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SUPPORT

OTHER FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES

ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SUDANO-SAHELIAN OFFICE (UNSO)
AND OTHER ASSISTANCE TO DROUGHT-STRICKEN COUNTRIES IN AFRICA

Other assistance to drought-stricken countries in Africa

Report of the Administrator

SUMMARY

1. At its twenty-first session (January-February 1976) 1/, the Governing Council decided to request the Administrator to include in his annual report that on assistance to drought-stricken areas of Africa and adjacent areas.

The present report provides information on the countries and regions of the African continent affected by the drought during 1982 and the effect of that drought on the people and economies of the countries. Information is also given on the measures taken to mitigate the consequences of unpredictable weather conditions both by the countries themselves and by the international community. The situation in the Sahel, in the countries of East and southern Africa and in some other African countries, will therefore be reviewed.

However, unpredictable weather conditions have not been the only causes for the continued food shortage in some countries. Medium-term and long-term measures will have to be taken to enable them to achieve food self-sufficiency.

INTRODUCTION

1. At its twenty-first session (January-February 1976) 1/, the Governing Council decided to request the Administrator to include in his annual report that on assistance to drought-stricken areas of Africa and adjacent areas.
2. The present report provides information on the countries and regions of the African continent affected by the drought during 1982 and the effect of that drought on the people and economies of the countries. Information is also given on the measures taken to mitigate the consequences of unpredictable weather conditions both by the countries themselves and by the international community. The situation in the Sahel, in the countries of East and southern Africa and in some other African countries, will therefore be reviewed.

I. THE SITUATION IN THE COUNTRIES OF THE SAHEL

3. Weather conditions were satisfactory throughout the Sahel and at the end of 1982, harvests were expected to be average and even good in most of the countries. However, several countries experienced insufficient or irregular rainfall, all over or only in part of their territories. The weakness of their economies, and of food production, in particular, made things considerably worse. That was particularly true in Cape Verde, Mali, Mauritania and Chad.

A. Cape Verde

4. Rainfall was insufficient and poorly distributed throughout the growing period of the two main food crops: maize and beans. In November 1982, maize output was estimated at 4,800 tons, or 11 per cent of annual consumption (and 24 per cent of a good year's harvest). The bean crop was decidedly better since, with 4,400 tons, it covers 59 per cent of annual consumption. It had been only 500 tons in 1981. While it is more satisfactory than the previous year, that output is still well below normal; in any case, it is not enough to meet the needs of the population.
5. The multi-donor mission which visited Cape Verde from 25 October to 4 November 1982 estimated the deficit at 32,500 tons, including 19,000 tons of maize, 7,500 tons of wheat, 3,000 tons of rice and 3,000 tons of beans; reserve stocks of 18,000 tons of grain and beans are included in the total. In addition, 1,900 tons of vegetable oil and 3,500 tons of powdered milk are required. The Government would like donors to make multi-year commitments in food aid to make up for the structural grain deficit, which has grown over the past year.
6. In order to remedy this situation, as part of its National Development Plan (1982-1985) the Government is undertaking the following medium-term and long-term programmes in the rural sector: practical application of land reforms; continuation of anti-erosion projects; soil conservation and restoration; continued reforestation; extension of rain-fed crops; development of fruit trees and coffee-growing; development of poultry and pig farming; establishment of rural development support agencies (training, extension services and marketing).

7. Food aid is provided by the United States (15,000 tons of maize), and by Belgium, Spain and Japan (6,770 tons of rice). These contributions have been taken into account in calculating the grain deficit.

8. The organizations of the United Nations system and other donors have continued to provide assistance, in particular in soil conservation, reforestation, the search for new water resources and integrated rural development projects.

B. Chad

9. The situation in Chad deteriorated further in 1982. The drought, which hit the Sahelian region hardest, affected the whole country; nor had it been spared civil and military unrest. Alerted since September 1982, the international community had discovered early in 1983 that no rain in the Sahelian region (north and east), for the third consecutive year had created famine conditions which were killing off livestock and driving the rural populations to migrate to urban centres in the hope of finding food.

10. The mission sent to Chad at the beginning of November 1982 by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)/Office for Special Relief Operations (OSRO), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (UNDRO) at the request of the Government of Chad, attested to the seriousness of the situation. The decline in agricultural production and livestock was exacerbated by the destruction of infrastructures and the almost complete lack of financial, technical and logistical resources to keep the social and administrative institutions functioning. This situation can be expected to affect production in the 1982-1983 crop year.

