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Bad Borders Make Bad Neighbours

**The Political Economy of
Relief and Rehabilitation
in the Somali Region 5,
Eastern Ethiopia**

Koenraad Van Brabant

September 1994

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Bad Borders Make Bad Neighbours
The Political Economy of Relief and Rehabilitation
in the Somali Region 5, Eastern Ethiopia

Koenraad Van Brabant¹

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To the memory of Madina Elmusharaf
who died on a mine, legacy of conflict,
on January 1st, 1993

Bad Borders Make Bad Neighbours

The Political Economy of Relief and Rehabilitation in the Somali Region 5, Eastern Ethiopia

1. Introduction

One of the distinctive features of the recent aid programmes in eastern Ethiopia is the almost complete absence of any political, institutional and programmatic history. This is an unforgivable omission in an area steeped in a century-old history of conflict and with a 20-year record of relief and rehabilitation work, that has strongly moulded the relationships between aid providers and recipients. One is tempted to believe that a similar lack of memory prejudices relief and rehabilitation work in other parts of the world.

Though it is the northern Highlands of Ethiopia that are best known for their wars and famines, the drought-prone Eastern lowlands have also suffered from continuous conflict and war. Perhaps more than anywhere else, the regionalization of Ethiopia has led to a complete institutional vacuum in this area, which is all the more worrying, given that secessionary tendencies, after the independence of Eritrea in 1993, are most pronounced in the Somali Region 5. Eastern Ethiopia, or 'Western Somalia' from the Somali point of view, is the third side to the Somali triangle. Population movements, cross-border trade and questions of regional food security, create strong links between Somaliland, Somalia and the Somali Region 5. Whereas in recent years much research has been done on the background to the Somali civil war, the current economic situation in Somaliland (e.g. Holt and Lawrence, 1992; Nathanail and Samater, 1993 a, b) and political processes and peace-making in Somaliland (e.g. Yusuf, 1993b ; Gilkes, 1993) and Somalia (e.g. Bradbury, 1994), the available research on eastern Ethiopia (e.g. Holt and Lawrence, 1991; Ryle, 1992 a, b) is much less and usually topic-specific. Yet, as the economy and politics in eastern Ethiopia are influenced by the situation in Somaliland and Somalia, reverse may well be true as well. Country programmes require a regional perspective.

In recent years, internal displacement and resettlement appear increasingly on UNHCR's agenda. This report illustrates how UNHCR tried to cope with these new challenges in Somali Region 5 by developing a 'cross-mandate' approach in conjunction with other UN agencies. Secondary analytic themes are the effects of relief and rehabilitation programmes on pastoralists, and the constructive or economic uses of food aid, and the capacity and knowledge of the local economic dynamics that they require.

2. Pride and Prejudice in the Somali Region 5 : The Political History of a Conflict

In the spring of 1993 the Somali population in eastern Ethiopia gained a formal degree of self-government after a hundred years of increasingly troubled history. Under the regionalization of the new Ethiopian state, eastern Ethiopia has now become the Somali Region 5. Before 1987, the whole area east of the Awash and north and west of the Wabi Shebelle rivers had constituted Hararghe Province. This is the second important administrative change in five years. A cautious version of regional decentralization (not raising the issue of a federal state) had taken place in 1987-9 under the previous 'socialist' and military government of Ethiopia, known as the Dergue which involved new boundaries drawing up by the Nationalities Institute. This had involved the creation of two 'Autonomous' regions, one around Dire Dawa and the other the Ogaden. The towns of Harar, Jijiga and Dergahbur and the surrounding areas remained part of a much reduced 'East Hararghe'.

The current Somali Region 5 encompasses the arid lowland areas between Dire Dawa and Djibouti but not the highlands around Harar which are part of the Oromo Region 4. Several districts west of the Wabi Shebelle, known together as the El Kerre or Afdher area, are included in Region 5. Unless otherwise stated, the southeastern part of Region 5 is meant when we refer to the Ogaden in this text. Reference to the 'northern part' of Region 5 means the area around Jijiga down to Dergahbur and Aware, demarcated in the east and north by the border with Somaliland. This is not an artificial division : there are slight ethnic, ecological and economic differences between the northern and the southern parts of Region 5, which are meaningful on the ground.

The agro-pastoral calendar of the eastern lowlands is determined by the succession of rainy and dry seasons. The *gu* rains are expected from late February till early May, followed by a dry season, often with fierce winds that increase evaporation. In the northern part of the region, the *krem* rains are expected between late August and early October. In the Ogaden the second rainy season *dayer* is expected between late September and early November, followed by the long *jilaal* dry season, which is the most stressful period of the year. The original and dominant

local population are Somalis. Previously overwhelmingly pastoral, over the past 40-50 years there has been an increase in agro-pastoralism and settled cultivation, to the point where up to half the population may now be engaged in this kind of production. The purely pastoral areas are those east of a line from Hartisheik through Aware and Shilabo down to Ferfer on the border with Somalia.

The creation of a 'Somali region' in Ethiopia is an important historical event in the light of the troubled relationship of the Somalis with the Ethiopian empire-state. Not surprisingly, it has been welcomed by the local Somalis, though the initial enthusiasm has somewhat soured since, as they have not yet been able to create a stable and functioning regional administration.

The Ethiopian empire-state and the colonial powers

Since the mid-nineteenth century Ethiopian politics has focused on state formation and the warding off of external challenges. State-building has inevitably raised the issue of nationality which, together with food supply, remains a key concern for today's government.

The first serious attempt at creating a centralized unitary state can be attributed to Tewodros II who was crowned in 1855. In a series of local wars he tried to establish his authority over local dynasties in northern Ethiopia, which brought a tentative end to the 'Zamana Masafent' or 'Era of the Princes' (1769-1855). The major external threat for Tewodros and his successor, Yohannes IV, were the Egyptians who controlled the Sudan and the Red Sea ports of Massawa, Assab, Zeila and Berbera. Both rulers sought British help, portraying Abyssinia as a bastion of Christianity besieged by Muslim forces. Britain, however, at that time perceived its interests as lying elsewhere; indeed, with the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 Egypt and the Red Sea coast acquired a new strategic and economic importance. It also allowed the Italians to gain a foothold on the Red Sea coast, on the understanding that they would protect British interests. A *rapprochement* with Ethiopia did not take place until 1882, when Britain occupied Egypt and needed Ethiopian help for the Egyptian garrisons in the Sudan that were being besieged by

the Mahdists, a Sudanese nationalist movement of religious revival that had broken out in 1881. Yet the Ethiopian-British treaty of 1884 did not prevent Britain from handing Massawa to the Italians in 1885; thus opening the road for further Italian expansion inland.

The death in battle of Yohannes IV in 1889 created the chance for Menelik II, an ambitious prince from Showa in the central Highlands of Ethiopia, who had founded Addis Ababa in 1881 as his capital. Having first brought the south and southwest under his authority, he then moved eastwards to establish control over the lucrative trade routes to the coast. In 1887 he defeated Emir Abdullahi in Harar and installed his cousin, Ras Makonnen, as governor.

By then the Italians had gained a foothold in what today is south Somalia, the French had occupied what later became Djibouti and the British had established a Protectorate in northwest Somalia, today's Somaliland, to ensure the meat supply for their strategic garrison in Aden. Britain had promised the local Somali clans protection from intruding Ethiopian armed bands. In 1888 the French, Italians and British made a first agreement on their areas of influence in this broad territory inhabited by Somali peoples. The Ethiopian defeat of the Italian expansionary invasion at Adwa in 1896 shocked the European powers and led to new diplomatic activity; successive agreements clarified, at least on paper, boundaries between Ethiopia and French Somaliland (March 1887), British Somaliland (June 1897), Italian Eritrea (July 1900) and British Sudan (May 1902). They also felt the need to protect their interests through an agreement among themselves. For the British, the main interest was the waters of the Blue Nile, the lifeline of their Egyptian territory. For the French, it was the railway which they had started building from Djibouti in 1897 and which had reached New Harar, subsequently renamed as Dire Dawa, in 1902 and was to arrive in Addis Ababa in 1917. The Italian interest, ominously, was much more vaguely expressed as the hinterland of Eritrea and Italian Somaliland, between which they hoped to establish a 'territorial connection' (Bahru, 1991:113-14, 151).

This led to the Tripartite Agreement of 1906 over the head of Ethiopia. Meanwhile, Iyassu succeeded Menelik II. Whereas Menelik had been the empire builder, he had done little to integrate the different nationalities into the enlarged empire-state.

Being of Muslim and Oromo background, Iyassu, on the other hand, wanted to adopt a more integrative policy, especially towards the non-Christian populations of the empire. He went to live in Harar, built mosques in Dire Dawa and Jijiga, and married Muslim princesses after divorcing his Christian wife. Not surprisingly, the nobility in the Christian Highlands deposed him in 1916 and nominated Zawditu, daughter of Menelik, as empress, and the son of Ras Makonnen, the former governor of Harar, as heir to the throne. This came as a relief to the European powers. In the Ogaden Sheikh Mohammed Abdille Hassan and his 'Derwishes' were successfully fighting British and Italian troops and they were afraid that Iyassu would incite a larger uprising while they were engaged in the First World War. Iyassu tried to resist his deposition and the Bartirre and Abasqul Somalis of the Jijiga and Kebri Bayeh area fought the local Ethiopian garrison in his support. Eventually he fled to Afar country where he was captured in 1921 (Bahru, 1991:127).

