

**Confidential Report of Arthur DeFehr, UNHCR Representative in Somalia
June 30, 1983**

I. Political Background

The Government of President Said Barre continues to impress observers with its ability to manoeuvre among shifting international and tribal loyalties. Nevertheless it is becoming increasingly clear that unity has been built on the strength of external threats, rather than internal cohesion. The predominantly Issak Northwest has finally emerged from the shadow of the Ethiopian threat and in the form of the SNM (founded in early 1981, ostensibly with external support) has provided dramatic evidence of the general lack of confidence in the Barre Government. In the autumn of 1982 there was serious tribal conflict in the Northwest between one branch of the Issaks and the Ogadeni tribe followed by very serious conflicts between the Issaks and the Doboalhante to their east in the spring of 1983. In both instances Government forces took up arms against the Issaks while SNM stepped in militarily on the Issak side. The Issak won decisively in both instances.

Following the dramatic prison break of January and an equally spectacular attack (actually the result of the defection of senior officers) on the Hargeisa officers club in March, the central authorities have reason to fear for even their personal security in the region. The central regions are similarly disenchanted, although lack the clear focus of the Issaks. Tribal fighting in late 1982 resulted in the appearance of hundreds of new refugee families. (These were presented to UNHCR as "new refugees from Ethiopia" although it has since been determined that they were in fact Marehan tribesmen – the President's tribe-expelled from the region by dissident tribes). Fighting and banditry continue in the region and combined with the border problems in the same area, this has all the ingredients of serious trouble for the Barre Government. An escalation of activity in the central regions could eventually cut the vital logistical lifeline to the Northwest, and if there was co-ordinated action in both regions, could effectively separate the country.

The discontent in the South has been less visible but recent events suggest it may be no less dangerous. The Government has reportedly made efforts to disarm the Hawiya Abgal living in Mogadishu and areas to the immediate north, raising suspicion that this was in preparation for the settlement of displaced Marehans (President's tribe) from the central regions. The killing of 15 policemen in incidents in Johar and Balaad during June 1983 suggests that feelings are running very high. The appearance of "900 new refugee families" in December 1982 and then subsequent difficulties in integrating into the Jalalaqsi camps can be understood more fully when it is realized that they were, in fact, Marehan tribesmen forced out of the central regions.

The situation of the refugees must be understood against this ethnic background. The refugees are predominantly Ogadeni (the tribe of Barre's mother – and the tribe of Tarrah) and to a lesser extent Oromo from areas south of the Ogaden. Ogadeni loyalty to Barre is based largely on his past and continuing support of their efforts to become independent of Amharic domination. Since Ogadenis carried the burden of the 1977–78 fighting, they now represent a disproportionate element in the Somali armed forces and consequently are an important element in Barre's survival strategy, but also a serious threat if their loyalty wanes. The Issak appear to be more willing to come to terms with Ethiopia since their interest in territory on the Ethiopian side is limited to seasonal grazing lands. The territory of the Ogadenis, on the other hand, is fully in the control of Ethiopia. This growing divergence in the perception of the problem is adding to the tribal conflict and the Northwest – central Government problem. If Barre begins to seek accommodation with Ethiopia he risks a challenge from militant (and well-armed) Ogadenis within his ranks and those

