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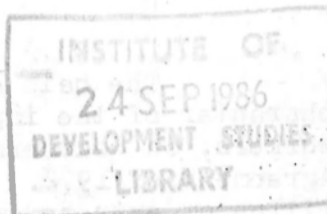
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RESERVE

SOME REMARKS ON AID AGENCIES AND
DEPENDENCY IN THE SOUTHERN SUDAN.

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of this paper is to show the general character of the impact of aid, and the activities of aid agency workers, on Southern Sudanese society, since the Addis Ababa Agreement of 1972. The author attempts to show, that the peculiarities of extreme undevelopment and the relatively intensive aid activity have in this respect been relatively unique in Africa. The results have often tended to reinforce the structure of dependency in the Southern Sudan. Further, the growing civil war appears to be forcibly bringing to a close, aid activity in this region of the Sudan.

Introduction: Independence and Dependence.

The euphoria of the early years of independence, the 50s and 60s in Africa, have long fizzled out. Soon after those heady years, the reality of neocolonialism and dependency curbed the initial excitement. Theoretically, it was a logical historical development since the essential character of the transformation from colonialism to post-colonialism, precluded any radical restructuring of the state. The economic relations between the old centres of capital resources, and the underdeveloped world have been largely inherited by a new elite who to some extent serve as local overseers of the interests of their former colonial overlords. The relationship is also sharply reflected on the cultural and social levels of the national and international lives of the people.

Under colonialism, the development effort was the inspirational preserve of the colonial power. Planning, development work, and supervision was run through a bureaucracy largely led by colonial administrators. With independence these roles were assumed by the local elite aided by expatriates from a variety of donor countries. In some African countries, the presence and influence of expatriate aid workers is relatively limited. This is the case in Ghana or Nigeria. In others, like Botswana or the Southern Sudan, the social, economic, and cultural influence of the aid agencies, is considerable. Their activities and lifestyles tend often to reinforce neocolonial relations and attitudes, rather than weaken them. Discussing specifically international medical aid, Turshen and Thébaud have pointed out that the benefits which expatriate aid agency workers reap,

range from prestige and enriched clinical experience.... to the higher standards of living abroad than they would enjoy at home and in countries where unemployment rates are rising escape from the rigors of competition for jobs in tight labour markets. Given their vested interests this group militates against change in organizations like WHO. (1)

The wide difference between the living standards of the aid agency worker and the local, tends to accentuate and amplify stereotyped images. As has been correctly observed, many Africans associate whites with luxury, cars, a villa e.t.c. "They do not believe you if you behave differently" (2). On the other hand, J.P. Brug has rightly observed that development aid workers undergo fundamental changes in attitudes during their stay in underdeveloped countries. Often, their initially positive and open-minded attitude towards the locals, changes to racist and superior postures(3). There is generally a strong tendency for the expatriate community to absorb a new-comer, and assimilate the new arrival into the basic ideas of their enclave mentality. Those expatriates who struggle to escape this subculture have as of necessity to develop some psychological imperviousness to social control(4).

The Southern Sudan

The Sudan is the largest country on the African continent, almost a million square miles of which over half is either desert or semi-desert. Its more vegetative part, the South, is also its more technologically backward part. The North is Arabised, and the South, African. Thus the difference between the North and the South does not lie only in the economic unevenness in the contemporary modes of production in these two parts of the country, but also in the cultural and national levels of social life. Historically, Arab dominance and slavery in the past, and contemporary economic and national domination in the Sudan as a whole is reflected most sharply in the relations between North and South, although many African nationalities like the Beja, Fung, Fur, Nuba, and Nubians e.t.c., have national areas in the north⁵. The Sudanese Arab minority, constituting about 38 per cent of the population together with most Africans in the North share one common attribute, the Islamic religion, the South being mainly Christian and Animist. Today, the Sudan as a whole is in the periphery of global economic relations, further, the south is as it were, is the periphery within the Sudan.