Since the beginning of this century, therefore, the Somali people have found themselves in areas of Ethiopian, French, British and Italian 'influence'. Notwithstanding the different agreements, boundaries were not precisely established nor physically demarcated. Ethiopian authority over the eastern lowlands remained very weak and was totally absent in the Ogaden. Only in the plains around Jijiga did subsequent governors exercise control. As the local Gadabursi and Giri Somalis were reluctant to cultivate the area and to pay tribute, Oromo cultivators were invited to settle on the Jijiga plains. Over time the local Somalis partially assimilated a sedentary way of life. Caught between the spheres of influence of different powers, they resented the Ethiopian administrators when they collected their animals as tax, but joined them in 'tax-collecting' raids on neighbouring groups, some of them in the British Protectorate. This led to mutual complaints between the British and Ethiopian Governments, and in 1921 the British established Boroma as a border garrison town to ward off these raids.

It was not until the 1930s that Britain, Italy and Ethiopia agreed on the need to demarcate their boundaries on the ground. The exercise went wrong, however, when a boundary demarcation mission approached Wal Wal, a site close to Warder in the Ogaden, small but valuable because of its wells. Although well within the

agreed Ethiopian territory, the site had been occupied by Somali soldiers under Italian command since 1930 without protest from the Ethiopians. In December 1934 a fierce, but inconclusive, battle erupted between the Italian forces and the Ethiopian troops accompanying the mission. The League of Nations proved incapable of mediating the diplomatic crisis which followed. The British public and Parliament objected to the government's proposal to make territorial concessions to Ethiopia and Italy to settle the dispute. Italy also rejected the offer, and in October 1935 attacked Ethiopia from Eritrea in the north and Somalia in the south. Using mostly Somali troops, the Italians attacked through Dollo and the Ogaden, a scenario the Somali army would repeat in 1977. In early 1936 Ethiopia was defeated, and Italy was finally able to establish the 'territorial connection' between its coastal colonies of Eritrea and Somalia.

As in the 1897 agreement with Menelik, Britain in 1937 negotiated an agreement with the Italians to secure the grazing rights of the Somali pastoralists in the Protectorate on the rangelands in the Ogaden, in exchange for Italian use of certain facilities at the port of Berbera. In 1940, however, as part of the Axis war effort Italy attacked British Somaliland, occupying Boroma and bombing Hargeisha, Zeila and Berbera. British troops launched a swift and successful counterattack from northern Kenya, through Italian Somalia and northwest through the Ogaden, defeating the Italians in early 1941. Thus when Ras Tafari Mekonnen, son of Menelik's governor of Harar, ruler of Ethiopia since 1916 and emperor Haile Selassie since 1930, returned from exile in Britain, he found most of the Horn of Africa under British military administration.

Greater Somalia, Britain and the growth of Somali nationalism

In 1942 Britain and Ethiopia concluded an agreement whereby Britain retained extensive control over Ethiopia's administration, finance and territorial integrity. It directly administered the Ogaden and also the cereal-producing areas in the northwest around Jijiga and up to the Djibouti railway, which were considered a 'Reserved Area'. The second Anglo-Ethiopian Agreement of 1944 restored some of Ethiopia's sovereign rights, but Britain did not withdraw from the east. In April 1946 Britain proposed to the victorious allies that the United Nations should recognize a 'Greater Somalia', and place it under its trusteeship, arguing that this would be in the best interests of the Somali pastoralists who could then move freely between their grazing lands. The Soviet representative at the UN, however, objected that this was a British trick to expand their empire; Ethiopia, of course, also lobbied strongly against the idea, although Britain was ready to offer the port of Zeila in return. The Somali Youth League based in Mogadishu and the Somali National League in British Somaliland, however, were very much in favour (Bahru, 191:181-2 ; Drysdale, 1964).

In the end, nothing came of the proposal and from 1948 Ethiopian officials took over the Ogaden and 'jointly' with the British administered the 'Reserved Area' and the 'Haud' grazing lands. In 1954 Britain formally agreed to return the eastern lowlands to Ethiopia, which guaranteed the grazing rights of Somaliland pastoralists. Once again, the Somalis were not consulted. The Somali parties in British Somaliland united into the National United Front and tried to lobby the British government and the United Nations, their claim being that in the Anglo-Somali agreements of 1884-6 the Somalis had sought the protection of the British Empire but had not ceded any territory to British control; Britain could not therefore legally transfer such territory to the control of another state.

Their lobbying was unsuccessful and in the following years, an uneasy situation obtained. Pastoralists from British Somaliland, with their elders and tribal

policemen recognized by the British Government, would move seasonally to the grazing areas on Ethiopian territory, where they would be harassed by Ethiopian officials and police. The Ethiopians would try to appoint elders they themselves had selected and move in with their own police, refusing to recognize the tribal police. They would also try to make the Somali pastoralists accept Ethiopian nationality (Drysdale, 1964:80-2).

In the meantime the UN in 1950 had returned Somalia to Italy under a ten-year trusteeship. The then border between Ethiopia and Somalia, following a line from Mustahil to Geladi, had been unilaterally established by Britain in 1948. Throughout the 1950s Ethiopia and Italy were to wrangle over the exact delimitation of this border, with Ethiopia refusing to accept anything but specific historical treaties made without any Somali input. It adopted the line that it granted the Somalis access to their grazing land as a favour which could be withdrawn at any time, and that the boundary, well to the east, could not be disputed (Ibid: Chap 8).

The matter was still inconclusive in 1960 when British Somaliland and Italian Somalia became independent and joined to form one state five days later. Obviously Ethiopia was alarmed by this development which came a step closer to a 'Greater Somalia'. It therefore firmly supported the Kenyan Government when the issue of self-determination of the Northern Frontier District, another Somali-inhabited area, came up in the months before Kenyan independence in 1963. In late 1962 Britain set up a commission to determine the viewpoints of the NFD inhabitants. Notwithstanding their expressed wish to secede and significant pressure from the Somali Republic (it broke off diplomatic relations with Britain in early 1963) Britain ultimately decided not to take the risk and left the matter to the new government after Kenyan independence.

Not surprisingly, Kenya identified the old colonial boundaries as those of the newly independent state. In this it received the support of the Organization of African Unity, also created in 1963 with its headquarters in Addis Ababa, which feared separatist ethnic movements all over Africa if such precedents were tolerated. Against these arguments the Somalis raised the principle of national self-determination, and the referendum as the appropriate instrument to determine the

wish of the people. The control of cross-border movements of livestock, the question of the national identity of Somalis whose clan territory straddles the border, the claim for a 'Greater Somalia' and for a referendum on self-determination : the issues are as alive today as they were 30 years ago.

Conflict and war between Ethiopia and Somalia

The year 1963 was not only that of the crisis over the Somali inhabitants of Kenya's Northern Frontier District, but also of the first serious hostilities between Ethiopia and Somalia in the Ogaden with Somalia having become an independent state, Ethiopia had moved to reinforce its control over the eastern lowlands and had started to collect taxes. This led to a revolt of some 3,000 guerrillas grouped in the Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF) which received support from Somalia. The Ethiopian army quickly proved the stronger. The fighting was followed by a pattern of repression that was to become typical in years to follow : animals of pastoralists were killed or confiscated, unregulated livestock trading was identified as 'smuggling' and the army took control of important water points. Farmers from the Highlands were encouraged to settle in the east, and were given land rights (Africa Watch, 1991:71-79).

When in 1969 General Siad Barre seized power in Somalia, he formally disbanded the WSLF to placate Ethiopia. However, he revived it in 1976 when he needed its support for his own position; in return, he provided it with support for its 'liberation struggle'. The main base of the WSLF was in Hargeisha, in northwest Somalia, from which it carried out attacks in which regular Somali soldiers participated out of uniform. The WSLF managed to gain control of significant areas of territory but could make no headway against the garrisons controlling the towns and strategic routes. Seeing Ethiopia weakened by the revolutionary chaos in Addis Ababa which had deepened after the overthrow of the Emperor Haile Selassie in 1974; by the weakening of western support to the new Marxist-Leninist government; and by the continuing war in Eritrea, Somalia decided to declare war and invaded in June 1977. Like the Italians in 1935, two invading forces came through Gode and Dollo, while a third one moved from Hargeisha to the outskirts of Dire Dawa. With Harar and

Dire Dawa under siege, Somalia would probably have obtained what it wanted had not the Soviet Union switched sides in December 1977. A massive airlift of military equipment, plus some 16,000 Cuban troops and Soviet military advisers, shifted the balance in favour of the Ethiopians. Their counteroffensive started in January 1978 and drove out the Somali army three months later (Korn, 1986; Chapman, 1988).

In the process both the Somali and the Ethiopian armies committed many abuses against civilians and prisoners of war. In certain ways worse than the war, but less visible, was the subsequent militarization of the area, and the brutality of the repression of its Somali inhabitants. The Ethiopian troops forcibly 'relocated' the local population in 'protected' camps and villages, and carried out punitive actions against those outside their control. Herds were machine-gunned, wells poisoned and villages bombed with napalm (Africa Watch, 1991:81-100). Whereas the war itself had led an estimated 85,000 Ethiopian Somalis to seek refuge in Somalia by mid-1978, the counter-insurgency campaign swelled the number of refugees to perhaps 800,000 by the end of 1980.