11. Agricultural output was about 40 per cent lower than in 1981, especially with respect to grain in the Sahelian region (91,970 tons compared to 143,400 tons in 1981). There was also a grain deficit in the Sudano region. The estimated production of 422,472 tons is not sufficient for food self-sufficiency. The food deficit for the 1982 crop year was estimated at about 208,000 tons for a population estimated at 4,240,000 inhabitants (an increase of 132,000 over the 1979-1980 period).

12. In 1981 the Government of Chad had requested 60,000 tons of grain in emergency aid to meet the needs of the population. It had been given only 30,000 tons through WFP, 6,000 tons by the Co-operative for American Relief Everywhere (CARE) (United States) and 458 tons by the Swiss Red Cross. Unfortunately, the food had arrived at N'Djamena in May-June when the rains were making it very difficult to distribute it to the most needy areas of the Sahel. The transfer of 3,016 tons of food from the capital to the remote areas of the Sahelian prefectures was ultimately effected by an airlift organized at the beginning of 1982 in which several donors participated (the United States, France, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom) by providing aircraft rented for that purpose. The European Economic Community (EEC), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the organizations of the United Nations (United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), FAO/OSRO, WFP, UNDP), Nigeria, the United Republic of Cameroon and non-governmental

organizations (Doctors across all Frontiers and Aviations sans frontières) covered other costs. This aid cost an estimated \$7 million, or a transport cost of \$2,331 per ton.

13. Food aid requirements for 1983 were estimated at 20,800 tons, and emergency needs to be met between February and May 1983 at 50,000 tons. The provision of 3,000 tons of seed grains is also essential. As of 1 March 1983, pledges of more than 52,000 tons of grain, milk, CSM (a soya/milk compound) and oil had been made. Of that total, some 8,000 tons had been received at N'Djamena, a portion was still en route and the remaining 40,000 tons were expected to arrive, mainly at N'Djamena, some time in March and April.

14. In November 1982 the United Nations convened an international conference at Geneva, on assistance to Chad. There the Government of Chad presented a priority programme aimed at meeting the most urgent needs to activate the country's economy and begin its reconstruction. Thirty countries, including nine African countries, made pledges at the conference totalling \$175 million.

C. Mali

15. Rainfall in the north-western, northern and north-eastern regions of the country was far below normal. In addition to the structural defects in Mali, this unpredictable weather created serious food shortages for the populations and their herds. Grain production (rice, sorghum, maize and millet) was estimated at 975,000 tons - an overall shortfall of nearly 350,000 tons.

16. An FAO/OSRO multi-donor mission which visited Mali in December 1982 made the following recommendations: provision of 140,000 tons of grain in food aid, including 87,000 tons as emergency aid; building up of seed stocks to be distributed to farmers and delivery and distribution of the food as soon as possible so that it could reach the people in need before the June 1983 rainy season; delivery of concentrated livestock feed and salt lick stones as well as pharmaceuticals and veterinary supplies; establishment of water outlets in the north. In addition, the temporary shifting of herds towards the south and the thinning out of herds by establishing a fund to encourage the sale by livestock farmers of 30 to 50 per cent of their herds have also been recommended.

17. As this report was being drafted, the European Development Fund (FED) had provided nearly \$300,000 in emergency aid to livestock farmers in the drought-stricken areas which will be used to purchase and transport 2,500 tons of livestock feed and 33 tons of salt lick. The United States had pledged \$130,000 in emergency aid to the peasants in Diré. Italy was to provide about \$3 million in freeze-dried food products. The Netherlands was distributing 2,500 tons of grain in the stricken areas. UNDP, in co-operation with the United Nations and the UNICEF, was considering the possibility of digging 15 emergency wells in the drought-stricken areas within the framework of the project, Development of rural groundwater resources. As emergency aid, Mali also received 2,750 tons of rice from Kuwait, 3,300 tons of maize from "Islamic Solidarity" and 3,850 tons of maize from the United Arab Emirates. Generally speaking, the countries and bodies

participating in the project, Reconstruction of the grain market, have advanced delivery rates by several months under the project.

18. In addition to emergency assistance, the international community provided 48,415 tons of grain in food aid during the first 10 months of 1982.