of the liberation movements. On the other hand, Ogadeni soldiers are more willing to serve with loyalty against the Issaks of the Northwest and are therefore important in the present political strategy. This mutual interdependence of militant Ogadenis and the Barre Government severely limits options available in refugee policy. It may also be assumed that the presence of the Ogadeni refugee camps, predominately women and children, in the midst of the Issak in the Northwest also can be a restraining force on the Ogadeni soldiers. A large-scale visible repatriation of refugees to Ethiopia would undercut the validity of the argument that Ogadenis are repressed and prefer not to return. It would also reduce the importance of the refugee population as a source of men and economic resources for the liberation movement. Even more disturbing, it also would represent the loss to the Somali Government of the source of soldiers it can count on. Against this background the logic of the Government with regard to repatriation becomes fully rational. It is publicly maintained that refugees "want to go home, should go home, but because of lack of freedom and security can't go home". At the same time, any refugee trying to return must do so secretly and at the risk of great danger if apprehended by Somali authorities. The reasons for the continuing problem of military recruitment among refugees also becomes clear. It has been reliably asserted that refugee recruits are largely used to support the pacification of the Northwest. The refugees may have left Ethiopia out of legitimate reasons, but are now rapidly becoming hostages to the interests of the liberation movements and the Barre Government. The President has recently launched an attack on the twin evils of "Qat and Tribalism". It should be noted that the definition of tribalism is limited to the actions of those who disagree with the policy of the present Government.

The new policy of "Settlement" emerged against this political backdrop. However, three more immediate events may have influenced the timing. There has been a substantial movement of refugees out of the camps (presumably to Ethiopia) in 1982 and continuing in 1983 (there are many empty huts and camp workers are aware of disappearing families). The Djibouti-Ethiopia discussions regarding repatriation have not passed unnoticed, and there has been a substantial reduction in the quantity of food and financial aid to the refugee programme. Settlement is offered as an alternative precisely at the moment when repatriation is beginning to appear as a genuine possibility – (note the large demonstrations in Bur Dhubo in March 1983).

It is also clear that authorities expect the settlement programme to stem the decline in external assistance. UNHCR must be fully aware that the pre-eminent motivation for the new Settlement policy was to divert attention away from the growing interest in repatriation. Settlement also represents some political pitfalls. The Ogadeni refugee population in the Northwest represents (according to official refugee statistics) fully 20% of the indigenous Issak population and would significantly alter the demographic, and therefore political balance, if settled in the region. Given the possible motivation for such settlement, UNHCR should proceed with extreme caution. In the South the impact would be more diffused and could be considered with somewhat less apprehension. Nevertheless, UNHCR must be fully cognizant of the motivation for settlement and will need to acquire a much more significant camp presence if it wishes to assure that settlement or repatriation become genuine options.

Somali authorities have always been somewhat puzzled by UNHCR distinctions between refugees and Somalis. They consider every ethnic Somali as a Somali citizen and appear to treat him accordingly – including induction into the armed services. They have learned to make the necessary public distinctions to justify external assistance, but do so with without conviction. It appears that the Somali understanding of settlement implies full acceptance of that person as a Somali citizen (which was in fact always the case). It will therefore be important for UNHCR to determine the status of a person who accepts the settlement option. Maintaining a distinction

between a settled refugee and a Somali would only perpetuate and aggravate the serious differences of opinion between UNHCR and authorities regarding the international protection of these persons. On the other hand, it provides a legitimate opportunity to transfer such persons from the refugee programme to the national development programme. A clear understanding of the political process suggests that settlement represents a unique opportunity for UNHCR to transfer responsibility to national authorities and international donors without being derelict in its duty.

The following strategy is suggested to deal with the Somali political context:

1. Develop repatriation as a meaningful option;
2. Pursue settlement as a creative opportunity to give refugees independence and full Somali status;
3. Maintain the present “undecided” camp status as a third option to prevent the other options from becoming unduly politicized.

II. Economic Analysis

The ability of the Barre Government to manage economic affairs has been much less impressive than its political agility. The only aspect in which this performance commands respect is the vast amount of aid Somalia has attracted on the basis of geopolitics, humanitarian appeals, national disasters and development imperatives. Nevertheless, this achievement also falls in the political realm, since the effectiveness with which this assistance has been utilized is much less impressive. Somalia is indeed one of the poorest countries on the globe with very limited natural resources and this severe landscape has produced one of the hardest and most resilient groups of people on earth. Nevertheless, despite decades of effort, it is highly questionable whether the techniques of development exist which genuinely make the desert more productive on a permanent basis and improve the lot of the nomads without creating a debilitating dependency. In spite of the expenditure of billions of dollars in Somalia, the only visible effect has been a bloated and ineffective public sector, a corrupt and inept bureaucracy and declining agricultural production. Remarkably, the livestock sector has prospered, no doubt because it escaped the paternal embrace of the bureaucrats and development experts. After 14 years of scientific socialism, an aid programme which now exceeds 50% of gross domestic product and is directed largely towards public investment, it is noteworthy that the economy remains over 85% private. This is a tribute to the resilience of the nomadic sector and a resounding condemnation of past development policies.

