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SPECIAL PROGRAMMES OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE

Assistance for the reconstruction and development of Lebanon

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report is submitted **to** the General Assembly in pursuance of its resolution **41/196** of 8 December 1986. It provides a brief description of various assistance programmes in Lebanon to mid-July 1987.

II. GENERAL SITUATION AFFECTING ASSISTANCE **EFFORTS**

2. **During** the period covered by this report, **security** problems in Lebanon made it extremely difficult for **the** United Nations to carry out its programme of reconstruction and development. Hazardous conditions and scarce financial resources also required that the number of international staff be kept at a minimum level.

3. The continuing lack of stability has led to a further deterioration of the overall economic situation. As a result **of** the growing sense of **uncertainty**, the substantial depreciation of **the** Lebanese pound continued at an **even** higher pace. While, in July 1984, **the** exchange rate to the United States dollar was LL 6.5, it plummeted to LL 195 in July 1987. Since Lebanon imports almost 75 per cent of its consumption and the near totality of **its equipment** and raw material needs, the depreciation of the Lebanese pound was the **main** reason for a soaring inflation.

4. According **to** one estimate provided by the General Confederation of Lebanese Workers, the cost **of** living increased almost four **times** since May 1986 and nearly doubled since January 1987. **As** a result of rising prices, **even basic** products **of** daily consumption are rapidly **becoming out of reach** for a large part of the population, particularly urban dwellers. Insecurity, inflation and a deteriorating economic situation **have** increased unemployment significantly. Of an estimated working-age population of 1 million **Lebanese**, **some** 250,000 are unemployed and 250,000 are working abroad. Owing to the deteriorating standard of living in urban **areas**, **there** is a significant **migration** of population to rural areas.

5. Owing to the destruction caused by the recurrent **hostilities**, thousands of persons have been displaced and live in very difficult conditions. A growing part of the population has difficulties in satisfying its **basic** needs of **food**, health, housing, education, etc. In a recent study prepared for the Council of **Development** and Reconstruction, which was established by the Government of Lebanon in 1977, the number of destroyed houses was estimated at **100,000** and the concomitant number of displaced persons at 450,000.

6. Despite these conditions the Council of Development and **Reconstruction** of the **Government of** Lebanon has continued its **efforts** to implement its budgeted programme approved in November 1984. Total new commitments made in **1986** amounted to LL 3,197 million **of** which LL 2,622 were to be financed from internal **sources** and LL **575** million from foreign grants and loans.

7. The education sector remained one of the priorities of the Council. Total commitments on education projects amounted to LL 187 million in 1986. Most of the

funds were designated for the rehabilitation of 163 primary, secondary and complementary schools, while the balance was used to purchase equipment for the University of Lebanon. In addition, preparatory work for the rehabilitation of technical schools was initiated. Total expenditures on education projects in 1986 amounted to LL 112 million.

8. The bulk of new commitments in the health sector (LL 58 million) pertained to a detailed survey of the hospital situation, while almost all actual expenditures of LL 203 million during the period under review were made for hospital equipment contracted previously.

9. The implementation of water projects initiated before 1986 continued. New water studies and physical projects in all regions were contracted in the course of the year for an amount of LL 119 million, while expenditures in this sector were LL 69 million.

10. Commitments for waste management amounted to LL 14 million and relate to a study for waste incinerator plants in various regions. Expenditures of LL 76 million in this sector pertain mainly to the waste incinerator plant in the suburbs of the capital, as well as the cleaning of a river bed.

11. New commitments in the telecommunications sector amounted to LL 96.1 million, representing mainly the provision of equipment for a telecommunications school. Expenditures in 1986 were LL 864 million and pertain to previously contracted projects.

12. In the area of rebuilding and improving transportation infrastructure, the bulk of expenditures continued to be on the roads and services rehabilitation programme which comprises the rehabilitation of 1,000 kilometres of international and main roads, including water, sewerage, electricity and telephone networks. Commitments made in this sector in 1986 amounted to LL 1,716 million and are accounted for to a great extent by price increases on contracts signed prior to 1987. Actual expenditures in the same period amounted to LL 2,086 million. The extension of a wave-breaker for the port of Beirut (LL 230 million) is now well under way. Following the transfer of the airport project to CDR at the end of 1985, cumulative commitments in the sector at the end of 1986 were valued at LL 1,957 million. Cumulative expenditures amounted to LL 700 million of which LL 533 million was disbursed in 1986.

13. In the area of public administration, a contract for the detailed study of a postal sorting centre at the Beirut International Airport was concluded, while previous computerization projects continued. In addition, two comprehensive planning studies were contracted for the education and for the health sector.