19. Mali has included measures to combat the effects of the drought in its 1981-1985 five-year plan, which identifies food self-sufficiency as one of the major objectives. Several major agricultural development projects begun under the previous plan with the assistance of various donors, are being continued: rehabilitation of the Niger Office and the Mopti rice operation aimed at rice self-sufficiency; the "lake area" operation, which consists of the controlled submersion of more than 13,350 hectares and the irrigation of 5,000 hectares for wheat cultivation, for example. Important concomitant measures have also been taken, such as the restructuring of the grain market, which should result in more remunerative prices for producers, and the expansion of agricultural credit. Projects for reconstitution of the herds have been launched. Anti-desertification measures include protection of forestry resources (improved hearths) and reforestation. The active participation of the population at the level of villages or groups of villages in the establishment of hydro-agricultural installations and irrigation works, fruit and vegetable production, reforestation and so on will be encouraged and the required financial resources have been included in the plan.

20. The organizations of the United Nations system are providing support to these programmes and important financial means are also being made available to Mali by the development banks: \$35 million in loans in the agricultural and rural development sectors by the World Bank; financing of wells in the rural areas by the African Development Bank (ADB)/African Development Fund (ADF); storage hangars by the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (ABEDA). Many bilateral donors are providing support for agriculture: for example, Saudi Arabia contributes to the project, Livestock farming in Western Sahel; Canada, the United States and France contribute to various projects for increasing grain production, as mentioned above; the Federal Republic of Germany and Switzerland participate in the financing of reforestation and forestry development. The adoption by the Government of Mali of a strategy which takes into account the various development factors to achieve food self-sufficiency is supported by the donor community.

D. Mauritania

21. The July to September 1982 rainfall was 30 to 50 per cent less than normal in the rain-fed crop areas. The spate of the Senegal river was late and short. As a result, grain crops and fodder production suffered. Insects and seed-eating birds further reduced the harvest.

22. In response to the appeal launched by the Mauritanian Government, FAO, on the one hand, and WFP on the other, provided emergency assistance for measures against crop pests and for emergency food aid for some 272,000 drought victims. WFP will provide 9,800 tons of wheat and 990 tons of CSM. A major effort was made by multilateral and bilateral donors to implement integrated rural development operations.

23. Unpredictable weather only marginally affected the other countries of the Sahel, which have made a sustained effort in recent years to develop their grain production by enlarging the areas under wheat, extending irrigation, paying more attention to training and extension services and environmental protection. The implementation of a better farm price policy more favourable to the producer and efforts in the areas of storage and marketing, have no doubt begun to bear fruit. However, increased agricultural production and, ultimately, food self-sufficiency for these countries is jeopardized by the rapid growth of their population and the even more rapid rise in industrial and fuel prices. In the circumstances, the results achieved are still fragile and at the mercy of variations in rainfall.

II. THE COUNTRIES OF EAST AFRICA AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

24. Of the countries of East Africa that have suffered from drought in recent years, only Ethiopia was seriously stricken. However, most of those countries appealed for international food aid because of the presence of refugees, great concentrations of displaced persons and sometimes a very localized absence of rainfall.

A. Ethiopia

25. The seasonal rains were late in coming and were 35 per cent to 40 per cent below normal in most of the grain- and legume-producing regions. Planting started late in the provinces of Welo, Gondar and Shoa and the growing period was shortened. In the provinces of Tegre and Hararghe, the crops suffered. There are food shortages in a number of provinces. The situation is particularly serious in Gondar because of the influx of people from Welo in search of food. Herd losses have also been reported. The Government has estimated that approximately 4 million people will need international food aid between now and the next harvest at the end of 1983. At this writing, there was no information on the response of the international community to the Government's appeal except for one contribution of 15,000 tons of wheat and maize announced by FAO/WFP to meet the needs of 500,000 people for two months. In the government reports on the situation, the authorities underscore the fact that the basic causes of the drought were severe soil erosion, the impoverishment of the land from overgrazing and excessive deforestation. To deal with the problem, the Government has therefore launched an extensive national reforestation programme and improved water conservation techniques, but it will be several years before the results of these measures will be felt.

