monitoring.

Environmental Concerns and Corrective Measures

69. During 1999, LWF has continued to carry out solid waste management and vector control activities within the refugee camps in addition to the construction and maintenance of family latrines. A clean camp environment and negligible incidence of vector-borne diseases were the results of these activities.
70. Materials and equipment were supplied for the maintenance and repair of the deep groundwater pumping system in camps for drinking-water supply, thus avoiding potential depletion of shallow groundwater used by surrounding communities.
71. The regular distribution of kerosene and the replacement of cooking stoves were continued to curtail the use of traditional fuels, mainly wood, thus preventing refugees' collecting firewood in the protected forests nearby. Locally available construction materials for shelter maintenance have been provided. As a result, fewer incidents of forest encroachment, which could have caused friction between the communities, were reported.
72. Similarly, specific schemes continued under RAARP with a view to preventing negative environmental impact around the camps. Local communities have benefited from activities such as the repair and maintenance of drainage systems and erosion control works for the efficient evacuation of waste water, riverbank protection against floods, forest maintenance and protection, as well as the construction of schools, family latrines and public toilets.

Coordination Mechanisms

73. MoHA is the main Government counterpart for assistance to refugees and is responsible for maintaining inter-agency and inter-ministerial coordination through its National Unit for the Coordination of Refugee Affairs at the central level and the RCU at the district level. The RCU, chaired by the Chief District Officer of Jhapa, has overall responsibility for camp administration, including law and order, through the posting of camp supervisors and police units near camps as well as for the registration of refugees and screening of new arrivals in liaison with UNHCR. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for the coordination of policy issues, including repatriation.
74. A monthly inter-agency coordination meeting is organized in Jhapa between all partners and RCU. In addition, periodic sectorial meetings take place in camps; these focus particularly on social services, logistics and infrastructure as well as health and nutrition. Similarly, coordination meetings between concerned district authorities, aid agencies and refugee representatives from all camps are normally held every two months to address issues of immediate concern to refugees.
75. Since the 1996/97 phase of the refugee operation, the Government has made yearly cash contributions of US\$100,000 to WFP, which have been used to complement the purchase



of food commodities. It is a significant financial commitment, given the other pressing budgetary priorities and the LDC status of the country. The Government also routinely grants WFP tax and duty exemptions for both locally purchased and imported food commodities.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

76. Following the recommendations of the 1999 JFAM, SCF-UK, in collaboration with NRCS, is carrying out regular food basket monitoring of basic food rations and fresh vegetables at distribution sites. WFP and NRCS will establish a mechanism to monitor food utilization at the household level. The consumption of blended food dry rations that are provided within the supplementary feeding programme will also be monitored.
77. The May 2000 JFAM was favourably impressed with the reporting and recording systems, as these remain adequate among the various partners for each specific sector of assistance. Detailed data on camp population and movements, new arrivals, births and deaths, school enrolment, etc. are available on a gender-disaggregated basis and constantly updated (see Annex III for details on performance indicators). UNHCR regularly updates the computerized camp refugee registration data including names, age, family composition and previous address/location.
78. For food and non-food deliveries, NRCS issues a Monthly Situation Report, which details the numbers of assisted refugees in all camps, actual food and non-food distribution and shortfalls, and stock balances in each warehouse. The WFP field office prepares a monthly supply schedule and a projection of requirements, which are then consolidated in monthly food availability status reports (FASREPs) for effective commodity planning and tracking. Close monitoring and regular reporting by WFP and NRCS have contributed to keeping post-c.i.f. food losses at a very low level, i.e. an average of 0.03 percent for a total of 18,630 tons handled during 1999.
79. SCF-UK monitors the health and nutritional situation of the refugees through primary health care services and issues monthly Health and Nutrition Situation Reports, which include information on mortality rates, nutritional screening of children, reproductive health and family planning services. They also cover the status of the implementation of the supplementary feeding programme. In addition, a survey is conducted each year in June to assess the nutritional status of children under 5.
80. Depending on the actual implementation of a durable solution and its time frame, WFP plans to undertake an evaluation towards the end of this operation, which will assess the effectiveness and impact of the long-term assistance provided by WFP to refugees since 1992 and identify lessons learned. The evaluation will include a gender analysis of the refugee camp population vis-à-vis the host community.