Civil war in Somalia

In April 1978 senior Somali military, belonging to the Mijerteen clan, attempted an unsuccessful coup d'etat against Siad Barre. The Issaq clan, the strongest one in Northwest Somalia, had also become disenchanted with Siad Barre's politics. The defeat in the 'Ogaden war' of 1977-8 complicated their access to the grazing lands there and had provoked a large influx into Northwest Somalia of Ogadeni refugees, belonging to the Darood clan. They also resented the predominance of Darood clan members in Siad Barre's regime. Consequently in 1981 the Somali National Movement (SNM) was founded, a mixture of Issaq nationalists, northern separatists and Islamists (Gilkes, 1992).

Siad Barre increasingly used the WSLF fighters against the SNM. The Ethiopians, on their side, did not miss the opportunity to support the SNM to weaken Siad Barre. Somalis were now set against Somalis, increasingly along clan lines. In the early 1980s SNM and WSLF militias clashed several times in Northwest Somalia

and eastern Ethiopia. In 1986 the Youth Wing of the WSLF broke away and established itself as the separate Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF), drawing more specifically on the Ogadeni within the Darood clan family (Ibid).

In April 1988, just two weeks after a significant EPLF victory at Afabet in Eritrea, President Mengistu hurriedly reached a formal peace agreement with Somalia in order to allow for the transfer of troops from the Ogaden to Eritrea. This peace agreement is crucial to an understanding of the current situation in the Somali Region 5. Whilst it enabled UNHCR to commence a formal repatriation plan for which it screened the refugees in Somalia, the peace agreement led directly to a worsening of the situation in Somalia. In May 1988, fearful of a weakening of its position without the support of the Ethiopians, the SNM launched surprise attacks on the towns of Burao and Hargeisha. Siad Barre's generals responded with great brutality, bombing Hargeisha to ruins and persecuting all members of the Issaq clan. This escalation of the conflict in Northwest Somalia led to a massive influx of mostly Issaq refugees into Ethiopia. Over 250,000 settled in three camps east of Aware and in Hartisheik southeast of Jijiga town (see Section 4).

The bloody suppression of a mutiny of Hawiye soldiers in Galcao in 1989 triggered the Hawiye clan into an armed uprising against Siad Barre, who was finally ousted from Mogadishu in January 1991. The continued fighting in Mogadishu and southern Somalia drove scores of refugees and 'returnees' -Ethiopian Somali refugees now fleeing back to Ethiopia- into the Ogaden, where they ended up with relatives in the countryside, or in camp-type concentrations around Kalaffo, Gode and Dollo towns. In the northwest, the SNM was now free to assert its supremacy over the clan militias that had supported Siad Barre. In February 1991 they sent back the Ogadeni refugees, who were joined by Gadabursi fleeing from the Boroma and Dilla areas. As a consequence, three more refugee and returnee camps were set up in the area near Jijiga. In May 1991 northwest Somalia proclaimed itself the independent Republic of Somaliland. So far it has not been internationally recognized.

Simultaneously, the Ethiopian 'Dergue' Government, in its turn, was defeated by the insurgents from the north, grouped in the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary

Democratic Front (EPRDF), the core of which consisted of members of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). Three years after the signing of the 1988 onwards peace agreement between Ethiopia and Somalia, therefore, both regimes had been militarily overthrown and chaos and anarchy seemed to have overtaken both countries. Caught in the middle were hundreds of thousands of Somalis, who from 1978 had sought refuge and a life in Somalia, and now were forced to flee back. Many of them were taken in by family members, while up to half a million hoped for international assistance in camps.

The Transitional Government in Ethiopia and Somali Region 5

When the victorious EPRDF troops moved eastwards, the Dergue troops disbanded and fled their garrisons in eastern Ethiopia without a fight. Many light weapons disappeared with them. Security broke down. Not surprisingly, in view of the repression suffered in previous decades, the Somali populations looted and destroyed many government facilities, including clinics and schools. Yet only a few revenge killings of 'Highlanders' took place. Some 'tribal' conflicts, notably between the Jarso and Giri close to Jijiga, and between the Rer Barre and Ogadeni pastoralists close to Kalaffo, escalated and led to new displacements of people. SNM and WSLF militiamen clashed in the border areas between the Issaq and Darood lands, where the relief supplies for Kebri Bayeh and Hartisheik camps were obliged to move. Armed militiamen roamed around in the mainly Gadabursi camps of Derwonaji and Teferi ber.

Simultaneously Oromo fronts, notably the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and the Islamic Front for the Liberation of Oromia (IFLO), fought the EPRDF troops for control of the main road between Dire Dawa and Jijiga, the main supply route for all relief goods from Djibouti and Addis Ababa. For about a year, between June 1991 and June 1992, eastern Ethiopia was generally in a very insecure state and all relief efforts had to rely on airlifts and armed protection by EPRDF escorts. While influential Somalis and sensitive EPRDF commanders worked to stabilize the situation on the ground, important changes were taking place in Ethiopia's national politics.

After the defeat of the Dergue regime, a national conference was held from 1 to 5 June 1991, which drew up the Charter of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) (Negarit Gazeta, 1991). The Charter (article 12) stipulated a transitional period of two years, with a possible extension of no more than six months. National elections were therefore to take place by the end of 1993. In the event, they were delayed until 5 June 1994, when the EPRDF obtained a full political mandate.

Apart from outlining the structure of the TGE, the Charter immediately focused on two fundamental issues : the nationalities question and relief and rehabilitation in an underdeveloped country. Regionalization and regional development planning are the strategy adopted to deal with both problems. Subsequent proclamations established regional governments and defined the powers and duties of the central and regional executive organs of the TGE and the sharing of revenue between them. Regional elections, first scheduled for October 1991, took place mostly in June 1992. Some, like those in the Somali Region 5, were delayed till the spring of 1993.

These elections brought Somalis to power in the area for the first time since having come under Ethiopian, British and Italian 'influence' a hundred years before. Their first prolonged debate was over where the capital of the region should be located. The contest was between Dire Dawa, Jijiga and Gode. Dire Dawa is the second largest city in Ethiopia and located on the commercial lifeline with Djibouti. Somalis belonging to the Issa clan live to the north of it but share the city with all other Ethiopian nationalities. Jijiga is on the land of smaller Darood lineages, but is a key trading point with Somaliland and of vital interest to the Gadabursi and Issaq. Gode is at the far southern end of the new Region, away from the main commercial routes and with few facilities and poor communications. Nevertheless, the numerical predominance of the Ogadeni clan in the new Region won them Gode as the capital and the Presidency and Vice-Presidency of the new Regional Government.

In the first 12 months or so of its existence, this government has been far from stable. As early as August 1993, the Regional President and Vice-President were deposed and later arrested when 6 million Birr (approx. \$1.2 million), provided by the central government to start up the regional administration, could not be

accounted for. They were replaced by two other Ogadenis, but the simultaneous reshuffle of the regional parliament led to a somewhat better representation of the smaller clans. Whereas the overall security situation improved significantly between the late spring of 1992 and the end of 1993, allowing rehabilitation activities to go ahead, it broke down again in January 1994. According to the Charter, national elections should have been held by then, which was not the case. Some Ethiopian Somali political parties, but with the ONLF up front, started accusing the EPRDF-controlled TGE of being just another 'colonizing' force from the Highlands that had betrayed its own promises and the Charter. Calls rang out for secession and an independent 'Ogadenia'.

Article 2 of the Charter of the TGE affirms 'the right of nations, nationalities and peoples to self-determination'. This encompasses the right to preserve one's own identity, as defined by culture, history and language, and the administration of one's own affairs within a defined territory. Point c of Article 2 allows a region to 'exercise its right to self-determination of independence when the concerned nation/nationality and people is convinced that the above rights are denied, abridged or abrogated'. In April 1993 Eritrea had opted for independence after a referendum.

Yet, in response to the calls for a referendum on secession, in February 1994 11 parties set up the Ethiopian Somali Democratic League (ESDL), mainly representing the Issa, Gurgura, Issaq, Gadabursi, Gaboye and Rer Barre. They distanced themselves from the ONLF, which they stated represented only one clan, and confirmed their support for the forces promoting democracy and a legal political process in the country as a whole. Although they want to see the possibility of self-determination up to the point of secession retained in the new constitution, they recognized that regionalization had potentially altered the political scene in Ethiopia and that in any case the present was not an opportune time for secession. The priority for the ESDL is recovery and investment in the development of Region 5.

Proponents of a quick referendum on secession responded by forming the Western Somali Democratic Party (WSDP) in March 1994, of which the then regional President was elected chairman. The notion of a 'Greater Somalia' was consciously evoked at the founding meeting. The ONLF, with its main support among the

Ogadeni clan, managed to mobilize smaller Darood clans such as the 'Jidwaq' alliance of Bartirre, Yeberre and Abasqul. Thus two blocks had formed, which ostensibly differed over political programmes and priorities.

'Tribalism', which has led to the total destruction of south Somalia and to conflict and the collapse of the first government in Somaliland, has also entered Somali politics in eastern Ethiopia. The other, smaller, clan groups obviously fear domination by the numerically stronger Ogadenis in an independent state. If they have to secede from Ethiopia, the Gadabursi and Issaq might prefer to seek incorporation in the Somaliland Republic, where the majority of their clansmen live, while the Issa will look towards their clan members in Djibouti. So far, however, the tribal split, although a threat, has not fully materialized. In fact, 'representatives' of all clans and most political parties appear in each block. Political authority and 'party discipline' do not mean much where elders, elected officials, political party representatives and anybody else with political aspirations or a degree of influence, all participate in the political process.