To understand the problems of economic development in Somalia, one must gain a perspective much larger than the individual project. Development presumes a certain basis of tradition, of social organization and cohesion, which provides a foundation upon which a new technological and organizational structure can be built. Somalia entirely lacks this foundation but this reality is too often ignored. The first phase of development is usually based on the intensification of effort through improved techniques, plant genetics, chemical assistance, often marketing or other organizational strengthening – but usually based largely on the increased application of labour. The second phase is generally based on the intensification of capital rather than labour. Development planning in Somalia has failed to recognize that the shifting nomadic style of agriculture places in Somalia not in the development phase, but in a pre-development phase. The methods, human resources and institutional basis do not exist upon which one can superimpose the normal development programmes. Taking agriculture as an example, it has become obvious that the cropping systems do not exist which can be extended to willing farmers. Furthermore,

the willing farmers, that is farmers with a strong base of traditional agriculture and knowledge, simply do not exist. In response, the frustrated Government and donors have by-passed the entire development stage and have opted for highly industrialized methods of agriculture with imported systems, equipment and even people. When “turned over” to Somalis they have been doomed to failure because they ignored the development realities of Somalia.

The Government of Somalia lacks a development philosophy as such, unless one defines central Government control as a policy, and as a result the objectives and priorities of donors have to a significant extent shaped the development programme. The Somalis have become adept at making the right responses to obtain the funds (sometimes for reasons that are highly individual) but with little conviction as to the role of the project in a national or philosophical framework. Since the decision-makers are generally the urban elite, the projects have focused on large, sophisticated, and centrally managed projects with a predictably high degree of irrelevance and failure. The danger for UNHCR is that the system of defining and designing development efforts is prejudiced in favour of large projects with centralized management – in spite of the reality that this represents less than 15% of the economy and the least productive part of that economy. If the bulk of our investment is focused on the least productive and smallest sector, how much chance of success will there be?

The structure of society is reflected in the structure of the Government and contributes to the inability to define a development philosophy. Each Ministry tends to be dominated by one tribal group (this domination changes when Ministers change), and this will be reflected throughout its ranks. The Ogadenis, for example, control the Ministry of information and the NRC. A development project such as ACARA II or Refugee Settlement is perceived as a new opportunity which must be shared equitably to maintain balanced relationships. Thus there is an effort to parcel the programme to different ministries for political reasons rather than to define meaningful development objectives and design programmes within them. The Planning Ministry does attempt to create some degree of coherence, but usually ends up with a shopping list of projects instead. Given this situation, it will take a minor miracle to produce a request to ICARA II which will be convincing to knowledgeable donors.

Of more relevance to UNHCR is the impact of the development situation on the regular UNHCR programme and the new settlement effort. The existing programme has been plagued by a complete lack of understanding between NRC and various programming implementing agencies which have attempted to shift the Care and Maintenance programme into a development mode. Since the major objectives have been to gain the benefits of foreign exchange and provide benefits to a preferred group, the development objectives have only tended to slow down the expenditures and increase the effort required. The settlement programme is now experiencing similar pressure. Various individuals within Ministries (and also within UNHCR Headquarters) are arguing in favour of immediate implementation of the Jalalaqsi Project in spite of the complete absence of any sociological data or project design which gives the slightest evidence that the project has any merit. Presumably they can take the credit (or benefit) of the immediate project, and will no longer be around when the failure becomes evident several years later. An ill-conceived project will condemn thousands of people to a decade of useless effort and make them permanently dependent upon others for their subsistence. The Jalalaqsi Project may have merit, but this is not evident from existing studies. On the other hand, there are other projects and areas which have much greater potential but which have never even been looked at. For example, there are an estimated 1,000,000 hectares of land south of Qoryoley in the Shebelli River swamps which have excellent soils, adequate fuel wood and the best ground water and rainfall conditions in Somalia but are completely underdeveloped.

