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UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND
Programme Committee

LIBYA

Recommendation of the Executive Director
for an Apportionment for a School Feeding Programme

1. In this paper, the Administration recommends, subject to the availability of funds, an apportionment to Libya of \$118,000 from the Eastern Mediterranean Area allocation for the purchase of dried skim milk, fish liver oil, soap, milk distribution, equipment and vehicles to cover the first two years of a four-year UNICEF-assisted programme aiming at the development of a permanent supplementary school feeding programme. In October 1952 an apportionment of \$43,000 (exclusive of freight) was made to help develop maternal and child welfare services in Libya, (E/ICEF/2.12/paras. 366-386) which included the provision of some milk and diet supplements for infants and pre-school children. If this recommendation is approved, it will represent the first UNICEF assistance of this type to Libya.

Economic Progress in Libya

2. Libya is a constitutional monarchy comprising the state of Tripolitania, Cyrenaica and the Fezzan. It was formerly an Italian colony and received full independence on 2 January 1952, the first country to do so under United Nations auspices. The country receives aid from France, the United Kingdom and the United States to finance the government, and to raise economic and social levels. At its sixteenth session ECOSOC considered the question of assistance to Libya and received a communication dated 27 June 1953 from the Acting Prime Minister (E/2469: 30 June 1953). The following excerpts from the communication serve to summarize the prospects of economic and social progress in Libya:

"The limited resources of our country do not now enable us to meet our minimum administrative expenditure from domestic revenue. Our budget deficit for the current year is approximately thirty-five per cent of the total expenditure, and this deficit amounts to £4.8 million (about \$13 1/2 million) including £1.6 million

(about \$4 1/2 million)

(about 1 1/2 million) for development and stabilization. The deficits have been covered since independence by grants-in-aid from the United Kingdom and France under temporary arrangements initially concluded at the time Libya attained independence.....

"We feel that judged by any criteria Libya stands in need of considerable assistance in order that we may develop our economy for the purpose of improving the economic and social conditions of our people, training civil servants, agriculturists and others and to develop our public revenues so that in the shortest possible time we will be able to meet our administrative expenses from our own resources.....

"The reports of the United Nations and specialized agencies technical assistance personnel have underlined the fact that our resources are poor and under-developed, and these consist only of the soil, water and latent skills of the Libyan people.....

"In considering this problem, it should be borne in mind that Libya did not receive assistance for post-war reconstruction from the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration or from the Marshall Plan which assisted many war-devastated countries. Until recently, it did not receive assistance from the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund. Thus, in this respect, we are in a less favourable position than many other war-devastated countries.

/"We have a

"We have a comprehensive and co-ordinated development programme, based in the first instance on the recommendations of the United Nations experts and effectively co-ordinated through the Government's co-ordination and planning agency, the Economic Planning Committee....."

"First priorities have been assigned to the raising of agricultural productivity, both through action programmes and the training of personnel. Necessarily, health and social welfare schemes, although badly needed, have had to be given a low priority."

Nutrition and Health of School Children

3. The Libyan Constitution makes elementary education compulsory for all children of both sexes. The Government is giving high priority to the development of education, the main difficulties to be overcome being the limited available number of teachers and of premises for new schools. The rate of illiteracy in Libya is very high (estimated at 85% of males and 99% of females) as before the war educational facilities were poor. However, great improvements have taken place during the past eight years and many government schools have been established.

4. There is a total of 305 schools in Libya: in Tripolitania 187, in Cyrenaica 96 and in the Fezzan 22. In Libya, contrary to many other countries of the Eastern Mediterranean Region, the buildings for schools are very often of a very good standard, with the exception of those in rural areas which are of a simple type. The demand is great and many schools work in two shifts, one class in the morning and one in the afternoon. 90 out of 95 schools in Cyrenaica, are located along the main roads on a narrow coastal area, which includes the littoral plains and part of the Djebel (inland hills). The same is true, but to a lesser extent of Tripolitania, since the schools

/there are more

there are more scattered and their number larger. The schools in the Fezzan are more dispersed, in the different oases of that province.