Until mid-March 1994 the TGE had remained very diplomatic in its public statements, but an increasing spate of attacks on EPRDF soldiers and bases in the Ogaden eventually provoked it into a full-scale military offensive in April and May. Officially this was targeted at the bases and supporters of the Ittehad rather than the ONLF or the Ogadenis. The Ittehad, or Islamic fundamentalists, had already been active in the Ogaden in 1992. Fundamentalism is not strong among the Somalis, but will obviously find adherents among all clans. In March 1994, however, it seemed that the Ittehad and the ONLF had made a tactical alliance. As a fighting force they were quickly defeated by the EPRDF, dispersed and driven into the El Kerre area. They may reappear in the future.

Also in April 1994, the second President of Region 5, who also chaired the WSDP, was deposed by a coalition within his own parliament, notwithstanding his protestations that in the absence of ONLF members there had not been a quorum. For a while there was fear of a split along tribal lines between the northern part of Region 5 and the Ogaden. Yet again an Ogadeni was chosen as the third President, who is expected to be able to provide strong leadership and unlike its predecessor

is believed not to support the ONLF. The secessionists have therefore suffered a serious military and political setback.

This political instability obviously causes problems. In particular, it has impeded the establishment of a functioning regional administration, with which aid agencies can cooperate. As in Somaliland and Somalia, the Somalis in Region 5 probably need to go through an inevitable process of rebuilding an acceptable, 'modern', political contract.

As we have seen, the Somalis, who possess all the qualities of nationhood, were denied a unitary state in the competition between the Ethiopian, British, French and Italian empires. The externally imposed boundaries have been a constant source of conflict. 'Bad borders make bad neighbours' as a Somali politician once remarked. It would be over-optimistic to believe that the political problems in the area have been solved with the creation of the Somali Region 5.

But on top of all this, central state structures, whether in Ethiopia, Somalia or Kenya, were forged and forced upon a traditional polity that functioned along very different lines. Every Somali individual by patrilineal descent (i.e. through male ancestry) belongs to a *diya* or 'compensation'-paying group, made up of closely related kinsmen between whom there is collective responsibility and obligation. This collective obligation offers protection and security to each member, but also makes them responsible, and vulnerable to retaliation, if one of them wrongs a Somali belonging to another group.

Territoriality is an important aspect of Somali society. Clans have their traditional territory and, within that, lineages and lineage segments all occupy and refer to a core locality. Towns and small urban centres will house people from different groups, but they are always located on the land of some one group, which will therefore have a prerogative or can make a claim on them. Different groups continuously compete for scarce resources such as water, pasture and arable land, relief goods or the spoils of political office. But in the face of an opponent that is stronger and further removed 'within the family' or who belongs to 'another family', *diya*-paying groups may tactically ally with one another. Ultimately, Somali society

is made up of six clan families, the Hawiye, Digil, Rahaweyn, Issaq, Dir and Darood, but it is the lower level of the clan that is the highest unit of practical political action.

Rather than organizing this competition into institutional and procedural formats, in Somali society it is traditionally a question of the balance of power. Alliances between groups to create or maintain power in the face of a stronger rival are common, but are also context- and issue-bound. Today's ally will be tomorrow's rival and vice versa. Fission and fusion are therefore an inherent characteristic of social and political life in traditional Somali society, and this leads to a highly dynamic and volatile situation. As a political process its advantage is that it tends to counter the centralization of power within the hands of a single group. This is effectively what happened under Siad Barre, who relied on an increasingly smaller number of Darood clans and who turned the state machinery into a tribal game to wage war on other clans. Ultimately, the result has been 'tribal' conflict which has led to the collapse of the Somali state.

Too many outsiders criticize and blame the Somali people for their 'tribalism', however. No one knows the curse of tribalism better than the Somalis themselves, as they have been the victims of it. Yet, at the same time, the traditional 'tribal' support mechanisms and obligations have provided a safety net for hundreds of thousands of them who would otherwise not have survived. Traditional 'tribal' Somali society also has well established mechanisms for negotiation and conflict resolution. To these the Somalis are now turning increasingly, as the only means to end the civil war and rebuild a nation and a state. In south Somalia, tentative efforts have so far been frustrated by new outbreaks of fighting. In Somaliland, real progress was made through the national conference in Boroma from February to May 1993. In the Somali Region 5 in eastern Ethiopia, there are those who contributed to the destruction of Somalia by Siad Barre's politics, but also many who have learned the lessons and are prepared to give up their power and influence to prevent the same thing happening again.

The challenge is for the international community and its relief work not to exacerbate the tensions. Valuable research has recently been carried out on peace-making processes in Somaliland (Yusuf, 1993) and in Somalia (Bradbury, 1994).

In south Somalia, the international community, through UNOSOM II, has tried to be an active player in the process, but instead got itself irreparably entangled in the internal power struggle. In Somaliland, the peace-making process has been very much an indigenous initiative. No agency involved with the Somali Region 5 appears to have analysed in a comprehensive way the current political dynamics in the region, or reflected on how to provide or use aid in the most constructive way. One can only hope that this will not turn out to have been a capital mistake.

The foregoing account would appear to be relevant and necessary. It underlines the deep structural and historical problems in the area that have triggered crises. These problems also shape the way in which the international community can and does respond to them. As we shall see in the following section, relief and rehabilitation programmes have not been simple technical exercises. Inevitably they are entangled with the question of who holds power and control.

3. Cycles of Relief and Rehabilitation in Eastern Ethiopia : 1973-93

The eastern lowlands of Ethiopia are vulnerable both to drought and occasional floods. Droughts occurred in 1973-4, 1984-6 and 1989-91. The vulnerability of the population, however, has been greatly increased by the losses and dislocation suffered as a consequence of conflict, war and attempted government control (Africa Watch, 1991, Dolal, 1992). The main investment in eastern Ethiopia over the past 20 years has been in military hardware which literally litters the place. Yet the political aspects of crises and emergencies, which are well recognized with regard to Eritrea and the northern Highlands, have been downplayed in the context of the east. The Somalis have never received, or been able to attract, the international support and sympathy that the EPLF and the TPLF could muster.

An analysis of relief and rehabilitation work over the past 20 years shows periods of relief focused on populations concentrated in camps, followed by periods of rehabilitation in which resettlement projects are a component of a wider programme of rangeland management and irrigation schemes to strengthen the regional economy and infrastructure. Although restocking of destitute pastoralists is a recurrent idea, these aid programmes have undoubtedly promoted sedentarization and an increasing reliance on cultivation. Food aid has been a key mechanism in both relief and rehabilitation efforts. Apart from the recent Galub oil and gas project near Shilabo,

none of these programmes can be considered as genuinely developmental. Indeed, the continuous need to assist the numerous victims of drought and conflict has meant that little could be aspired to beyond 'recovery'. In certain respects, the situation has only deteriorated. Much physical and social infrastructure had been destroyed in the Ogaden war of 1977-8; not all of it was restored and renewed destruction took place during the chaos and looting of 1991. Governmental institutions have never been strong, but were further weakened in the Ogaden when it became an Autonomous Region in 1989 and again, as we have seen, upon the creation of the Somali Region 5 in 1993. Ambitious rehabilitation and recovery plans were, and continue to be, conceived at central level in Addis Ababa. But the institutional capacity to realize them, or to adopt a participatory approach in accordance with the new disaster management philosophy of the Transitional Government, simply does not exist.

1973-85 : 'Relief shelters' or the politics of drought and repatriation

The 1973-4 drought in Ethiopia is best known for the famine it caused in Wollo, which contributed to the downfall of Haile Selassie and the Imperial regime. But the east also suffered from drought. The then just created Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC), supported by technical experts currently working with the Save the Children Fund (UK), conducted a nutritional and mortality survey of the area which showed death rates significantly higher than normal (RRC, 1974). The RRC's famine relief plan has subsequently been criticized as being a covert attempt to sedentarize and control the pastoral Somalis (Africa Watch, 1991:73). Indeed, by early 1975 more than 80,000 Ogadenis, mostly women and children, had been gathered together in 18 'relief shelters', run under a strict regime and with movements of people in and out of the camps restricted. The criticism may be coloured by subsequent events in eastern Ethiopia and the controversy that arose later around the national villagization and resettlement programmes (Clapham, 1988:176, 192-4). The government had made a first attempt to settle Afar nomads in 1966, and in the 1970s the belief that pastoral nomads had to be settled was widely held by national governments and development specialists alike. Yet the historical review in Section 2 should leave little doubt that greater political control

of these mobile and rebellious populations on the fringe of the empire must have been a major motive behind the strategy.

The political nature of the situation became much more visible after the Ogaden war when the government's repressive counter-insurgency measures eventually forced more than a million Ethiopian Somalis to seek refuge in Somalia. Hamlets and herds were attacked and people forcibly relocated in government-controlled shelters and so called 'protected' villages. In June 1980 the RRC launched an appeal for international assistance for destitute drought victims in these shelters. Yet there had not been a prolonged drought and the rains in the autumn of 1979 were good. After a visit to the area in July, the UNHCR mobilized resources worth several million dollars to support the RRC with relief food and transport. In early 1981 representatives of the International Council of Voluntary Agencies also visited the area as guests of the RRC. Although more critical, they too recommended assistance for the 'settlement' programme (Africa Watch, 1991:91-3). In early 1981 a 'shelter' was established in Babile for drought-affected nomads, and in late 1981 the Bisidimo sedentarization scheme was conceived. The UNHCR's assistance rose from \$ 100,000 in 1979 to \$ 7.3 million in 1981.