An objective evaluation of the development and assistance efforts of the past two decades could easily conclude that the negative effects are at least in balance with the positive. Somalia must begin its development with rural infrastructure and human development, rather than capital intensive industrial style projects. UNHCR is dealing with a segment of the population with the least urban and industrial experience and must take the lead in appropriate development efforts. Failure to build skills and experiences gradually will isolate the refugees from their traditions and will leave them unproductive, vulnerable and dependent in the modern sector.

III. The Role of the UNHCR

There is no quicker way to be disabused of any idealistic notions regarding the possibilities of international organizations than to work for one. It appears that the UN organizations have joined the galaxy of governments and institutions which eventually make institutional and individual self-preservation the operative ideal. This is not meant to condemn the UNHCR, since they are in very impressive company. Nevertheless it does come as a shock to those of us who still believed in the rhetoric.

A second and more complex realization is that the principles upon which the UNHCR is based have a definite cultural, religious and ideological bias. If the UNHCR would have emerged out of another corner of the globe the concepts and effective principles may have been very different. The present result is a western-educated African elite which understands and acknowledges the lofty ideals based on a Judeo-Christian understanding of personality, with an increasing divergence of comprehension and relevance as one proceeds toward traditional cultures. Such a statement in no way implies a value judgement; it simply reminds us that our principles and vocabulary were not created by the peoples on the Horn of Africa based on their ideas of justice and personality.

A third contradiction is the tension between the UNHCR as a servant of the refugee and as a servant of its sovereign creators – the various Governments. The signing of the Conventions and Protocols theoretically bridges this tension, yet it is an undisputable fact that refugees are virtually always the product of Government action or inaction. It appears that if there is tension between faithfulness to principles and relationships with Governments, the former bend with much less pain to the organization. Virtually all institutions eventually become conservative and in effect make this form of institutional self-preservation their highest ideal. It may be predictable and unavoidable but is nevertheless regrettable.

The situation on the Horn of Africa during the period 1979-1981 was undoubtedly serious and resulted in great human suffering. It does, however, represent an example of the rigid application of refugee doctrine to a situation that in the absence of the UNHCR and its formulae and mandate may have been solved very differently and possibly more productively. The population disrupted by the war in the Ogaden had their economic base on the Ethiopian side of a hypothetical border, while their sociological and cultural base was on the Somali side. The UNHCR Convention applies a definition which focus unduly on the political rather than the cultural definition of a person and creates distinctions between that person and the host population which may exist in the minds of neither. Having created these distinctions, great effort must be expended to find a “durable solution” to a problem which could possibly have been in large part avoided.

The Somali influx should have been recognized as an essentially economic disruption – with an undeniably political genesis. A much greater effort should have been made to permit the majority

of displaced persons to remain more closely associated with their nomadic traditions. Instead of organized camps this may have involved periodic distributions at dispersed points convenient to nomads. The purchase of animals and discharge of refugees from camps would have also been productive. The argument of insufficient grazing is not valid in the short run since a camel with a new owner does not consume more. All of the experts (including the UNHCR Emergency Handbook) now decry the creation of camps, yet it appears to be the only solution which was considered.