5. The teachers themselves have received often only elementary schooling and a course in a training college, which is virtually only a partial secondary school education. Nevertheless, they are generally good, carrying on their work with intelligence and earnestness.

6. There are 51,746 school children in the whole country (32,557 in Tripolitania; 17,502 school children in Cyrenaica and 1,438 in the Fezzan). It is anticipated that the present number of children in schools will be gradually increased each year in view of the Governments' constant efforts to encourage education. It is thus anticipated that during the scholastic year 1955/56 there would be a total of about 60,000 children in schools.

7. Education of the nomadic and semi-nomadic population (70% of the total population in Cyrenaica, an estimated 200,000 in Tripolitania and 13,000 in the Fezzan) is an important problem. In Cyrenaica and the Fezzan, primary boarding schools were set up for this purpose. In Tripolitania the boarding schools are reserved for secondary education only. In the province Bedouin children take their residence near schools during the scholastic season. A total of 4,219 children are in boarding schools - 2,006 in Tripolitania; 1,813 in Cyrenaica and 400 in the Fezzan.

8. It is a matter of concern to the Government, that malnutrition is widespread among children, including the number now attending schools all over the country. United Nations experts have formed the opinion that the infant mortality rate is probably not less than 300 per thousand live births. Although the birth rate is very high (53%) the population increase is estimated to be relatively low (1.1%) due to the general mortality rate which is 42%.

9. From visits to families made by U.N. experts during their surveys and from inquiry among school children it has been established that the food consumption in rural populations and some urban populations is unsatisfactory. This is in conformity with recent agricultural statistics according to which the average consumption per person per day is 1,387 calories. The experts consider that to this total 200 calories should be added for vegetables, fruit, poultry, etc. The total would be a daily average of 1,600 calories.

10. One of the main reasons for this state of malnutrition is an inadequate purchasing power both among agricultural and industrial workers. The wages of Libyan unskilled workers in urban areas are about 15 piastres (US 43¢) a day. It has been calculated that the cost of food (including soap, fuel and cigarettes) for an Arab family in town, consisting of a man, wife and two children, on the basis of a twenty-five day working month, would require daily earnings twice as much. The national income averages only \$35.00 per head.

11. The normal diet among sedentary or semi-sedentary population is monotonous. It is based on cereals, wheat and barley, prepared as whole bread (khobs) semolina (couscous) and flour (aich or bazine) served with a sauce, rich or otherwise according to the family income. Olive oil is used in certain food preparations or in the sauce. Vegetables (broad beans, peas, green onions and fennel) are also used but in limited quantities, varying according to season and family income. Fresh fruits are scarce but dry dates and figs are available. Butter (semen); milk (fresh) and leben (a fermented milk) are among the staple food of the Bedouins, but are not regularly included in the diet of sedentary population. Animal protein intake is very low. Meat is rarely eaten, and at the most once a week. Many families have meat only on holidays or when an animal is killed by accident. Eggs are consumed only exceptionally.

12. According to reports from teachers and officials of the Ministry of Education attention of many children at school fades very noticeably after one or two hours due to insufficient nutrition. A number of children are reported to faint during school hours, and especially during gymnastic lessons. To complete this picture, it must be added here that a great number of children have no food at all before going to school. In rural areas children may also have to walk as far as ten kilometres and more to reach the school.