The repatriation of Somali refugees to Ethiopia came under serious discussion as early as 1980. Between 1980 and 1983 some 13,000 were able to be formally repatriated from Djibouti, after the signing of a Tripartite Agreement. A similar agreement between the UNHCR, Somalia and Ethiopia had to await the peace agreement between the two countries in 1988. Yet in the early 1980s a relief and resettlement programme was operating in support of what the Ethiopian Government claimed to be a large-scale voluntary repatriation. In March 1981 another UN mission concluded with a request for funds for the villagization of some 300,000 families, mostly returnees. In September 1981 the Ethiopian Government appealed for assistance for almost 500,000 returnees, a figure completely without foundation. Visitors to the so called 'reception shelters' in the east were shown camps full of mostly relocated local people. At the first International Conference for Assistance to Refugees in Africa (ICARA I) in April 1984, the RRC Commissioner claimed that there were over 150,000 returnees and that a restocking programme was under way. The UN approved projects to a value of \$27m, excluding additional food aid,

to support the repatriation of over 260,000 returnees from Djibouti and Somalia over the following three years.

The drought of 1983-5 triggered another food aid and relief operation by the RRC and again provided an excellent rationale to explain the plight of the local people and to solicit international assistance.

1985-93 : Repatriation as opportunity for rehabilitation and development

Interestingly enough, subsequent projects for the recovery of drought victims and the reduction of vulnerability to drought were subsumed in larger-scale, ambitious rehabilitation and resettlement programmes for returnees. It is worthwhile comparing 4 such major proposals :

- a) The 'Recovery/Rehabilitation Programme for Returnees in Hararghe Region', developed by the World University Service of Canada (WUSC) for and with the UNHCR, in the mid 1980s;
- b) The 'Rehabilitation Programme for Returnees of Hararghe Region', issued by the Ethiopian Government in October 1986 ;
- c) The 'Greater Ogaden Special Development Programme', prepared by IFAD/UNHCR in 1989 and
- d) The 'Recovery/Rehabilitation Programme' for Returnees and Needy Host Communities in Region 5 and East Hararghe Zone, issued in September 1993 by the RRC.

The WUSC/UNHCR document is a programme running over 4 years at a total cost of \$ 43.3m. The government's proposal is a 5-year plan costing 271 million Ethiopian birr, then about \$ 134m. The IFAD/UNHCR programme was to be implemented over 10 years at a cost of \$ 59.4m, while the most recent RRC programme is conceived for a 3-year period at a cost of about 146 million Ethiopian birr, currently \$ 26.5m.

With differing emphasis, all the programmes are multi-sectoral. The main focus is on the pastoral sector and irrigated agriculture; the physical infrastructure, communications, health and education are at best secondary objectives. The support for pastoralism encompasses rangeland management, water-source development, veterinary services and sometimes livestock marketing. Irrigated farming, as a means of resettling people, is the objective of shorter-term proposals ; the development of a master plan for regional water management is an aspect of longer-term, more development-oriented programmes. Whereas the programmes originate from the need to resettle and reintegrate returnees, and some projects such as training and the provision of assets focus specifically on this category, their activities will benefit the population at large. The programmes therefore have a wide geographical coverage and are not limited to specific, localized settlements.

They all rely on the concerted action of a large number of players. The WUSC programme sees the WUSC together with the UNHCR and the RRC as the major implementers. Where appropriate, other institutions like the Ministries of Agriculture and Health, the Alemaya Agricultural University (in Harar), the National Water Resources Commission, the Regional Planning Office, etc. will be involved through additional agreements. No less than 12 institutions were to participate in the government's 1986 rehabilitation programme, which makes no mention of international agencies. Only the 1993 RRC proposal outlines a detailed programme management structure (RRC, 1993a:30-31), with government and UN staff cooperating at different levels. Interestingly enough, at a meeting on 25 February 1994, a slightly revised structure was presented in which the Regional Executive Committee no longer appeared. The absence, or weakness, of any regional planning and coordinating capacity is a constant feature in all the proposals.

Another notable omission is policy. All proposals state their objectives in a more or less measurable way, and some, notably the WUSC/UNHCR one, provide extensive detail with work schedules, targets, budgets and job descriptions. But none discusses vital issues such as the government's policy towards pastoralism, livestock trading, the provision of social services such as health and education, levels of authority and decision-making, access and sustainability, etc. Yet the longer-term economic, social and political sustainability of the programmes is

dependent on the policies adopted.

Let us try to illustrate this by looking at three key areas: pastoralism, irrigation schemes and food aid.

The pastoral sector : Recovery or control ?

Eastern Ethiopia is one of the world's great rangelands, with an estimated 11.5 million camels, cattle, sheep and goats. Since the mid-1960s vast amounts of money have been invested in livestock development projects in Africa, much of it provided by the World Bank. In Ethiopia, the Yavello Rangelands Pilot Project, started in 1965 under the First Livestock Development Project, tried to introduce controlled, rotational grazing in the southern region of Borena. In 1973 the Second Livestock Development Project, aimed to integrate more closely the pastoral lowlands with the agricultural highlands through the development of marketing and livestock routes. The Third Livestock Development Project (TLDP) started in 1976 with three regional 'project branches' : SORDU continuing in Borena in the south, NERDU in the Afar area of the north east and JIRDU, the Jijiga Rangelands Development Unit in what is currently the northern part of Region 5, which mainly focused on livestock, ponds and some rural infrastructure. The WUSC/UNHCR proposal of the mid-1980s envisaged cooperation with, and support for JIRDU. JIRDU was absorbed by the Southeast Rangelands Project (SERP) which started in 1990 and covers a much wider area virtually coinciding with the present Somali Region 5. Its mandate also involves the promotion of agricultural production outside the irrigation schemes (Desta, 1992).

After 30 years of big livestock development schemes in Africa the general feeling is that by and large they have not been successful (PVO/NRMS, 1993:4). They shared the implicit assumption that pastoralists degrade their natural resource base and are economically irrational and incapable of participating responsibly and competently in planning exercises. The pastoral way of life is judged to be inferior and undesirable, and pastoralists have to be controlled, ideally settled, to 'integrate' them into national society. In short, pastoral development focused on livestock and rangeland, not on the herders (Ibid).

Ethiopia did not differ from other countries in this respect. The general aim of its pastoral development projects has been to increase livestock productivity and off-take, while preserving or improving the range. Its projects were too exclusively technical, however, and ignored the socio-cultural dimensions of the pastoral societies. Local people did not participate in their design or decisions, and their knowledge was not called upon. Both the WUSC/UNHCR and the 1986 government proposals for returnees intended to 'create' Pastoralist or Grazier Associations and Service Cooperatives, set up after the model of 'peasant associations' in the agricultural areas, which were government constructions that failed to elicit genuine participation or to generate responsibility among the members. Treated as second-class citizens, harassed and sometimes downright persecuted, the Somali pastoralists obviously saw the 'livestock development project' as a hidden means of state control, and viewed it with great suspicion. It is not surprising therefore that the sheep farms around Jijiga, for example, were looted and their facilities destroyed after the fall of the Dergue in 1991. Where valuable work was done, as in the construction of ponds, machinery was used without any attempt at cost recovery, so that the local population did not, and could not, appreciate the costs involved. Maintenance and management of infrastructure were usually neglected, and on the whole these big projects had very high administrative costs (Hogg, 1993).

In the last few years, important changes have taken place in the thinking about pastoralism and its development. Better research has led to greater appreciation of the resilience of plant productivity in arid areas, and to a more positive view about traditional pastoralism. Its strength, its productivity and the quality of its adaptation to fragile environments are better understood. Greater value is placed on the traditional pastoralist and his knowledge. The latest development paradigm, internationally and now also in Ethiopia, therefore emphasizes community participation and the strengthening of local institutions and management capacity.

The Southeast Rangeland Project is currently the only 'development' project in Region 5. It was pre-appraised in 1984-5 and designed in 1987, with modifications in 1989. It is planned to run from July 1990 to June 1996, and was originally

budgeted at \$ 40m for the whole period, some 80% of which comes from an African Development Bank loan and the rest from the government. Its long-term goal is to raise the living standards of the population in the eastern lowlands, by improving food security and livestock productivity, while ensuring the sustainability of the natural resource base (SERP, 1993). The project was conceived under the Dergue regime, with the then common, top-down, government-centred approach. The TGE favoured a more community-based, participatory, bottom-up approach. Consequently the project was redesigned in 1992, in preparation for the review the TGE was carrying out of all national projects. Government approval finally came through in 1993. The latest design has led to organizational changes, such as a serious expansion of the Extension and Institutional Development department, and a new focus on the Marketing and Economics department which was lacking in purpose. A new area of activity is also the stimulation and support of women's groups.

Nevertheless, in a more fundamental way, SERP has so far not been able to define its role and priorities clearly, for two main reasons. In the first place, it has suffered from possibly foreseeable but unplanned for changes in the context of its work, the most important being the influx of vast numbers of refugees and returnees since 1988, which has vastly increased the demands being made on it. These demands come from local people but also from the aid agencies. In 1993, for example, the UNHCR agreed to invest \$ 3.7m in SERP, ostensibly to help it expand its activities more quickly into the remoter areas, but also in the expectation of its support for the reintegration of returnees through the provision of a variety of services. Simultaneously, the Save the Children Fund (UK) chose SERP as its main partner in starting up a region-wide recovery-support programme with several project components in the agro-pastoral sector. This situation, which affects field staff and management procedures, has led to serious internal discussions about SERP's priorities.