The Somali refugee programme has been subjected to great quantities of scorn and abuse. A careful and objective analysis suggests that these evaluations may be more than a little unfair. The emergency period involved very substantial numbers of refugees, a great geographical expanse, and difficult access and communication. Within a relatively short period of two years the programme had stabilized to the point where the camp populations enjoyed better access to food, water, health and educational services than the vast majority of Somali citizens. The criticism has been focused on those who were struggling under the indicated conditions (and there were indeed lapses in performance) but the greatest criticism should be directed at those who were not here or those who could determine who should be in Somalia. If there was any single failure in Somalia it was the failure to provide the quality and quantity of skill and leadership at the initial stages where experience was in great demand and where strategic decisions could have influenced the course of events. The young and relatively inexperienced people in UNHCR and a multitude of agencies displayed great courage and resourcefulness in bringing the situation back to a semblance of order. In several instances, such as the Refugee Health Unit and ELU/CARE, the creativity and quality of the solutions are outstanding. The major defect was the time required to discover the errors and then the excess time to rebuild the programme – due in large measure to limited experience and leadership. This had the fully predictable result of permitting bad habits and vested interests to become inbedded in the programme. The inevitable result of such a process is a programme which is more costly than necessary (to the Chagrin of certain donors) and which tends to create resistance to change in the programme (which may be to the disadvantage of the refugee who is attempting to regain his independence).

The Government of Somalia has also been greatly maligned, however their performance and the criticism require some perspective. The programme criteria and expected levels of services are substantially imported by UNHCR, donors and other organizations. The resulting programme demands a level of technical, managerial and financial skill which is not yet available to most parts of Somalia. This produces an unfortunate tension between a Government which attempts to exercise its sovereignty (and retain its dignity) by asserting its role and influence, and a programme which is essentially imported and in large measure inappropriate to the Government's present state of competence. In addition, the peculiar blend of traditional pride and insularity with Soviet-inspired paranoia has certainly exacerbated this tension. The expectation that everything can be "handed over" to the government totally ignores reality. If such a handover is a genuine intention, the programme should be initiated in a manner which recognizes the existing institutional framework, and is structured in accordance with a realistic assessment of competence. If the programme requires special elements which are outside the normal services and which are not expected to survive the refugee problem, then a significant Government role is merely a diversion of energy and is unlikely to be successful (consider ELU/CARE).

In a situation such as Somalia, where integration (read settlement) is in fact an important element in a solution, the role of the Government can be viewed in another manner. The maintenance of a refugee programme which has higher standards of service and performance than what is provided to the balance of the population may in fact be a significant deterrent to such integration. The

shift of responsibility to the Government (if accompanied by an allocation of resources which seeks to only replicate the lifestyle of the host population) will inevitably result in a convergence in the quality and nature of services provided. This convergence (which could cynically be described as deterioration in Somalia) will tend to reduce discrepancies and therefore promote integration. If this is considered a desirable goal, then the barriers to increased Government involvement should be lowered and the programme objectives aligned with Somali realities and Government development objectives.

Given the politicized character and reactive decision-making process of UNHCR it is unlikely if any strategy could ever be articulated which requires a leap of logic or the assumption of risk. An analysis of the UNHCR role in an emergency refugee situation suggests that its mere presence may be its most important contribution. A UNHCR presence provides visibility, credibility, donor support and creates a certain moral climate. Its contribution to the definition of strategy and the establishment of effective solutions undoubtedly varies from situation to situation, but appears to have been minor in Somalia. As the Brand Office matured and began to assert itself it ran into a Government which increasingly wished to project its own role. Given the many rigidities of the UNHCR (role of the nationality in recruitment, lack of a disciplined rotation system, unwillingness to employ technically-qualified staff, nature of delegation of authority) it may be unrealistic to expect a more courageous and creative UNHCR role. If the visibility and credibility created by UNHCR presence is important to secure protection and international support at the inception of the problem, that some presence may in fact be a deterrent to the resolution of a problem if integration and normalization are major elements of the solution. In the case of Somalia, the fighting has largely ended, the Ogaden is green and the refugees are in good health. If one assumes that there is an increasing willingness of some refugees to repatriate (or at least attempt a nomadic existence) and the Government public endorses repatriation but privately places impediments in the path of those attempting to do so – what is the role of the UNHCR? This clearly describes the present state of affairs where we applaud the Governments' rhetoric but are unable to effectively assist those wishing to vote with their feet. It could be argued that a reduced UNHCR role (visibility and financial) could affect the nature of the relationship between refugees and Government in a manner which reduced the political and economic value of the refugees and therefore increased their scope for independent action. A degree of humility with regard to UNHCR ability to influence events could often be highly productive. A realistic assessment of the situation in Somalia suggests that doing and being less may be a positive contribution.