26. It is southern Africa, however, that has suffered the most severe drought in 30 years, causing food shortages among the rural population, killing several thousand head of cattle and imperilling crops on thousands of cultivated hectares. The drought that has now prevailed in the region for more than two years is likely to continue. Over most of the region rainfall was low and irregular during the last rainy season, and the heat wave in December 1982 destroyed the first growth and the newly sowed crops in some areas.

B. Angola

27. The rainfall was below normal throughout the country, with the coastal regions most seriously affected. Agriculture in general and food production in particular are in jeopardy not only because of the low rainfall but also because of the general economic situation and the more or less smouldering war in the southern part of the country. The country does not have the foreign exchange it needs to import food. The United Nations emergency aid system is co-ordinated by UNDRO. Some 19,500 tons of maize and 700 tons of fats have been allocated to Angola for the victims of the war and the drought, but their distribution is being hampered by lack of transport.

C. Botswana

28. The President of Botswana declared the country a drought disaster area on 2 April 1982, announced a series of emergency measures to deal with the situation and appealed for assistance from the international community.

29. Grain production (maize and sorghum) was 20,000 tons in 1982 compared with 54,000 tons in 1981, whereas 120,000 tons are required to meet the needs.

30. The Government has launched a huge food aid programme for about 400,000 of the most needy. About 29,000 tons of grains, legumes, oil and CSM (food compounds) in food aid is required from the international community. The aid should make it possible, among other things, to replenish the reserve stocks that have been seriously reduced by the emergency food aid programme. At the end of 1982, Botswana had received financial assistance from multilateral organizations and bilateral donors for the purchase of food supplies as well as donations in kind with an estimated value of \$18 million and additional aid in the form of drilling and transport equipment.

31. Livestock, the second largest resource of the country after diamonds, was also seriously affected by the drought. The Government launched a programme to accelerate the slaughter of animals, to distribute anti-foot-and-mouth-disease vaccines and vitamin A and to sell fodder. Well-drilling projects in rural areas to augment water resources was speeded up.

32. The Government undertook a long-term rehabilitation programme to increase agricultural production (which now represents only 20 per cent of the national income), augment water resources, introduce varieties of fast-growing grains and improve extension and marketing services.

D. Mozambique

33. The provinces of Mozambique have in varying degrees been suffering from drought since 1978-1979. In 1981 it was most severe in the coastal areas of both the northern and the southern provinces. In 1982 the situation deteriorated markedly in the central provinces. The civil and military disturbances in the

south and centre are disrupting farming, crop harvesting and marketing and the distribution of food supplies. The prospects for the 1983 harvest would appear to be little better.

34. The Government, in an appeal to the international community on 12 January 1983, estimated that 4 million people could be left without enough food. Seventy per cent of the livestock is endangered. The international community was asked for 100,000 tons of grain and for medical supplies, tents and vehicles to alleviate the situation. In 1982 the international community provided or pledged a total of 143,180 tons of grain (maize, rice and wheat), 1,210 tons of seeds and 4.4 tons of various medical supplies, as well as trucks. At this writing, thanks to the assistance received, the situation had definitely improved in the north of the country.

E. Lesotho

35. Lesotho's grain production was cut by about 20 per cent below normal because of unfavourable weather conditions: insufficient rainfall and frost in April 1982. It might become necessary to import close to 45,000 additional tons of grain. The Government has asked for food aid.

F. Swaziland

36. Grain production amounted to about 55,000 tons, which represents a loss due to drought of about 40 per cent compared to the 1980/81 crop year. Cotton production also suffered substantial losses dropping by almost 50 per cent. Cotton being the only source of income of the majority of the rural population, their purchasing power is jeopardized; the drought has also led livestock farmers to dispose of their herds more quickly, sometimes at very low prices.

37. The rural population can expect to find itself in an even greater predicament in the next few months because the drought in the neighbouring countries has pushed up maize prices; the Government has therefore appealed for food aid and FAO/WFP have responded by providing 3,000 tons of maize, 300 tons of legumes and 150 tons of oil. Delivery of these products has, however, been slow. An EEC contribution is in the offing.

G. Zambia

38. Zambia has also experienced unfavourable weather and a FAO multi-donor mission visited the country to assess food production losses and made recommendations on the aid required.