The second reason originates from the original design of the project. SERP is a highly operational project. It carries out its own logistics, such as purchasing and transport, construction of offices and facilities, fuel supplies and vehicle maintenance. It is also a service-deliverer. It operates heavy machinery for road

construction, provides seeds, tree seedlings and veterinary services, constructs livestock markets, and operates food-for-work schemes. Finally, it is also involved in research, which includes work on a base-line survey of the types and conditions of rangeland in the region, the uses of plants and vegetation by the pastoralists and the epidemiology of livestock diseases. This again has led to conflict over priorities and a debate about whether SERP should privatize its logistics and focus on research and technical advice, reducing its role as a service-deliverer.

To illustrate the issue, let us look at the provision of veterinary services and the problem of livestock marketing. Until 1993 the Ethiopian Government tried to manage the whole of the livestock sector, from vaccinations and veterinary clinics through abattoirs to the export of livestock, skins and hides. The total annual requirement of veterinary drugs for the whole country amounts to well over \$ 50m, of which \$ 4.3m would be needed to deal with the projected disease patterns in the eastern lowlands. The government, however, has neither the budget nor the hard currency to provide for even 20% of the national need. Veterinary services had already declined before the fall of the Dergue regime. The livestock sector in eastern Ethiopia came under additional stress from the drought in 1989-91. At the same time, exports to Saudi Arabia and Yemen declined in the absence of vaccination certificates and because of the conflict in Somaliland and over its main port of Berbera. In 1992, therefore, SCF(UK) and Oxfam donated veterinary drugs to SERP worth over \$ 200,000, and further donations from the UNHCR, and again from SCF, are in the pipeline. It is obvious, however, that SERP, and by extension the MoA and the Ethiopian Government, simply do not have the financial and operational means to run an effective veterinary service in so vast an area. There is clearly a need for private sector enterprise; indeed, international companies have started up branches in Ethiopia, through which veterinary drugs can now be imported. On the service delivery side, there is a need for a serious policy review about what should and should not remain the responsibility of the government. Fodder reserves and dip tanks, for example, could be managed by the local populations, while traders, auxiliary animal health staff and veterinary doctors could provide veterinary drugs and curative services on a commercial basis.

Livestock marketing is another key area of considerable sensitivity. Under the

Dergue regime, livestock were only allowed to be marketed through the Livestock Marketing Board (LMB). The idea was for the government to manage the off-take of livestock in order to decrease the pressure on the rangelands, caused by the irrational behaviour of the pastoralists. Secondly, livestock were to be directed towards agricultural areas in the Highlands where there might be a shortage of oxen. Thirdly, the government intended through the LMB to control the export of livestock, skins and hides, as a major source of revenue. Water and fodder areas were to be developed along those livestock routes that served the government's purposes. Livestock development projects such as JIRDU, and subsequently SERP, had a livestock marketing component included to provide market intelligence but also to develop market infrastructure in the region.

The Somali pastoralists in eastern Ethiopia, through their seasonal movements in search of water and pasture, but also economically in terms of imports and exports, are far more integrated with Somaliland than with the rest of Ethiopia. Livestock are not bred primarily as a market commodity. In this harsh environment, they constitute the wealth and security of the holder. They will be sold or bartered to avoid losses from drought and disease, or when there is need of cash or other commodities. The two major sales periods therefore are in the *jilaal* dry season and at the time of the *hadj*, the annual pilgrimage to Mecca, when increased demand leads to high prices. JIRDU and SERP have been involved in the physical construction of livestock markets. Since these were previously controlled by the government, and currently by the local authorities, the pastoralists are obviously not interested in selling through them at a fixed price and with a sales tax levied. Agents operating for international livestock traders operate in the area and buy 'in the bush'. The animals are then driven in small groups to the Somaliland border where they are taken over by other agents. The livestock owners are certainly interested in market information, but they want to know prices in Somaliland and at Berbera. They are interested in stock routes that lead northeast rather than to the Ethiopian Highlands.

This trade remains consistently labelled as 'smuggling' by the Dergue and also by the current government, who see it as a major loss of revenue. At times the EPRDF troops in the region have set up checkpoints to control imports (cigarettes, electronic

goods, food, clothes, etc.) and exports (livestock, chat, fuel, etc.) on which tax should be levied. There is therefore an inherent dilemma in the government's position vis-à-vis the pastoralists and livestock owners. On the one hand, projects are set up to promote a sustainable livelihood, on the other hand this livelihood is dependent on economic links with Somaliland and Somalia, not with Ethiopia. Although an increase in regional trade is vital for overall food security in the area, the government would like to control the trade and direct it more towards integration with the Highlands. The RRC rehabilitation programme (1993a) recognizes the dilemma, but has no more to say on it than that there is a need to create an 'attractive in-country marketing system'. Within SERP, it has become unclear what the Marketing and Economics Department ought to be doing.

The issue is likely to lead to dispute between the central and the Region 5 governments, as Proclamation No. 33/1992 on the sharing of revenue (Negarit Gazeta, 1992), retains income from trade taxes for the central government. As a region with an active trade, the regional government is deprived of an important and much needed source of local income.

Irrigation schemes : Ownership, management and economic viability

The 1983-5 drought triggered the development of irrigation schemes as a means of resettling returnees and also of reducing vulnerability to drought. None of these schemes runs smoothly, however, because their design has been too exclusively technical. Social and economic considerations could be ignored by the Dergue regime with its centrally planned economy and its 'social engineering', but they crop up now in earnest. All the schemes suffer from managerial problems, while the cost of inputs, the choice of crops and the distance from markets jeopardize their economic viability. Finally, they are sited in areas with different and potentially antagonistic groups, and can easily become the subject of conflict and violence. Let us look at the most important schemes :

- a) Berak : West of Shinile, close to Dire Dawa city, the Berak irrigation scheme was established in 1985 by the RRC and UNHCR for refugees repatriated

from Djibouti. Some 830 former pastoralists and agro-pastoralists were resettled here at the foot of the escarpment of the Hararghe highlands where springs provided the permanent water supply. Of the 817 hectares made available, 150 were being irrigated. In accordance with its normal practice, after three years the RRC withdrew its technical, material and administrative assistance. The settlers, however, who had been organized into a Producers' Cooperative (collective farming), had not been sufficiently trained in the organization and management of the scheme. The Greater Ogaden Development Programme (IFAD/UNHCR 1989a, Working Paper no. 3) therefore proposed a resumption of assistance to the first settlers, while recommending a feasibility study for a Berak II irrigation scheme for another 1300 settlers.

- b) Gode : Originally started by the RRC in 1985 to relocate some 4000 farming families from the Highlands, the irrigation project at Gode was handed over to the Ministry of State Farm Development in July 1989. Many settlers then left as they found it difficult to adapt socially, while the remainder became employees of the state farm, which produced mainly cotton, sugar and oil seed (sesame). The cotton had to be transported to the Highlands for further processing. In December 1991, under extreme pressure from drought, pastoralists drove their herds on to the state farm land where they ate the crop and put an end to cotton production. Since then maize has been grown. The aid community saw this as a positive move since it increases food production. But maize farming is not cost-effective; its sale price, depressed in recent years by the free food distributions in the area, does not cover the costs of irrigation and pesticides. In late 1993, in agreement with the new government of Region 5, 800 hectares of the current 1,150 under irrigation were handed over to individual Somali families in lots of 1 hectare per family. The RRC and UNDP plan to invest 16 million Birr (\$ 2.9m) to bring another 1885 hectares under cultivation (RRC, 1993b:42-4). Eventually, the whole state farm management should be handed over to smallholders organized in Producer Cooperatives. The original settlers, mostly from Wollo in the Highlands, were armed by the Dergue regime to defend themselves against the local population, and still feel under threat.

- c) Kalaffo : Kalaffo town, some 40 km south of Gode, has a sizeable population of Rer Barre, a tribe the Somalis do not recognize as one of their own. Many were settled in the area following the drought of 1974.

In the 1980s, the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) supported the resettlement of 1,350 families in 28 of the 52 Rer Barre villages, organized into 9 farmers' cooperatives. It introduced 16 diesel pumps and provided fuel and spare parts free of charge. The returnee resettlement proposal of the Ethiopian Government (1986) included the rehabilitation of 21 villages in the area and an extension of the irrigated surface from 1659 to 11,750 hectares. Everything, from pumping stations, grain mills and oil extractors to fertilizers and pesticides, would have to be provided by the aid institutions. The Greater Ogaden Development Programme (IFAD/UNHCR, 1989b) recommended a feasibility study for this expansion which would increase the number of beneficiaries from 9,100 to 32,500. It saw little possibility of gravity irrigation but believed the pump irrigation could be rendered more cost/effective. It also proposed more use of oxen rather than tractors. However, when WUSC and the LWF withdrew in 1989, the scheme quickly began to collapse.

Located more than 700 difficult and at times insecure km. from Dire Dawa, Gode and Kalaffo irrigation schemes have a highly vulnerable supply line for fuel and spare parts. Moreover, as at Berak, insufficient attention had been paid to training the farmers in the economic management of the projects. By November 1991 only 3 pumps were still working, more on a private than on a cooperative basis. Fighting then broke out between the Bagerre Ogadeni pastoralists and the Rer Barre. All 52 Rer Barre villages, 28 along the river and 24 further away on the Wabi Shebelle flood plain, were burned and completely looted. The Rer Barre fled to a returnee camp on the outskirts of Kalaffo town, where the Irish NGO Concern was operating a health and nutrition programme. In March 1992 Concern, on the basis of a feasibility study, formulated a resettlement proposal. Over a period of 2 years approximately 30,000 camp dwellers were to return to their village of origin. The looted pumps and pipes of the 9 cooperatives were to be replaced, while the management and the financial viability of the scheme was to be strengthened through training, revolving funds and the establishment of

Cooperative Irrigation Committees. The RRC and the MoA were to be key players in the programme (Concern, 1992). Unfortunately some time later Concern withdrew almost completely when some of its staff were killed and wounded in a security incident.