IV. Somalia and UNHCR – Specific Problems (Restricted Internal Distribution only)

Protection

The discrepancy between rhetoric and action on the part of the authorities with regard to the recruitment of refugees and the secret detention of Amharas requires UNHCR to require specific performance or forget its protection mandate. By way of example, after the Extraordinary Commissioner (Tarrah) promised the Cuenod Mission that there would be prompt action on the list of 43 persons (out of some 500) admitted to have been recruited, the list was actually read in the military cantonment with the statement that the named individuals would soon be released. One such individual was present and on the list, but after several weeks of no action on his release, he finally escaped on his own initiative. So far the Government has officially released only 17 although Tarrah telexed Cuenod directly that “all 42 refugees have now been released”. Additionally, local authorities informed Geneva directly, but have yet to interact with our suboffice to permit any verification of such action. The situation with detainees is much worse and will not be described in writing.

Financial and programme integrity

The degree of integrity in the different aspects of the programme varies substantially. In some instances it is merely a financial loss, in others it denies legitimate services to eligible refugees (eg. Scholarships), and in some instances such as food distribution it reinforces pressures which are not in the interest of the refugee. Somali authorities have focused on the quantity of aid rather than the quality of its application, possibly on the premise that the input was considered a national resource. Accordingly, the effort to promote integrity tends to restrict the flow of aid and is therefore a negative factor. It is not being asserted that Somali authorities deliberately condone mismanagement, but they appear to have little internal incentive to reduce its magnitude. If delivery of an appropriate service to the intended recipient is a guideline, the loss or diversion of resources for a variety of reasons ranges from a high of over 75% in the educational scholarship sector to 30-50% in the food programme and to very minor problems in health.

UNHCR must participate in the responsibility for this state of affairs. In a large number of incidents where branch office has identified specific problems and made recommendations or has requested advice, Headquarters has generally failed to make a definitive decision or provide relevant advice. The attack on the Representative cannot be disassociated from this factor since the Somali authorities cannot be blamed for assuming that Headquarters and Branch Office had divergent policies. Of major concern is the effective absence of any genuine management system. The PMS is in theory a management system but is in actuality used as an administrative manual and a mechanism for Headquarters control. An objective review of all HQ – BO interaction on any given programme would reveal a great deal of attention to the legal and administrative aspects, but very little attention to the substance. This state of affairs is undoubtedly not restricted to UNHCR, but it does suggest reasons why implementing partners can meet all of the administrative and reporting requirements without actually providing the service.

Staff

The staffing policy with respect to the UNHCR programme in Somalia reflects a serious dereliction of duty. Criticism tends to be levied on individuals who have been placed in situations beyond their depth (due in some cases to limited experience, inadequate leadership and in others inappropriate recruitment) rather than on those responsible for their selection. When the lives and futures of people are at stake, one cannot fail to fill vacancies because of nationality or the lack of dedication of existing staff (unwillingness to be rotated to Somalia). One could go into much greater detail, but a continuation of the present approach to staff in the Somalia Branch Office will seriously impair the future competence and credibility of the entire UNHCR.