39. The 1982 maize crop came to 504,000 tons. At the end of the year the country had 660,000 tons of maize, including 104,000 tons of reserve stocks from the previous year, 20,000 tons imported from Zimbabwe, 30,000 tons donated by the Netherlands and 2,000 tons by the United States. The needs of the country have

been estimated to be about 750,000 tons. However, because of its export of 110,000 tons of maize to Zaire, the Zambian Government estimates that the grain deficit will be almost 200,000 tons between now and the next harvest in June 1983. If reserve stocks are set aside as the Government would like to do, that would require importing another 180,000 tons of maize.

40. Zambia's precarious economic situation and its very limited foreign exchange resources preclude the possibility of purchasing such quantities. At the end of 1982, WFP-approved aid consisted of 4,320 tons of maize, 432 tons of CSM food compounds and 216 tons of oil. At this writing, no new pledges of food aid had been received.

41. The Government has launched a long-term programme to increase the country's food production. Special support will be given to small and medium-sized farms, as well as incentives for the establishment of co-operatives and support for State farms. A substantial rise in farm prices has been announced for the 1982/83 crop year.

H. Zimbabwe

42. A severe drought struck the country during the 1982/83 crop year, seriously threatening the June 1983 maize, cotton and tobacco crops. Rural water resources are drying up and fodder shortages are critical in the south and west of the country, endangering the livestock. The "bread basket" of Africa, Zimbabwe's grain production has dropped to 1.2 million tons, only 450,000 of which were exported.

III. THE SITUATION IN THE OTHER AFRICAN COUNTRIES AND THE ADJACENT COUNTRIES

43. In other countries, there was no rain, too little rain or the rainy season came late in certain parts of the territory.

44. In Benin, for instance, irregular rainfall between June and October in the northern part of the country damaged crops. Food aid for some 150,000 persons is being supplied by FAO/WFP.

45. In Ghana, irregular rainfall and long dry stretches after sowing resulted in very low yields of maize, sorghum, millet and rice in the north. Although prospects for the late grain crops were distinctly better, these areas are experiencing a marked food deficit. Difficulties in supplying pesticides, herbicides, fertilizer and fuel and lack of transport are restricting farm production throughout the country.

46. The Bamingui and Vakaga prefectures in the north of the Central African Republic had no rain, with detrimental effects on food production. Weather and farming conditions generally were normal.

47. Despite irregular rainfall over parts of its territory, grain output in Tunisia is about 2 per cent higher than that of 1981.

48. Morocco again had a drought, especially during the grain sowing and growing periods. However, thanks to collective ploughing operations (Touiza), which brought farmers together as a group to speed up the ploughing and sowing of available lands, the country managed to avoid disaster and produce the best possible crop. The 1981 crop of the four main grains (durum wheat, soft wheat, barley and maize), had amounted to only 2.2 million tons; half that of 1980 (4.3 million tons) - the smallest crop in the last 25 years. Despite the late sowing and insufficient rainfall, the 1982 harvest has been estimated at 4.7 million tons, more than double that of the previous year.

49. The drought of past years has continued to affect the northern coastal region of Egypt. More than 60,000 of the Bedouin population and close to 35 per cent (600,000 head) of their herds (sheep, goats and camels) have been affected. FAO has approved food aid amounting to \$793,500. Fodder has also been provided and the local purchase of 300 tons of barley seed has been financed by FAO.

CONCLUSION

50. The consequences of insufficient rainfall in the arid and semi-arid areas of Africa continue to weigh heavily on the daily lives of the people and on the economies of the countries of those regions. However, the drought has not been the only natural or even weather phenomenon influencing the quality and quantity of the continent's food production in 1982.

51. As already noted in the report on the 1981 drought submitted to the Council in 1982 (DP/1982/47), the tragic situation in some countries is the result of unpredictable weather conditions which exacerbate the structural flaws in their food production system, and in some cases, compound the effects of civil unrest, a more or less smouldering war and influxes of refugees or displaced population groups.

52. For these complicated reasons, countries faced with severe and persistent food shortages have appealed for emergency aid from the international community.

53. In most cases, the situation has been assessed, sometimes several years in succession, by multidisciplinary and multi-donor missions organized under United Nations auspices. Their recommendations deal both with the emergency relief required and the medium- and long-term economic development measures which must be taken to bring the countries to the point of food self-sufficiency, which has for many years been one of the goals of all their efforts.

Notes

1/ Official documents of the Economic and Social Council, Sixty-first Session, Supplement No. 2 (E/5779), para. 36 (h).