/Present Efforts

Present Efforts to Meet the Nutrition Problems

13. The Government, through the Ministry of Education, are currently conducting feeding in the boarding sections of Libyan schools. In the scholastic year 1952/1953, 3,042 students have been fed in the three provinces: Tripolitania 750; Cyrenaica 2,142; the Fezzan 150. The Government is spending for feeding these students the following:

<u>PROVINCE</u>	<u>Cost Per Head</u> <u>(Daily)</u>	<u>Total Cost</u> <u>(Daily)</u>
Tripolitania	\$ 0.616	\$ 462.00
Cyrenaica	0.392	839.66
Fezzan	0.420	63.00
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Average Cost for all 3 provinces	<u>0.449</u>	<u>1364.66</u>

14. There were also children in orphanages under the auspices of the Ministry of Interior receiving food. In Tripolitania, there are approximately 900 children in orphanages and reformatories and in Cyrenaica there are 400. An estimated sum of \$180,000 is spent annually for this feeding by those institutions.

15. In addition to the expenditures of these two government departments, there are two milk programmes and clinics in Tripoli run by a voluntary organization known as the Tripoli Social Welfare Committee. One of these is at the Women's Teacher Training College - and an attached girls' elementary school. The college is being aided by four UNESCO experts, substantial equipment and local study grants. The other, which has just started, is at a primary school of 900 students. At these a group of women volunteers distribute daily a glass of milk each to children who are markedly under weight. Tinned milk is furnished by the Tripoli Relief Fund, an Organization supported by a Government weekly lottery. During the forthcoming school year this group, comprised of Libyan ladies and wives of U.N. personnel American and British officials will distribute milk daily to about 850 children. The tinned milk is budgeted to cost \$2,476.30

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16. With the above efforts the Government and the different agencies are estimated to be spending the equivalent of about \$560,000 per year for feeding school-aged children.

The Government's Request

17. The current budgetary difficulties of the Government have been reflected in seriously diminished funds for imported expendable supplies to improve the standards of nutrition in schools.

18. The organisation of an adequate feeding scheme in schools which are attended by poor children is given a high priority by the Government. In view of the difficult financial position of the country, the Government, in a comprehensive request for technical assistance in 1954, dated 29 August 1953, addressed to the Resident Technical Assistance Representative in Libya, included in it also a request for UNICEF assistance for a supplementary school feeding programme in the form of milk and fish liver oil to be distributed through about 300 schools to their present number of school children and to an increased number of children each year.

19. A WHO Regional Adviser and a Senior FAO Nutritionist from FAO Headquarters, together with a UNICEF Representative visited Libya in March/April 1954, and verified on the spot the needs of the assistance requested. These representatives recommended that assistance be given to meet the feeding needs of these schools in the form of milk and fish liver oil. In view of the great dependence of Libya on foreign aid, and particularly that of the United Nations and in view of its weak economic position, the provision of milk and distribution equipment in each of the schools, is strongly recommended by the group referred to above. They also recommend the provision of four vehicles for use by the FAO expert adviser and the Government Supervisors in each of the three Provinces, without which it is regarded as impossible properly to organize, orient and supervise a programme of this type on a long term basis.

Plan of Action

20. The assistance proposed for this programme is designed to meet the following long-term objectives:

- (a) The development of a permanent school feeding service;
- (b) Gradual improvement of nutrition throughout Libya and for this purpose the co-ordination of all interested Governmental departments

/(c) The utilisation

- (c) The utilisation of the school feeding to increase community and family interest and participation in the educational, social and health aspects of child nutrition.
21. If UNICEF assistance is granted, a technical and administrative supervisory staff of the Government will be organized to ensure the effective development of this programme and to guide it towards the objectives outlined above. The overall supervision and co-ordination of this programme will be undertaken by the Ministries of Education and Health, while the immediate responsibility for its execution will rest with the Ministry of Education.
22. Under this plan the programme should be developed progressively and at its beginning, i.e., during the second part of scholastic year 1954/1955, be limited to one province in Tripolitania and one in Cyrenaica. It is thereafter proposed to reach all the children attending school, whose numbers are expected to increase as follows: 50,000 children during the scholastic year September 1955-September 1956 (200 days); 60,000 children the second year; 70,000 children in the third year and 80,000 children in the fourth year.
23. The school principals will be responsible for the distribution in each school, and will arrange and provide facilities for proper distribution of rations to children, including the provision of safe water for reconstituting the milk. A school feeding expert will be appointed by FAO for a period of two years to launch and administer the early phases of the programme and instruct the local authorities and particularly the teachers. The services of this expert will be particularly useful to help establish the programme on a permanent basis.