FUTURE STRATEGY

81. It is expected that the ongoing bilateral negotiation process will lay the groundwork for setting up both the timetable and modalities for repatriation and reintegration movements during the next 12-month period. Should the ongoing bilateral talks have a positive outcome, a joint UNHCR/WFP policy mission is expected to visit both Bhutan and Nepal with a view to further supporting both Governments in the formulation of appropriate plans as mentioned above. Therefore, this PRRO document is intended to provide the basic level



of food assistance to facilitate the process, pending detailed arrangements that will be developed by both countries and facilitated by UNHCR. This is in keeping with WFP obligations as stipulated within the standard MOU with UNHCR.

82. During the above-mentioned period, and pending further progress in political negotiations, repatriation plans will be formulated, including arrangements in the home country for reception and reintegration of the returning refugees, and also for the movement of the remaining refugees. This will also require plans for minimizing the negative effects on the host community for which extra donor support may need to be obtained. In this respect, the standard Framework for Operational Cooperation between UNHCR and UNDP will be useful during the transition to rehabilitation. WFP country offices in Bhutan and Nepal, in close coordination with UNHCR, will operate for the design of contingency plans with a view to making early arrangements for the provision of food assistance to returnees as and when required.

Risk Assessment

83. The overall level of the food and non-food assistance has continuously been decreased during the past two years and is now minimal. Refugees' coping mechanisms are stretched to the breaking point, as they have to be contained within camp rules and host country policy. Under these conditions the limited resources available for PRROs in general, and Nepal in particular, could seriously affect the nutritional status of the refugee population, as the host Government and the concerned communities have no means of replacing WFP food assistance.
84. The recommendation for a 12-month operation is based on current indications that both Governments might reach an agreement on a durable solution to this long-standing refugee situation. Any undue delays with regard to a timely resolution will have significant implications on the refugees' well-being and will also result in serious social consequences leading to instability, both at the camps and in the surrounding host community.

INPUT REQUIREMENTS

Food Aid Requirements

85. The 2000 JFAM recommended maintaining the daily per capita ration as shown in Table 1 below. For the general distribution, a figure of 98,000 refugees is planned and 3,400 beneficiaries are targeted for supplementary feeding for the duration of this PRRO. The supplementary feeding includes the provision of complementary food commodities to be supplied by UNHCR, in particular fresh vegetables for general distribution and dried skimmed milk (DSM) for malnourished children only. In addition, a school-based supplementary feeding programme for an estimated 38,000 students during three months (or 78 school days) will be set up through the provision of fortified blended food by WFP.

TABLE 1: BREAKDOWN OF DAILY FOOD RATIONS (grams)

Commodity	General ration	Supplementary ration	School-based ration
Rice (parboiled)	410	—	—
Pulses	60	—	—



Vegetable oil	25	10	–
Blended food (fortified)	–	80	25
Sugar	20	15	–
Salt (iodized)	7.5	–	–
Fresh vegetables (UNHCR-supplied)	100	–	–
DSM (UNHCR-supplied)	–	40	–

86. The basic food ration, including fresh vegetables, provides 2,022 kilocalories per person per day (inclusive of 41 grams of proteins and 27 grams of fat), which is close to the recommended minimum daily requirement of 2,100 kcal. An additional 452 kcal and 14.4 grams of proteins and 14.8 grams of fat per person per day are supplied in the form of a pre-mix under the supplementary feeding programme.
87. The total food requirements for the 12-month PRRO duration are outlined in Table 2 below. For WFP only, the total requirements are 18,893 tons of basic and supplementary food commodities.

TABLE 2: TOTAL FOOD REQUIREMENT (tons)

Commodity	General ration	Supplementary ration	School-based ration	Total
Rice (parboiled)	14 666	–	–	14 666
Pulses	2 146	–	–	2 146
Vegetable oil	894	12	–	906
Blended food (fortified)	–	99	74	173
Sugar	715	19	–	734
Salt (iodized)	268	–	–	268
Fresh vegetables (UNHCR-supplied)	3 586	–	–	3 586
DSM (UNHCR-supplied)	–	6	–	6

Food Resourcing and Delivery

88. Since 1992, most of the food has been procured locally or regionally, except for vegetable oil due to its limited availability and high market price. Local purchases have ensured timely and regular delivery and contributed to greater acceptability by refugees, while at the same time benefiting local production and trade. In addition, local procurement has the advantage of reducing losses to insignificant levels.
89. Depending on actual availability of cash contributions during 2001/2002, local procurement should continue to be given priority as this is not only the most efficient, but also the most cost-effective means of supply compared with importing commodities, especially once ocean and overland transport costs are added.
90. However, the sharp reduction in multilateral untied cash resources for PRROs strongly calls for planning and making budgetary allocations for in-kind contributions. Food commodities will have to be shipped to refugee camps through Calcutta port in India, which is the main entry point for the eastern region of Nepal.