For much of the 19th century, during two successive regimes, the Turco-Egyptian Regime (1821-1863) and the Mahdist Regime (1881-1898), the South was robbed constantly of human labour through slavery. Both humans and cattle were taken from the generally cattle-owning ethnicities of the area, so that, the human population of the South at the beginning of the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium Rule (1898-1956) was only a fraction of what it had been 50 years before (6). Today, the South provides relatively, a large measure of the construction, casual, and menial labour in the North. Conflict has for decades characterised the relations between North and South, Arab and African, to the present period. The last major conflict between the two unevenly developed parts of the Sudan erupted from small beginnings in 1955, one year before independence. The war lasted 17 years and was finally brought to a close with the Addis Ababa Agreement of 1972. During the war years, development in the South was naturally arrested while some measure of progress was made in the North. Thus by 1972 the South was relative to the North even more backward than it had been on the eve of independence. The Addis Ababa Agreement was universally welcomed, and various foreign groups and governments offered and pledged help to resuscitate the warshattered society of the South. The major task after the peace settlement was the repatriation of about 250,000 refugees. By the end of December 1972, the number of registered returnees were as follows(7).

Country of Refuge	People Transported by the U.N.H.C.R.	People Returned Independently
Uganda	17,600	11,900
Zaire	8,800	18,800
Central African Republic	10,800	11,300
Ethiopia	7,400	15,600
Total	44,600	57,600

In addition to registered returnees, about 324000 returned to their homes from the sanctuaries in the bush(8). By February, 1973, the Special Fund created to meet the contingencies of repatriation and resettlement reflected the following(9).

Contributions (Sudanese Pounds)	In Cash	In Kind
<u>Local</u> (National Govt. and other Sudanese bodies)	783,210	3,794
<u>External Aid</u> (UN Agencies)	4,000	498,539
(International Charities)	126,800	584,472
(Friendly States)	1,850,140	144,367
(Others)	6,316	- -
	<u>2,770,466</u>	<u>1,236,172</u>

Further pledges in cash and kind to the Special Fund by the same date totalled about ten million Sudanese Pounds, of which nearly seventy five per cent was promised by the UN agencies, international charitable agencies and friendly states(10). The size of the problem, compounded by the weak infrastructure and a war-shattered economy, dwarfed the available aid. Virtually, the South was starting from scratch. It was the desperate plight of the South in the face of her daunting post-war problems of reconstruction which made her particularly pliable, and opened her up to the great assortment of aid agencies we find in the Southern Sudan today; numbering about 50. It is doubtful if there is any state or region of a state in Africa today with such a proliferation of aid agencies.

Aid Agencies and the Southern Sudanese Economy

The aid agencies are classified into three groups; multi-lateral organizations, bilateral organizations, and voluntary

agencies. The multi-lateral organizations are dominated by the United Nations agencies i.e. the UNDP, UNHCR, FAO, UNICEF, and the WFP. In addition to these UN agencies, the World Bank and the European Economic Community also operate as multi-lateral bodies in the South Sudan. In the case of multi-lateral and bilateral agencies the Sudanese central government directs where and which projects should be set up. All the multi-lateral and bilateral agreements are negotiated with the central government. On the other hand, the voluntary agencies sign their agreements directly with the regional authorities. Bilateral assistance is undertaken by the ODA, GTZ, USAID, the Dutch government, the Kuwaiti government, and the Belgian government. The voluntary agencies are the most numerous and are dominated by Christian missionary organizations. These include, the Lutheran World Service, the Frankfurt Zoological Society, the New York Zoological Society, the African Medical and Research Foundation, the Voluntary Service Group, the International Voluntary Service, Voluntary Service Overseas, German Voluntary Service, the Action Coordination for the Reconstruction of the Southern Sudan (ACROSS), the Norwegian Church Aid, (NCA), the Sudan Council of Churches, the Norwegian Council for the Prevention of Blindness, the German Leprosy Relief Association, the Sudan Interior Church Development Aid and its sister organization the Sudan Interior Mission, the Sumner Institute of Linguistics, the Seventh Day Adventist Church, the Swiss Inter-Church Aid, Euro-Action Accord, the Canadian Universities Students Organization, and the Juba Boatyard Project.