14. The Council of Development and Reconstruction continued its assistance to the private sector through credit programmes. Loans for an amount of LL 199 million were approved, and a total of LL 128 million was disbursed on these programmes in the same year.

15. Displaced families were paid LL 30 million in emergency assistance. In addition, in 1986 the Council of Development and Reconstruction initiated a housing

assistance programme with a view to repairing damaged dwellings. By the end of 1996, amount amounting to LL 44 million had been concluded and LL 13.5 million had been disbursed for repair work. The programme continued in 1997.

III. UNITED NATIONS ROLE AND ACTIVITIES

A. Emergency relief activities

16. The United Nations Co-ordinating Committee at Beirut, which was established in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 33/146 of 20 December 1978, met regularly in order to assess actual needs, to establish a joint response, and to monitor implementation of the activities of the organizations involved in providing emergency relief assistance. The meetings were attended by representatives of the Office of the United Nations Co-ordinator of Assistance for the Reconstruction and Development of Lebanon and United Nations organizations and entities (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (UNDRO), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations information centre, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Truce Supervision Organization in Lebanon (UNWIFIL), United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), United Nations Truce Supervision Organization in Palestine (UNTYO), World Food Programme (WFP) and World Health Organization (WHO)), the Government of Lebanon (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Health, High Relief Committee), bilateral and multilateral donors (Governments, USAID and the European Economic Community (EEC)), the International Committee of the Red Cross and a number of non-governmental organizations and local voluntary agencies.

17. In May 1987, the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator launched a special appeal by the Secretary-General to provide assistance, valued at approximately \$US 20 million, to about 250,000 Lebanese persons.

18. During the period under review, UNDRO continued to act as a focal point for the co-ordination of emergency relief assistance to Lebanon. The UNDRO representative at Beirut was at the same time in charge of the Office of the United Nations Co-ordinator of Assistance for the Reconstruction and Development of Lebanon as well as Chairman of the United Nations Co-ordinating Committee at Beirut.

19. As a result of two information meetings, organized at Geneva in September 1986 and March 1987 for the representatives of Governments, United Nations agencies, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and as a result of the response to the special appeal of the Secretary-General launched through UNDRO in May 1987, UNDRO mobilized approximately \$US 17.5 million of emergency assistance during the period October 1986 to June 1987. Of this amount, \$US 450,000 from EEC and \$US 200,000 from the Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development Organizations (AGFUND) were donated to UNDRO for its emergency assistance programme through non-governmental organizations.

20. As a result of a \$US 12,216 contribution from the Government of Switzerland at the beginning of October 1986, UNHCR was able to provide medical services, literacy classes and income-generating activities to displaced persons in Wadi Abu-Jmil (Beirut) and the village of Khiam (south Lebanon).
21. In late 1996, as a result of car explosions, babies and children in both sectors of Beirut had to be provided with layette sets, milk and feeding bottles by UNICEF. The total funds utilized amounted to \$US 18,600.
22. UNIFIL continued to provide humanitarian assistance in its areas of operation in order to alleviate emergency situations. These humanitarian activities included distribution of food, medicaments and blankets to the local population, in particular during winter-time, as well as medical assistance and emergency transportation. Further details are contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon to be submitted to the General Assembly at its forty-second session.
23. In his annual report to the General Assembly, the Commissioner-General of UNRWA describes the assistance to Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, including the emergency relief assistance provided to them. 1/
24. WFP continued to provide substantial assistance, particularly to displaced persons in Lebanon. In 1986 and 1987, 260,000 families, consisting of approximately 1.8 million persons, benefited or will benefit from two WFP emergency operations at an approximate cost of \$US 15,420,250.

B. Technical co-operation activities

25. In view of the fact that international staff had to be kept at a minimum level, special tribute should be paid to the local staff who took over the responsibilities of their international colleagues and kept most of the projects running.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

26. In spite of difficult conditions and the evacuation of its international experts, FAO, by relying on national experts, continued to implement the following projects in various regions in Lebanon:

(a) Technical co-operation programme projects

Four technical co-operation programme projects approved previously are being carried out in 1987, namely, determination of the levels of pesticide residues in fruit and vegetables; assistance in the development of exotic fruit crops; protection of cedars; and control of the bee disease varroasis. Two technical co-operation projects on the establishment of processing plants, and on parasites in livestock and poultry had to be deferred owing to the prevailing situation. Four technical co-operation projects are being studied by FAO technical services: development of aquaculture; control of brucellosis; rehabilitation of fisheries;

and irrigation in mountainous areas. The approximate total of these projects amounts to US \$650,000.