91. There may be possibilities for exchanging imported wheat for local parboiled rice. Currently Nepal produces a total of about 1 million tons of wheat per year (Ministry of Agriculture, 1999). To meet full domestic demand, an additional 36,000 tons is imported annually. Only 8,000 tons is commercially imported and the rest is met through grant food aid.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

92. 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 (parboiled)	14 666	230	3 373 180
– Pulses	2 146	400	858 400
– Vegetable oil	906	650	588 900
– Blended food	173	340	58 820
– Sugar	734	360	264 240
– Salt iodized	268	130	34 840
Total commodities	18 893		5 178 380
Ocean transport	17 736	30.12	534 148
Superintendence costs		2.5	47 233
Landside Transport		35.83	676 935
ITSH		7.15	135 085
Total LTSH		42.98	812 020
Other direct operational costs		0	0
Subtotal direct operational costs			6 571 781
B. Direct support costs (see Annex II for details)			
Subtotal direct costs		6.82	448 100
C. Indirect support costs (7.8 percent of total direct costs)			
Subtotal indirect support costs			547 551
TOTAL WFP COSTS			7 567 432

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.



ANNEX II

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

Staff

International	143 500
United Nations Volunteers	35 000
National professional officers	27 000
Local staff and temporaries	99 600
Overtime	2 000

Subtotal	307 100
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Technical Support Services and Training

Technical advisory services	15 000
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Subtotal	15 000
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Travel and DSA

Blanket travel	8 000
In-country travel	12 000

Subtotal	20 000
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Office expenses

Rental of facility	5 000
Utilities	3 000
Communications	15 000
Office supplies	7 000
Equipment repair and maintenance	4 000

Subtotal	34 000
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Vehicle operations

Fuel and maintenance	14 000
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Subtotal	14 000
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Equipment

Vehicles	40 000
Security equipment	5 000
Furniture and equipment	5 000

Subtotal	50 000
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Other

Miscellaneous and contingencies	8 000
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Subtotal	8 000
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TOTAL DIRECT SUPPORT COSTS	448 100
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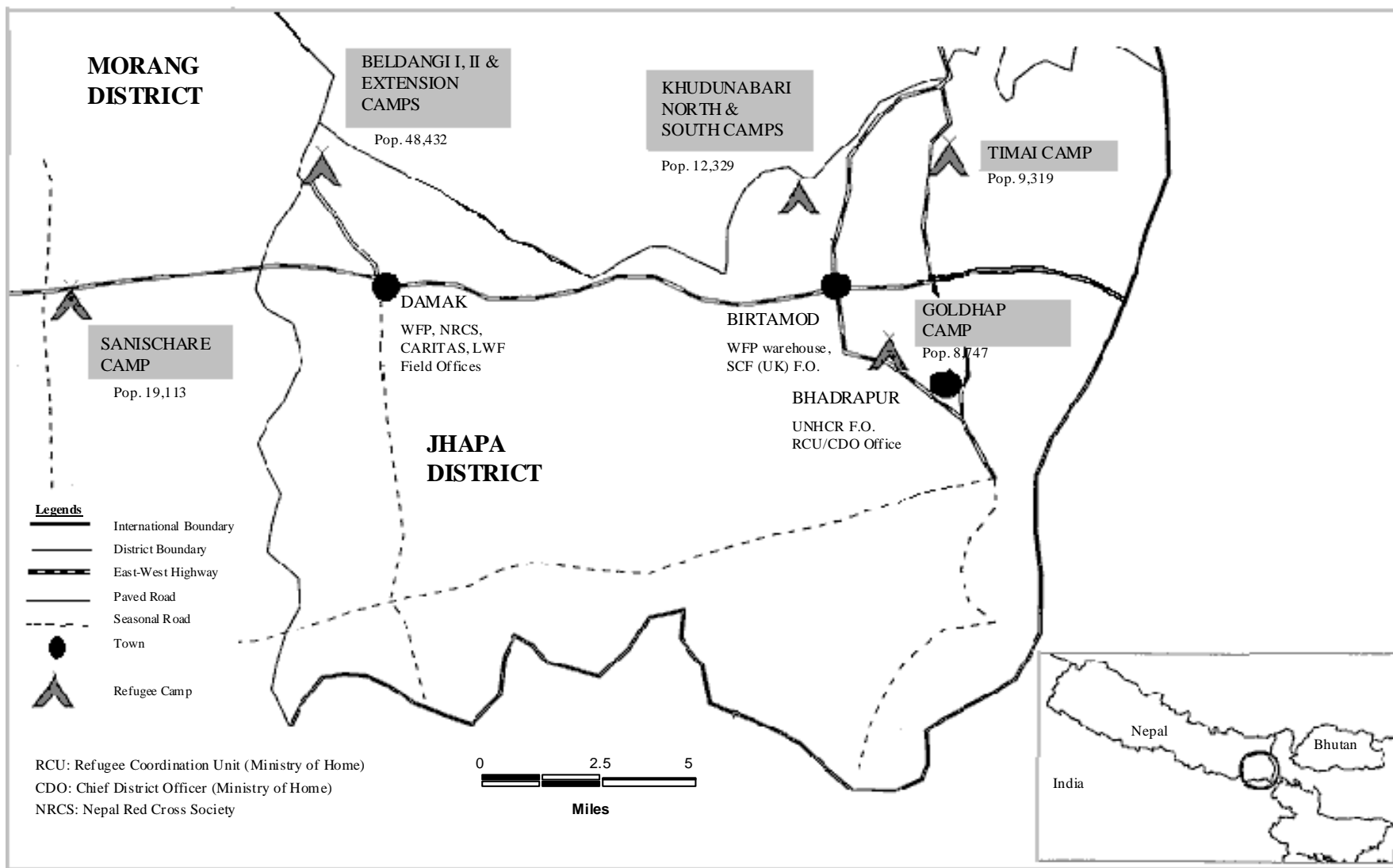
ANNEX III