For the most part, these organizations are staffed by expatriates with only the most junior and menial positions, such as petty clerks, messengers, radio operators, some typists, drivers, cleaners e.t.c. earmarked for locals. Over the years these agencies have been running steadily increasing budgets, the last of which appears as follows:

Budgets 1981 and 1982⁽¹¹⁾ (In Sudanese Pounds I.S.P. =2US Dollars)

	1980 - 81	1981 - 82
Multilateral Organizations	10,237,300	20,220,793
Bilateral Organization	3,565,074	21,177,710
Voluntary Organizations	26,560,569	52,401,279
TOTAL	46,063,031	93,809,782

The extent and importance of aid funds to the Southern Region can be appreciated when compared to the Central Government Sponsored budget for the Southern Regional Government for the same period.

Southern Region Recurrent and Development, Budgets

1981 - 1982 (In Sudanese Pounds) (12)

PARTICULARS	1980 - 81	1981 - 82
Recurrent Budget	62,416,000	84,510,000
Development Budget	20,500,000	19,500,000
TOTAL	82,216,000	104,010,000

Thus for the 80-81 period aid funds to the South equalled 56% of what the Central Government provided. In 81-82 it rose to 90%. It is thus hardly surprising that a growing structure of dependency exists between the South and the donors.

Aid funds are supposed to finance a wide variety of projects, including road maintenance, agricultural development and training, fisheries, boatbuilding, administrative skills, health projects, technical and University education, forestry, wildlife management etc. Some limited measure of success has been achieved

on the infrastructural level in the construction of clinics, schools, etc. But by and large, considering the funds involved, very much more could have been achieved in the 12 years of aid since the Addis Ababa agreement.

Instead of creating conditions of self-reliance and independence the activities of aid agencies have increased dependence. One of the leading Southern Sudanese journalists remarked that:

Clearly the NCA's contribution to development in the East Bank is a significant one. But it remains equally true that the province is becoming more and more dependent on the NCA with each four-year development period necessitating an NCA presence in the area⁽¹³⁾.

THE AMIGO SYSTEM⁽¹⁴⁾

Why has so little been achieved in a decade of such concentrated development aid? Some of the traditional answers to such questions are partly valid here. Some of the more immediate benefits of aid have gone more principally to the local elite in the form of house rents and minor contracts for supplies and services. But clearly in the South Sudan the often open and excessive squandering of foreign funds, as is sometimes found in other countries of the underdeveloped world, is not true here. The explanation for this is simple. The locals have little or practically no chance of getting their hands in the till. As has been already pointed out, except for very minor officials the aid agencies in the Southern Sudan are entirely in the hands of expatriates who supervise the funds and invite their selected book-keepers to monitor the use of these funds⁽¹⁵⁾. When it comes to replacement of personnel or the award of consultancies their largely closed system of selection and operation, personal contacts and social network, are crucial factors in staff selection. A good example of this was observed by the author in 1982-83. A Swedish social worker sponsored by Christian organizations in Sweden and attached to the

Sudan Council of Churches for work with refugees in the Sudan-Uganda border area invited his brother, a forester, to the Sudan for ostensibly a holiday. Some weeks later the latter conveniently took over the brother's job in the Sudan Council of Churches office in the regional capital Juba, as the former's contract ended.

The "jobs for the boys" mentality is pronounced among the agencies in the Southern Sudan. More often than not job openings are never properly advertised. Sometimes they are advertised only as a formality to satisfy rules and regulations. The real processes of selection and appointment are based more on the politics of friendship, than open and fair competition. As a result, many end up with highly paid jobs for which they are not necessarily suitably qualified.

THE CONDITIONS OF SERVICES:

Aid agencies in the Southern Sudan are offered a number of privileges by the Sudanese authorities in order to help and facilitate their operations. All their vehicles are imported tax-free. On behalf of the aid agencies, the Regional Government pays taxes on office equipment, machinery, and fuel used by the agencies. This arrangement includes the understanding that in case of sale of any equipment by the agencies to a 3rd party, the latter pays the relevant tax on the equipment or vehicle. Personal vehicles are not exempt from taxes, but practically none of the agency personnel run personal vehicles. So that, in effect, all the agency officials use official vehicles for all purposes with free fuel provided by the particular agency. Agencies are not allowed to sell fuel, since this is imported tax-free. In actual fact a lot of the fuel sold on the black market in Juba and other parts of the Southern Sudan is from agency stores. Fuel which was purchased by aid bodies in Kenya for 2 Sudanese pounds per gallon including transportation in 1983, sold on the black market in Juba for 15-18 Sudanese pounds per gallon⁽¹⁶⁾. The absence of a good and effective electricity supply system in the South has made the production of electricity for the consumption of aid agency workers in their