(b) FAO/UNDP programme

At the end of December 1996, the projects on the restoration of the national hydrometric department, on animal health (phase I), on protected crops (phase II), as well as on the improvement of olive cultivation, were completed. Owing to the evacuation of international experts, phase II of the animal health project, phase III of the protected crops project, the extension of the project on the improvement of olive cultivation, as well as the establishment of an agricultural documentation centre are being managed by national directors. The total amount for the whole duration of these four projects is \$US 980,000, of which \$US 457,000 is for 1987. In addition, a project on seed production of cereals and one on agricultural advisory services are being studied.

(c) Trust Fund projects

The project regarding technical assistance for the planning of rural and agricultural development, which was frozen in 1966, has been reviewed and is in the process of being reactivated. A project providing farmers with 6,000 tons of fertilizers was carried out in 1986, while a project on cattle breeding and one re-equipping the Ministry of Agriculture had to be frozen because of the prevailing situation. The provision of fishing equipment to support the technical co-operation programme "fisheries" project is in the process of being approved. The approximate total of all these projects amounts to \$US 3,564,100.

(d) Regional projects

Lebanon benefits from the activities of four regional projects. One on cereal seed production is based in Lebanon; the other three projects are located abroad and give Lebanese Fellows the opportunity to participate in training courses and seminars on olive production (terminated in December 1986), on poultry training and development, as well as on animal health. In addition, a FAO/UNDP project on Rinderpest eradication is being considered by the Government of Lebanon.

United Nations Development Programme

27. UNDP activities in the Country Programme 1986/87 continued to be affected by the security situation. Seven projects whose objectives and execution proved impracticable were terminated in 1966. A UNIFEM project was completed in 1996. Three projects were continued in a redefined form and 12 pipeline projects were identified.

28. The Third Country Programme could not be developed further under the prevailing security conditions. Therefore, in February 1987, the Governing Council of UNDP decided to continue the technical co-operation activities on a project-by-project basis, focusing on viable, small-scale projects.

29. UNDP projects address a variety of needs and are directed towards the development of human resources through multi-sectoral fellowships and study tours, promotion and increase of vegetable production, livestock protection and development, modernization of telecommunications and postal services, civil aviation, vocational training for women, modernisation of technical education, improvement of health, assessment of industrial needs, conservation of agriculture data and assisting artisanal services through non-governmental organizations.

30. Indicative Planning Figure (IPF) entitlements under the Fourth Programming Cycle (1987-1991) are equivalent to \$US 5,500,000, including an estimated transfer of \$US 5,336,000 from the previous cycle.

31. UNDP operational projects in 1986/87 include hydrometric techniques, technical education, green houses (phase II) and postal training. The related IPF commitment during 1986/87 amounts to \$US 533,980, of which \$US 55,143 is being paid by the Government of Lebanon.

32. Additionally, five projects have been approved comprising animal health (phase II), establishment of an agricultural documentation centre, green houses (phase III), olive cultivation, and telecommunications training, with total IPF commitments of \$US 1,373,500. Efforts continue to construct a firm pipeline, for which the estimated XPF allocation is equivalent to \$US 4,461,000.

United Nations Children's Fund

33. UNICEF continued to implement its technical co-operation and reconstruction activities in close co-operation with the Lebanese authorities.

34. An expanded programme of immunisation (for 150,000 children) started in all Governorates in 1986 and is designed to reach full immunisation by 1990. UNICEF Support includes the provision of vaccines, syringes, needles, the production of informational material, cards, cold-chain equipment, cash assistance for project support and orientation sessions. For the period September 1986 to June 1987, the funds disbursed amounted to \$US 95,200.

35. In co-operation with the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health and non-governmental organizations, UNICEF is carrying out a health education programme in primary schools. For the period September 1986 to June 1987, UNICEF assistance included grants for training, first-aid kits, the production of teaching material, supplies and equipment, at an estimated value of \$US 25,500.

36. In co-operation with WHO, the relevant ministries as well as the American University at Beirut, a health education resource unit was established with a view to developing an accessible source of information and services related to health education. UNICEF input included the salaries of personnel, the cost of materials and supplies, travel, communication and administrative support services. An amount of \$US 70,000 was disbursed in December 1985 and will cover the project's activities until the end of 1987.

37. In 1985, with the support of UNICEF, the Lebanon Family Planning Association initiated the GOBI/FF project in order to develop manpower and provide services in

the field of health education and improved childcare. From September 1986 through June 1987, UNICEF provided vaccines, audio-visual aids and equipment and grants for training worth \$US 18,000.