Settlement Programme

The significance of the new settlement policy will be the opportunity to officially promote integration efforts rather than the impact of any major “greenfield settlements”. The new policy represents an important opportunity to integrate refugee programmes and expenditures with the general thrust of development policy. Somalia already has great difficulty in absorbing the existing level of development assistance and new complex projects such as Jalalaqsi (which is entirely ill-conceived in any event) will simply dilute available human resources to the point where both refugee and development projects have an increasing likelihood of failure. Reinforcement of development projects with new resources, technical input and the participation of the refugees may in fact enhance the absorption capacity of Somalia.

Food

The question of the quantity of good and the method and quality of distribution remain as two intractable problems. They are both inextricably linked to refugee numbers since the planning figure is used to determine the global requirements and also for the division into individual rations. A third and frequently ignored issue is the appropriateness of items in the food basket. Recognizing the sensitivity of the numbers issue, BO has attempted to introduce a degree of rationality into a very irrational process by making changes in the following areas.

1. Attempt to obtain donor and Government agreement that a continuation of the 1982 rate of distribution of basic commodities (105,000mt) would result in an acceptable level of nutrition and gain donor support. The Government has continued to request 135,000 mt and the donors have responded by delaying shipments so that effective rate of distribution during the first half of 1983 is 85,000 mt.
2. Reduce inequities on a regional basis by reapportioning the planning figure to camps and regions on the basis of the number of huts in existence. This inequity has become more evident recently with Gedo Region reporting malnutrition rates which are double those in other regions – following the serious scurvy outbreak in Gedo in mid-1982. The Government has resisted all such efforts including a recent personal attempt by the US Ambassador. Presumably such a redistribution would affect tribal interests and may lead to an eventual exposure of the fallacy of the reported numbers. (For example, Arabsio camp has 10,000 rations but less than 300 huts!)
3. The introduction of the ration shop system provides an essential foundation for any transition to an orderly and effective distribution system, but will not remove the underlying inequities between camps, nor will it determine if the correct person has ration cards. If each camp received the correct proportion of food, and the ration shop assured fair treatment at the point of distribution, then it would isolate the cardholders list as the single outstanding problem. It would still not be easy to resolve, but the defects in the present lists will (and have already) become more visible.
4. Strengthen the supplementary feeding system to protect vulnerable groups until such time as rationality and equity become more operative.

The question of appropriateness of food is emerging as a more important factor. The recent arrival of a professional nutritionist has alerted all parties to the fact that the distributed items and the actual refugee diet have little in common. The substantial excess rations during 1980/81/82 permitted refugees to maintain their traditional habits by monetizing much of the relief food. The reduced rations now make this more difficult. In addition, during the period November 1982 to May 1983 the diet consisted almost solely of hard wheat (low market price), DSM and beans. The latter two have always been known to be unpopular but it is becoming increasingly obvious that the refugees lack the capacity to mill the wheat and do not have recipes which can effectively utilize whole grain wheat. The emphasis on wheat may be on the single largest factor in the reported increase in malnutrition in 1983, yet WFP is still recommending a preference for wheat! Additional solutions include the replacement of DSM with DWM, the more careful selection of bean varieties, the emphasis on flour rather than wheat and the addition of CSM into the general ration (very high in vitamin C, very nutritious, and easy to prepare and liked by children).

The specific problem in 1983 will be the delay of the EEC commitment to the extent that EEC food is not available in 1983, it will represent a shortfall from the 105,000 mt which most

knowledgeable persons in Somalia consider adequate. Completely equitable distribution would in fact only require 75-80,000 mt but everyone is prepared for a somewhat imperfect world. To fully understand the food debate one must appreciate the food (at 105,000 mt) is worth US\$60,000,000 and represents a major foreign exchange savings to Somalia. It also represents 60% of the value of the refugee programme and its distribution reinforces many tribal and political priorities. Refugee workers and donors, on the other hand, consider excess food and inequitable distribution as major deterrents to repatriation and self-reliance. Unfortunately nobody even asks the refugee what kind of policy really makes the most sense for him.