residencies part of their daily operational costs. Here efforts of the individual agencies are expensively duplicated. Each agency operates its own generator or generator system on separate compounds, fenced and guarded. It has been estimated that in Juba if these efforts for energy production were pooled, the capital costs could comfortably find a comprehensive power-supply system for the whole town⁽¹⁷⁾. Equipment used by the agencies are not supposed to be sold. They are expected to be preferably transferred to the regional authorities on the completion of the project undertaken by the agency involved. In September, 1983, the NCA sold a fleet of used Suzuki and Landrover vehicles. Almost all the vehicles went to very highly placed politicians, security officers and Southern military brass; effectively keeping these elite elements happy and cordially related to the NCA.

Most of the agencies hold the bulk of their funds in Nairobi. The supplies which flow in regularly include very basic food items such as eggs, tomatoes, carrots, cauliflower etc. The bigger agencies such as ACROSS, NCA, and PDU, AMREF and others maintain their own aircraft. Within the last year (1982-83), the USAID has built a compound of 4 houses for their expatriate personnel at \$593 per meter square, costing 250,000 dollars each with all the internal fittings and finish flown in from Europe⁽¹⁸⁾. This has been done out of a total USAID budget of 6 million dollars over 3 years, lucrative salaries for the U.S. staff is also paid out of this allocation and its supposed also to account for their vehicles, maintenance, fuel etc. Precious little is left over for development work which benefits the Southern Sudanese. During the Boma Hostage Incident of July 1983 the USAID compound became the operational headquarters for the U.S. military mission planning the assault on Boma to free the hostages on behalf of the Sudanese Government.

The construction of swimming pools is becoming fashionable among the agencies and these compounds stand fenced, humming with generators and in sharp contrast in affluence and development to the rest of the extreme poverty and misery of the country and society they are ostensibly helping to develop. In an area of the

world where the per capita income per head of the indigenous population is less than 90 dollars, it is interesting to note the hefty salaries and other remunerations which the personnel of the agencies supposed to be there to help them, get. It has been estimated that between 65 - 70% of the funds voted for aid are actually spent in maintaining the expatriate staff. The PDU staff salaries would serve here as an example. The salary of the head of this agency is close to of \$ 100,000 per year, the PDU accountant gets \$23,000, the project anthropologist earns about \$35,000. All these remunerations are paid tax free and there are additional perks like paid house and local leave, free transport and fuel, duty-free liquor and other items. In 1982 the PDU brought in a consultant to run a month's course for a handful of storekeepers of the P.D.U. for which the appointee was paid \$40,000. In 1983, 2 consultants were brought in to conduct a month's course on management for about 20 people. They received \$67,000 for their 4 weeks service. In contrast to these rewards for the expatriate top echelons of the P.D.U. the most senior local staff receives \$3,000 per year, in local currency. Generally what could be described as a conspiracy of silence is maintained regarding rewards and remunerations. It is arguable that the U.S., the French, Dutch or British tax-payer is never told the truth about aid. The local authorities are also kept in the dark about the delicate and sensitive financial aspects of their activities. In the Southern Sudan, GTZ regulations clearly forbid discussion of salaries on the argument that, each expert negotiates singly as it were, from each according to his ability to each according to his need! Dutch estimates suggest that an associate expert costs \$30,000, an expert \$50,000, and a volunteer \$25,000 per year. (19)

There is a distinct difference between the volunteers (VSO, Peace Corps, VNV), and the higher flying experts. Working more closely and meaningfully with the local population, the volunteers in their lifestyles do not exhibit the same degree of extravagance which the experts display. One frequent allegation levelled against the aid agencies is that they generally prefer to recruit their own nationals instead of locals. The PDU for

example has been known to employ expatriates as junior accountants, office clerks and secretaries when locals could do these jobs. Again many of the expatriates in agency employ are barely qualified, and often lack experience for the jobs they hold. According to Albino Chol the P.D.U., N.C.A., and ACROSS are the worst culprits.