Thereafter, the RRC and UNDP were the only agencies left in Kalaffo. The aim of their project, which started in July 1993 and of which UNDP funded 55% of the estimated 4.4 million Birr cost (\$ 0.8m), is to restore 780 hectares of pump-irrigated land allocated in lots of 1 hectare per family. Water-user associations and farmers' cooperatives still need to be established or revived, while it is hoped that an 'integrated community development' approach will establish economically viable production (RRC, 1993b:45-8). The UNDP has a competent presence in the person of a courageous 'cooperative management' consultant. His brief is to organize the privatization of the South Gode State Farm and the rehabilitation of the irrigation schemes in the Kalaffo area, but neither the RRC nor the UNDP in Addis Ababa has been very supportive or shown much active interest.

Meanwhile, on the Kalaffo State Farm displaced individuals have been growing maize and sesame. Sesame, although fetching high retail prices, is difficult to sell in significant quantities locally. Markets such as Dire Dawa or the Arab countries are not easily accessible. Maize, on the other hand, has a local market but does not fetch high prices. The farmers were therefore facing problems repaying the State Farm for seeds and water and contributing to a revolving fund for fuel, which left them with hardly any money to move their homes from the town back to the villages.

- d) Jijiga : A fourth major irrigation scheme with three dams, has been under construction for the past decade in the Jijiga. The mission to draw up the programme took place in 1984 when the area was in the grip of drought. Although the focus of the project was on irrigation, the original idea paid considerable attention to health and ecological management, with plans for soil conservation and reforestation, the provision of agricultural inputs, access and feeder roads, improved storage, health facilities and sanitation. In

December 1985 the project document was signed. With significant Italian funding, the Ethiopia-Italian Programme of Rehabilitation and Development (EIRPD) was launched, with UNDP acting as coordinator. The decline of the Dergue regime in late 1990 and the subsequent insecurity interrupted project work. By then some \$ 26m had already been spent on dams that collect some water, which is so far used only for washing and the watering of livestock.

In 1992 the TGE proposed that the irrigation works should be completed and agricultural extension activities started. By then doubts had arisen about the effects of damming the flows of seasonal rivers on the water availability further downstream in the Jehrer valley. The need for more community involvement also became imperative. In early 1993 therefore the UNDP sponsored a base-line survey to assess local needs in order to gain insight into the socio-economic status of the affected populations and their conflicting land-use requirements, and to make a technical examination of the possible downstream effects of the dams.

This last turned out to be positive (UNDP/FAO, 1993:97-101). The difficulties lie in the technical, economic and organizational changes required by the shift from rainfed to irrigated farming. Currently the people in the area cultivate primarily maize and sorghum, some wheat and barley and pulses; they sell animals, hides, milk and butter on the Jijiga market, and chat, which is grown as a cash crop.

An irrigation scheme, to be profitable, would require the introduction of different crops, farming techniques and work disciplines. Grazing land, particularly dry season grazing, would be affected. If irrigation farming were to be introduced, 'water user' committees would have to be set up, as well as committees to manage credits, inputs, marketing and transport, all of which would require high levels of training and extension assistance. The major responsibility therefore falls on the MoA, notably the staff at zonal and district level. The problem is that, as the report itself recognizes, the MoA staff in Jijiga are in a 'lethargic state' (UNDP/FAO, 1993:139). They need training, themselves are not supported by the central MoA and do not

cooperate even with other MoA staff such as those of SERP. Moreover, the local populations in the project area associate the MoA staff with the previous regime. They are suspicious and expect the government to trick them out of their land, so that it can be given to 'Highlanders' (Yusuf, 1993a:73).

Another key problem is that of land reallocation. Under the previous regime, land in the irrigable areas of Biyo and Chinaksen was allocated in lots of half a hectare per farmer. Traditionally however, land in this region is 'owned' tribally, by geographically localized subgroups within each clan. In Chinaksen the dam and reservoir are on the site of a former military camp, which will cause few problems. In Biyo, however, they are on the territory of the Wallabi Jarso subgroup. The smallholders displaced by the reservoir were given land in the irrigable area, which belongs to the Warra Dhango subgroup of Jarso. The latter expelled the relocated Wallabi Jarso when the Dergue regime collapsed. In return, the Wallabi Jarso now threaten to withhold the water. In Elbaye, the site of the third dam, the dominant Yeberre and Bartirre want to maintain their clan rights over the project area, whereas minority groups such as the Issaq Abdella Musa, Howle and Jarso see the project as an opportunity to assert their individual rights (Yusuf, 1993a).

Given the money already spent, not surprisingly the consultancy report recommends the completion of the dams, the start of training and the provision of agricultural inputs, once the issue of land allocation is settled. This does not seem practical, however, unless the local MoA is strongly reinforced and until the barrier of suspicion between the local populations and the government is at least reduced.

The IFAD/UNHCR mission of July 1989 concerned itself with the development of what it called the 'Greater Ogaden' and tried to identify 'investment projects to support the longer-term economic and social rehabilitation of Ethiopian returnees from Somalia'. The report pays a lot of attention to the unexploited potential for irrigation. Whereas in 1989 some 31,500 hectares along the Wabi Shebelle between

Imi and the Somali border were irrigated or had a scheme under construction, the potential is for 300,000 hectares of first-class soil. Such projects require a much larger watershed management approach, for which some groundwork has been done. Indeed, the Wabi Shebelle basin in the Ogaden had been the object of study by the Franco-Ethiopian Cooperative Programme. And in July 1987 the Valleys Development Studies Authority had been created, which divided Ethiopia into 14 major catchment areas, for each of which a Master Plan was to be developed. The Canadian government at the time had shown interest in a proposal for an integrated study of the Fafen river valley, a tributary of the Wabi Shebelle. The subsequent insecurity, change of government and regionalization have put all these ideas and proposals on hold.

Food aid : Targeting, free food and economic uses of food aid

For most of the 1980s, wheat grain flowed into eastern Ethiopia from the refugee camps in Somalia. When in 1988 and 1991 huge numbers of Somali refugees and returnees came to Ethiopia, this process was reversed. Food aid has played an important role in the overall food security of a regional economy that encompasses Somalia, Somaliland and eastern Ethiopia. The estimate is that in 1991 and 1992 a total of almost 200,000 metric tonnes of food, mostly wheat, went into the area.

In the northern part of Region 5, food aid was mostly targeted on the refugee/returnee camps around Jijiga and east of Aware. Pastoralists seasonally or permanently under pressure also moved into these camps. In the Ogaden, free food was initially targeted on returnees and locally displaced people around Gode, Kalaffo and Mustahil in the Wabi Shebelle area only. Some 13.000 MT was airlifted in during the latter half of 1991. A new airlift mainly of Corn-Soy-Blend (CSB) started in February 1992, and some distribution was organized outside the main centres, although still along the river axis. Larger amounts had to be flown in July 1992 in response to high malnutrition and mortality rates. Not until January 1993 did security allow GTZ/TOR to extend its trucking operation to Gode, which meant that several thousand MT per month would be brought in until the end of the

year.

An informal assessment mission to the Ogaden in November 1992 (RRC-UNEPPG, 1992) came to the conclusion that, after the better rains, the time was ripe to start resettlement and rehabilitative work. The UNHCR had handed over its operations in the Ogaden to the RRC after the murder of its representative in March 1992. The RRC was therefore able to dispose of food provided by the World Food Programme, but continued its distribution of free food in different localities of the Ogaden to anyone who happened to line up.

One rehabilitation mechanism being seriously considered in the autumn of 1992 was market intervention, the purpose being to sell food aid locally at below the going market price, in order to depress the latter. Lower prices make grain more accessible and improve the terms of trade for those who have to sell livestock or other assets to buy grain. The idea was being developed by SCF(UK) (Chadwick, 1992 ; Van Brabant, 1993a), following a recommendation of SCF's helicopter survey of the Ogaden in 1991, which had found unfavourable terms of trade for the pastoralists (Holt and Lawrence, 1991). It was picked up by the informal assessment teams, which proposed a trial in the Warder area (RRC-UNEPPG, 1992:15,7). For such an economic intervention, up-to-date knowledge about the local food economy is required, with information about main markets and trade routes, seasonal variations, traders and their hold over the market, warehousing, pricing parameters, terms, trends and volumes of trade, money supply and cash availability, etc. A good monitoring system is also needed to decide when to intervene and to assess whether the intervention has had any impact, and when to stop it. Understandably SCF-Ethiopia was hesitant, as it was felt that the team had no experience and lacked the capacity to handle such a complex operation. Potential food aid donors were also wary; they thought a straightforward rehabilitation programme should first be drawn up, so that it would be clear how the proceeds from the sale of food aid would be used.

In the end, it was the World Food Programme that commissioned a research report on the subject. At the time of the helicopter survey of the Ogaden, in the summer of 1991, little food was going into the Ogaden and the unfavourable terms of trade

for the pastoralists were seen as likely to oblige them to eat into their reproductive capital, i.e. the minimal herd size needed to continue their pastoral lifestyle over time. The WFP research in the spring of 1993 concluded that there was no longer any need or justification for generalized or large-scale market intervention programme, as the overall food situation had improved, because of the abundant rains and regenerated pasture in 1992 and increased livestock exports to Somaliland and Somalia as security improved (Hogg and Galle, 1993). An underestimated factor would appear to have been the influx of large amounts of relief food into south Somalia after Operation Restore Hope in December 1992, which, traded through Belet Weyne into the Ogaden, constituted an unplanned market intervention.