38. With a view to developing child-care services in Lebanon, a project has been designed to assist orphans within their families. From September 1994 through June 1997, the programme provided direct support to 800 families with approximately 5,000 children and created and developed community-based services and human resources. From September 1986 to June 1987, UNICEF support to this project amounted to \$US 331,000.

39. UNICEF continued to implement numerous programmes of reconstruction within the framework of the reconstruction programme that was initiated in 1981, which is jointly sponsored by the Council of Development and Reconstruction and UNICEF. 46 health projects, 227 water projects, 233 education projects and 36 community self-help projects had been completed by June 1987. Ten water projects for an estimated total of LL 7,571,300 and two education projects for an estimated total of LL 1,153,700 are being implemented.

40. Under the Programme for the Reconstruction of Lebanon (\$US 34.3 million) funded by the UNICEF 1982 appeal, 90 per cent of the work has been completed. By June 1987, 80 health projects, 190 water projects, 26 education projects, 3 training projects, 60 water projects and 10 community self-help projects had been completed for an estimated total of \$US 22,556,557. An additional 60 water projects and 4 health projects for an estimated total of \$3,958,573 and 4 health projects for an estimated total of 63303,954 are in the process of being implemented. Moreover, a sum of \$3,210,000 was allocated for emergency sanitation and water works, including the trucking of water to centres for displaced persons, the repair of small water pipes to centres for displaced persons, the repair and replacement of small generators and small booster pumps, and the cleaning and spraying of shelters.

41. For 1986-1987, the work plan "X", elaborated in 1986, included projects for the rehabilitation of 10 water systems throughout Lebanon. The total funds for this work plan of 114 projects amounted to \$US 5.6 million comprising the following donations: \$US 4 million from the United States, \$US 729,827 from Canada and \$US 897,200 from Australia. For a total of \$US 3,410,851, 107 projects have been completed, and 60 projects are being implemented for an estimated total of \$US 1,987,120. Owing to the devaluation of the Lebanese pound in relation to the United States dollar, the 114 projects originally contained in this work plan could be increased to 173. The 59 additional projects could thus be carried out within the same scope as the work plan, but with no change in the budget.

42. In co-operation with the various water authorities, UNICEF has prepared a new work plan "Y", approved by the Ministry of Hydraulics and Electrical Resources, for the repair of water systems all over the country to a total value of \$US 7 million. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has promised to contribute \$US 1.4 million for projects which have been identified and are ready for implementation.

World Food Programme

43. During the period 1986-1987, the following three World Food Programme projects have been operational: a feeding programme for children and youth in schools and vulnerable groups in mother and child-health centres which seeks to reduce the malnutrition of children and pre-school youth (WFP contribution \$US 28,676,049); a project on integrated development of the Lebanese mountain areas which aims at improving the economic and social conditions of the rural population through the construction of retaining walls, earthen and concrete reservoirs as well as access roads (WFP contribution \$US 18,523,200); and a project for the rehabilitation of sericulture in Lebanon, which is geared towards the rehabilitation and revival of the silk industry, a long-forgotten tradition, through the improvement of silk-worm rearing (WFP contribution \$US 1,480,000).

World Health Organization

44. The assistance of WHO to Lebanon from its regular budget approved for 1986-1987 amounted to \$US 1,238,300. This assistance focused on educating nursing and other health personnel; providing equipment for health statistical services, laboratory services and dental health care; strengthening of epidemiological services; providing training and fellowships for rehabilitation services, primary health care; and an expanded programme of immunization. In addition, WHO granted emergency assistance to Lebanon in the form of drugs valued at \$US 40,300.

IV. CONCLUSION

45. Despite the adverse security situation, United Nations organisations have continued, to the extent feasible, to render assistance to Lebanon. However, as indicated above, the overall economic situation continued to deteriorate, and the country suffers from galloping inflation and a continuous depreciation of its currency. The forthcoming winter season could be particularly harsh for thousands of displaced families who do not have access to sufficient nutrition and housing.

46. In view of the situation described above, the Secretary-General plans to send a high-level United Nations Inter-Agency Mission to reassess emergency needs in Lebanon. The United Nations will continue its efforts to mobilize, to the maximum extent possible, all possible assistance to help the Government of Lebanon in its programme of reconstruction and development. In this regard, it is crucial that donor countries continue and increase much needed contributions.

Notes

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-first Session, Supplement NO. 13 (A/41/13 and Add.I).