The operation of aircraft by some of the bigger organizations has with it, stories about some of the illegal cargo of the personnel of these flights. Gold smuggling is not unknown among some agency expatriates, particularly in the Kapoeta area of Eastern Equatoria⁽²⁾.

SUBCULTURE AND CONTRACULTURE:

Among agency elements the "spreading effect" idea is fairly prevalent and rather characteristic. Such aid agents, hope and believe that somehow their expensively capitalized lifestyles, and the production units they create will catch on with the local population. Ripples of development and greater productivity will simply radiate from their operations. The NCA director Per Westborg articulated this opinion by saying that:

the whole idea of putting in resources is to create a certain momentum of development which can spark off further development in the area⁽²¹⁾.

This is not happening. A clergyman working in close association with ACROSS and the NCA bitterly described how one after the other clinics built in various parts of the South have functionally collapsed after they were handed over to the locals. While expatriates run these clinics, the inputs, drugs, vehicles, fuel, and other equipment are available. The expatriates, as it were, practically leave with these logistics. Living in fenced and technologically cushioned compounds, and guarded by watchmen, while earning salaries most of them could hardly earn at home, many become cynical about what they are doing.

Torit, a town on the East Bank of the Nile, serves as the headquarters of the NCA. The compound, built up to European standards of living in an area of backwardness, covers about 5 square miles. It has all the amenities of western life, and has also a school running up to secondary school level for the children of the Norwegian staff. The place is referred to by the locals as "Little Oslo".

The Compagnie de Construction Internationale or CCI, a contracted French-based multinational has been building the new Juba Airport runway, and the controversial Jonglei Canal (to drain the swamps of the Sudd). These two projects have been largely financed by the European Development Fund, an EEC institution. Between them, these two projects are second only to Chevron in the Bentiu oilfields, in terms of investment capital in the South. The subculture of the CCI expatriates in their compounds on the Sobat River and at Juba Airport, perhaps most glaringly illustrated the distance between expatriate and native lives; the geographically inextricable, but socially totally separated worlds of the two groups. At the Sobat River camp, on most days, French ladies would be at the swimming pool sunning and paying attention to their lacquered fingers while natives waited on them with various beverages and other delicacies. Outside the camp, in its immediate vicinity, Shilluk tribesmen lived and carried on like they have done for centuries in their largely precapitalist cattle cultural complex. There is a well stocked boutique, kindergarden, primary schools, and a canteen comparable in quality to a good European restaurant. They also boasted water-ski facilities, and on Sundays some went off on hunting expeditions. At the Juba Airport compound, there was even a specially imported French Chef, who also served as hairdresser to the expatriates. At the Sobat, 6 months before the commencement of the project, prophylactics and a variety of drugs were widely distributed and administered in the area among the native tribesmen in order to rid them as much as possible of disease which could endanger French lives.

Recently, operations on the Jonglei Canal, Juba Airport, and other activities of the multinationals: Chevron, Total Oil, and the CCI, have been forced to a halt, and the area evacuated, on account of the growing conflict in the South.

Armed Insurgency and Aid Agencies

The Peace of Addis Ababa held in the main for a decade, during which period, the aid agencies in the Southern Sudan pursued their objectives with considerable equanimity and limited success. However it should be pointed out that, already in 1975, on precisely the 3rd anniversary of the Addis Ababa agreement while Col. Gaddafi of Libya was being conducted around the South as a guest of honour for the anniversary celebrations in Wau, a major breakdown of the integration process of the former Anya Nya insurgents into the Sudanese army occurred in Akobo. A large group of former African nationalist fighters fled into the bush as a result of the Akobo incident, and started a renewed armed campaign against the Arab dominated government. The renewed insurgency at this stage hardly affected the work of the aid agencies since the armed struggle was territorially, narrowly restricted to the Akobo area close to the Ethiopian-Sudanese border. However, when in 1982-83, successively, the Nuneiri administration redivided the South in negation of the spirit and letter of the Addis Ababa agreement, and subsequently went on to introduce Sharia law, a spate of armed mutinies exploded in the South and accelerated the pace of events into the second civil war.