PRRO NEPAL 6151.01: PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Sector of assistance	Main indicators	Reporting
Delivery of food and non-food items	- Fortnightly camp-wise number of food receiving refugees (general ration + SFP)	WFP Monthly FASREP
	- Fortnightly quantity of general and SFP food commodities distributed per camp	WFP Fortnightly SITREP
	- Weekly quantity of fresh vegetables distributed per camp	NRCS Monthly Situation Report
	- Ration size	
	- Balance stocks of food commodities	
	- Balance stocks of empty containers (for auction)	
	- Quantities of food and non-food commodities delivered to the camps (UNHCR)	
	- Post CIF losses	
Health and nutrition	- Maternal mortality rate	Monthly Health and Nutrition Situation Report, SCF-UK
	- Malnutrition rate	Annual Nutrition Survey Report, SCF-UK
	- Under 5 mortality rate	Ad hoc surveys and studies (for instance, CDC/Atlanta in October '99)
	- Infant mortality rate	
	- Crude death rate	
	- Crude birth rate	
	- Immunization coverage	
	- Contraceptive prevalence rate	
	- Diseases incidence rates	
	- Number and category of beneficiaries in SFP	
Demographics	- Camp wise number of refugees, by age and gender (including births, deaths, new arrivals, intra-camp transfers, etc)	UNHCR data base
	- Camp wise number of families (with location by sub-sector / sector)	NRCS Monthly Situation Report
Education	- Enrollment by gender	CARITAS school records
	- Graduation rate (School Leaving Certificates)	
SIGA & VT & HGP	- Number of beneficiaries by gender for SIGAs	RWF Progress and Final Reports
	- VT completion rate by gender	CARITAS Monthly Situation Report CARITAS Project Completion Report
	- Beneficiaries and production levels for HGP	HKI/NRCS/LWF Seasonal Monitoring Report HKI/LWF Half Yearly Report HKI/NRCS/LWF Final Report



LOCATION OF REFUGEE CAMPS IN MORANG AND JHAPA DISTRICTS, EASTERN NEPAL
AND REGISTERED POPULATION AS OF MARCH 2000 (UNHCR source): Total 97,940 refugees



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

LIST OF ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

AMDA	Asian Medical Doctor Association
AS	Angular stomatitis
BMI	Body Mass Index
CDC	Centers for Disease Control, Atlanta
CMC	Camp Management Committee
DSM	Dried skim milk
FASREP	Food availability status report
HGP	Home Gardening Project
HKI	Helen Keller International
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
MoHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NRCS	National Red Cross Society
PRRO	Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation
RAARP	Refugee-Affected Areas Rehabilitation Programme
RCU	Refugee Coordination Unit
RWF	Refugee Women Forum
SCF	Save the Children Fund
SFP	Supplementary feeding programme
SIGA	Supplementary Income Generating Activities
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
VT	Vocational Training
WHM	Weight-for-height Measurement