UNICEF Commitments

24. If this recommendation is approved, UNICEF will provide, for 50,000 children over the first year and 60,000 over the second:

(a) Skim Milk Powder at 40 grs/day for 200 days/year:

880 tons in 100 lb. bags or 200 lb. drums - \$19,400

(b) Fish Oil Capsules

13,200,000 would be required at 120/year/capita \$36,300

(c) Soap

4-Oz cakes (1 cake/day/class of 40 children):

137,600 lbs. \$11,700

Milk Distribution Equipment

300 sets of each 1 heating pot

1 mixing pot

1 pitcher

1 ladle & 1 mixer

\$ 7,500

plus 40,000 tumblers:

\$ 6,000

Vehicles

4 Pick-up vehicles with spares:

\$ 7,000

Contingencies

\$ 3,100

Subtotal

\$91,000

Freight

\$27,000

TOTAL

\$118,000

25. If this project is approved in principle, it will be the subject of a further recommendation at a later date, to cover assistance in the third and fourth years of the programme.

Government Commitments

26. If this programme is approved, the Government will undertake the following commitments:

(a) The Government has committed itself to match the UNICEF contribution

/by providing daily rations

by providing daily rations of dates from its own resources, as follows:
1st year, for 50,000 children at 100 gr/day for 200 school days:

1,000 tons = £20,000

2nd year, for 60,000 children at 100 gr/day for 200 school days:

1,200 tons = £24,000

£44,000

or \$123,000

Experience may show that it is preferable for a part of the Government ration to be in the form of cereals. The Government is prepared to maintain this commitment in the third and fourth years.

(b) While the Government in view of its current budgetary difficulties will be in a position to provide only dates as local matching food, necessary measures will be taken in the course of the four years in question to provide from their own resources other food stuffs in addition to dates for the continuation of the school feeding programme on a permanent basis. In this connection due regard will be given to the recommendations made in the joint FAO/WHO survey report with regard to the use of locally produced food stuffs.

(c) The Government has also undertaken the following commitments:

(i) Personnel: Three full-time inspectors; the necessary number of personnel in schools for reconstituting and distribution of milk and accounting of supplies within schools; one secretary; drivers for the Government and UNICEF vehicles.

(ii) Internal transportation of supplies

(iii) Cost of petrol for Government and UNICEF vehicles

(iv) Maintenance of Government and UNICEF vehicles

(d) The total cost of the Government for this programme, including the cost for local food, may be estimated at between \$150,000-\$175,000, for the first two years.

Participation of Other Agencies

27. WHO and FAO will participate in this programme by giving the necessary technical advice. The plan provides for one experienced FAO nutritionist and school feeding expert for a period of two years, to assist in organizing the programme and in the development of local sources of foodstuffs, particularly

/vegetables

vegetables, as a contribution to the permanent continuation of the programme. Discussions are currently in progress with FAO regarding the financing of this expert.

Target Time Schedule

28. UNICEF supplies are required to arrive in Libya in the spring of 1955 and will thus help start a small scale programme during the second part of the scholastic year 1954/1955. The normal programme will be developed progressively beginning with the school year 1955/1956.

UNICEF Representation

29. The UNICEF Representative in the Cairo Office will continue to work closely with the Government in the development of this programme.

Recommendation

30. The Administration recommends that the Board approve this project in principle and, subject to the availability of funds:

- (a) approve an apportionment of \$118,000 to Libya, out of the Eastern Mediterranean Area allocation, to provide skim milk, fish oil capsules, supplies and transport for the first two years of a four-year programme to establish school feeding in Libya, and
 - (b) authorizes the Administration to approve a plan of operations as outlined above.
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