With these developments, the activities of the aid agencies became increasingly difficult. Hostages were taken from among aid agency workers from time to time, from 1982 through into 1984. By the middle of 1983 contingency plans had been made by most aid agencies, in case matters seriously worsened necessitating evacuation on short notice. Indeed on the 23rd May, 1983, the first Inter-Agency meeting was held to iron out these matters. By then, already the British VSO had withdrawn its volunteers from the troubled Bor, Pibor and Kangyor triangle. A month later towards the end of June the Boma hostage affair took place during which 2 Americans, 1 Canadian, 1 West German, and a Dutchman all belonging to ACROSS were taken by a group calling itself the Southern Sudan Liberation Front. This incident which captured the headlines in the international media sent alarm bells ringing.

From the statements and declarations made by the insurgents on various occasions, it was clear that the insurgents did not harbour as such any ill intentions towards the aid workers. Their spoken objective was variously to draw international attention to their cause, raise ransoms, and generally prove that they were masters in the areas in which they operated. The increasing volume of the fighting and the uncertainties arising thereof, induced many aid agencies to start phasing out their activities, while others transferred the running of their projects to the bigger groups, and withdrew most of their personnel. Early in 1984, the Dutch withdrew most of their aid workers. Soon after that in May, the West Germans withdrew the bulk of their nationals after two of them had been taken hostage by SPLA forces in the Wau area. Other governments by now also gave serious attention to similar courses of action.

In September 1984, Numeiri rescinded the operation of Sharia Law Courts, and agreed to, abrogate the redivision of the South. It is however doubtful if at the present stage these ostensibly conciliatory gestures could halt the war. For the aid agencies further escalation of the war would almost certainly mean a cessation of their activities, bringing to a close, a decade of aid efforts in the Southern Sudan.

Closing Remarks

In retrospect, the balance sheet of development aid activity in the South Sudan would most probably show a very limited, mainly infrastructural developmental gains in the area. Most of this may appear to be, clinics, schools, housing and other accommodational facilities which latter served mainly the expatriate workers. The lack of meaningful coordination and the inherent structure of dependency on which these development activities have been carried out makes it fairly unlikely that most of these projects will be in the near future self-sustaining and self-reliant. Only a minor proportion of the funds earmarked for the Southern Sudan during the last decade really sank into the ground for the long term good of the people of the Southern Sudan.

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3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Maxine Rodinson. The Arabs. London. 1981 pp. 64 - 65.
6. See Lord Lugard. The Dual Mandate of British Tropical Africa. London. 1923. P. 356. See also British Foreign Office Handbook. 1898. This text indicates a decline of 8 to 2.5 million.
7. Table as given in Peace and Progress 1972 - 73, Regional Ministry of Information and Culture. Juba. 3 March 1973. pp. 7.
8. M.O. Beshir. The Southern Sudan. From Conflict to Peace. Khartoum. 1975. pp. 116.
9. Op. Cit. Peace and Progress 1972 - 73. The Friendly States were namely Yugoslavia, Egypt, U.S.A., Britain, Italy, Cyprus, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Somalia, Camerouns, Gabon, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Dubai.
10. Ibid.
11. Extracted from the Report on External Assistance 1981-82. June 1982 Regional Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning. Southern Regional Government. Juba.
12. From Regional Budget Estimates. Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning. 1982.
13. Jacob Akol. All the way with NCA? Sudan Now. November 1980.
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16. Albino Chol. Ibid.

17. Taban Samuel. Interview. Katire. 16 July, 1983.
18. SUD/79/004. Physical Infrastructure Support Unit (PISU) Project Review and Evaluation. Mission Report. 18 November, 1981. Louis Berger International, Inc. East Orange. New Jersey.
19. Lieve Joris. Op. cit.
20. Albino Chol. Op Cit.
21. Jacob Akol. The Limitations of Aid. Interview with Per Westborg. Sudan Now. November, 1980.

+ The following are the full rendering of unexplained abbreviations in the text. ODA (Overseas Development Aid) British. GTZ (German Agency for Technical Cooperation) UNDP (United Nations Development Project) UNHCR (United Nations High Commission for Refugees). FAO (Food and Agricultural Organization). WFP (World Food Programme). UNICEF (United Nations Childrens Fund). PDU (Project Development Unit) British. WHO (World Health Organization).