Interestingly enough, the rationale for considering market intervention was always to improve the terms of trade in favour of the pastoralists. Yet an estimated 40-50% of the population in the Ogaden, and probably more in the northern part of the region, have now become agro-pastoralists (Holt and Lawrence, 1991). Reducing the market prices would have disadvantaged the local producers of maize and sorghum, and would also have had a negative effect on the camp-dwellers who sell some of their ration to obtain other commodities. Indeed, the combination of good local production and continuing food aid was to lead to very low grain prices in late 1993, cutting into the profits of local producers and putting a strain on the poorer families in the camps.

After the first influx of refugees in 1988, the relief operation targeted its food aid on the card holding camp-dwellers. In late 1991 and particularly in 1992 the free food distribution increased in scale and became less targeted, as the whole population in the region was understood to be suffering. This shift was justified, and fulfilled its aims of sustaining a large number of refugees and returnees in the camps and of supporting a pastoral economy under stress.

With improved conditions in 1993, the recommendation was made to shift policy again to avoid the negative side-effects of a continued large-scale free food distribution (Hogg and Galle, 1993:ii). Market intervention was not recommended, but alternative creative uses of food aid adopted were food-for-work, local purchase and seed and tool distribution.

Localized, short-term and small-scale rehabilitation efforts supported by food-for-work increased in number under the 'cross-mandate policy' in late 1992. UNHCR/RRC, the Red Cross and Oxfam operated such schemes in the northern part of Region 5, mostly around Babile, Jijiga and Dergahbur, while SERP/SCF(UK) a year later started up food-for-work projects all over Region 5. These FFW schemes differed from the classic types of such operations and did not follow national policy as spelled out in the government's *Directives for Disaster Prevention and Management* (TGE, 1993b and c). They did not establish daily wages or try to calculate and monitor the number of manhours required to carry out a job. Standard reference rates for a particular type of job eg. digging a shallow well or desalting a pond, were adopted, but could be negotiated in the light of particular difficulties for the specific project. A time frame was agreed upon. How many people carried out the job, how they were selected and by whom, and how the food was to be distributed were left to the leaders of a community or interest group. In this sense, aid agencies gave up total 'control', a significant change compared with the practice in the past.

Logistical and manpower constraints made managing all these issues impossible. Over a period of 7 months, for example, SERP/SCF used about 4,700 MT of wheat to support some 300 FFW projects all over the Ogaden. SERP extension staff would on average pay 8 visits to each project : one for a technical assessment of the proposed activity, one to come to a signed agreement with the group concerned, two to monitor the completion of phases 1 and 2, and one when the project was completed; for a project with three phases, they would also accompany the truck each time it delivered a proportion of the food according to the project's progress. This in itself amounted to 2,400 trips for which staff, fuel and vehicles had to be made available. And while doing so, the extension staff obviously could not carry out their other tasks.

Although the theory of the 'cross-mandate' and the national disasters management policies states that employment-based relief and rehabilitation schemes ought to target the 'needy', in practice this was quite unrealistic. There was no workable mechanism for targeting the poorer zones or hamlets, let alone the needy families within an area. The aim of these projects was simply to encourage people who took

up work for their own benefit, and to get a job done that had been proposed and given priority by a local group. In the absence of evaluation so far, one can only hope that the kinship ties and the strong tradition of mutual support among Somalis have benefited the poor. As to the nature of the projects, more than 60% of all SERP/SCF supported ones concerned water sources and water management, and another 20% economic infrastructure, mainly rural roads (Van Brabant, 1993b).

Food-for-work schemes using wheat were not the best option in 1993. There was then sufficient food available, and the overall economy would have benefited much more from cash-for-work. But cash is more difficult to obtain, particularly for such a variety of small-scale localized projects, which are hard to plan for as the initiative lies with the local people. If it had to be FFW, then wheat is too competitive with locally produced maize and sorghum, so SERP/SCF approached donors for another, high-value commodity. Vegetable oil, packaged in re-usable gallon-sized cans or containers, was considered an excellent option.

Another approach that aid agencies gradually came to adopt, was local purchase. Local purchase and its distribution as relief rations is practised on a larger scale in the northern Highlands. In eastern Ethiopia, it was spearheaded by the WFP. In the autumn of 1993 WFP bought several hundred tonnes of maize in the Kalaffo area, which was stored in the RRC warehouse in the town. Unfortunately, the local administration subsequently sold it to cover recurrent costs. In early 1994, the WFP and UNEPPG were inquiring into the possibility of purchasing maize from the Gode State Farm, as rations for 12,000 people from Dolo to be resettled in the El Kere area. SERP/SCF also obtained funding in 1994 for the local purchase of sorghum in the Kebri Dehar-Danaan area. For a variety of reasons the purchase was delayed until well after the harvest and into the dry season when prices had gone up; it was therefore decided to buy a smaller quantity and distribute it as seed.

Seed and tool distributions have been another important way of stimulating agricultural recovery in the region. After good rainfall and heavy floods along the Wabi Shebelle in the spring of 1993, a major seed and tool distribution scheme was quickly organized. As the floods had made part of the area inaccessible by road,

RRC/SERP/UNEPPG used helicopters and a light aircraft to distribute in the Ogaden. The operation got under way very fast, with local purchase of maize seed in Gode and Kalaffo between late May and early June, and distribution completed by mid-June (UNEPPG, 1993). Unfortunately there has been little follow-up or evaluation. At the same time the UNHCR/RRC were distributing seed and tools in the northern part of Region 5.

The SERP/SCF seed distribution in the spring of 1994 in the Ogaden has been reviewed. The programme was found to have suffered from serious flaws, even taking into account that conditions at the time were very difficult. Though the issue had been raised repeatedly, SERP had not worked out a clear distribution policy regarding which areas would receive seed, who would receive it and how much, and whether the seed would be distributed free or at a price ? At the time the SERP operations in the Ogaden were seriously hampered by fighting between the ONLF and Ittehad and the EPRDF ; several of their cars and radios had been confiscated and communications between the SERP headquarters in Jijiga and the Gode branch office were difficult. Under pressure because the rains had started, the Gode staff decided to distribute the seed as they had done the year before. It was handed out free, predominantly in flood recession and pump irrigation areas rather than rainfed areas. It was even distributed in the same areas where it had been bought. In many ways this operation distorted the market and sent the wrong signals. It illustrates how distorted the relationship between the MoA and the local farmers had become.

Having been drawn into relief and rehabilitation work by the aid institutions, SERP/MoA had now adopted an untargeted free hand-out philosophy. At the same time, the local populations came to expect these hand-outs in equal shares to all farming areas, irrespective of any agricultural or economic logic.

While the overall trend during the period 1988-94 has been away from free relief food towards more productive and rehabilitative uses of food aid, the aid agencies can hardly claim (as e.g. RRC, 1993b:3) that in the process food aid has become more targeted or is specifically reaching the needy. In their attempt to counter a presumed 'dependency syndrome', the agencies have also tended to overlook the genuine survival requirements of free food aid of particularly poor families in the camps. Indeed, with the adoption of the cross-mandate policy in the summer of

1992, food is being diverted from the camps to the surrounding countryside in support of recovery. In 1993 and again in 1994, the UNHCR calculated its need for relief food on the basis of reduced numbers of beneficiaries. Since nobody has yet discovered an effective mechanism for getting ration cards returned or for rescreening camp-dwellers, this has meant that the ever smaller and more infrequent amounts of food aid are not distributed more equitably, thus causing disproportionate stress for the poorest families.

That poverty is a fact of life among camp-dwellers and that they do not all automatically benefit from a general agro-pastoral recovery in the region, is demonstrated by the quick onset of emergencies. After the floods and heavy rains in the spring of 1993 interrupted the food supply line, the malnutrition and mortality rates in Gode 1 and Gode 2 camps in particular soared to emergency levels. Although disease in the wake of the rains and floods has been an important contributory factor, it also illustrates the importance of continued, and targeted, rations. Similarly, in the Aware and Jijiga camps, malnutrition rates crept up again above the seasonal variations in late 1993 and early 1994, to the extent that blanket distribution for all children under the age of three in Kebri Bayeh camp again had to be envisaged.

As regards the uses of food aid over the past five years, coordination was reasonably good for relief food, but has not been particularly good for its use in support of recovery; WFP and SERP/SCF did not jointly discuss their local purchase operations with regard to timing, procedures and prices. Nor have the seed distribution programmes become part of a joint policy so far. Where a national policy existed, as with the food-for-work schemes, its implementation procedures were found to be unrealistic.

Community participation and institutional strengthening

Throughout 1993, in a series of documents (TGE, 1993 a,b,c,d) the TGE articulated its new National Policy on Disaster Prevention and Management. Its overall aim is to address the root causes of the country's vulnerability. This implies that all relief

should become employment-based, as far as possible and should carry out works that preserve or build up the assets of the community. Disaster management is to be decentralized and to become a responsibility of the regions, zones and districts. Whereas relief and rehabilitation was previously very much the prerogative of the RRC, line ministries, particularly through their local bureaux and offices, will now have a more prominent role. At all stages, however, from the formulation of disaster preparedness plans to evaluation of projects, local communities will be actively involved. As one document states succinctly : `Participation is the new development paradigm' (TGE, 1993d Annex 4:68). The new philosophy is not lost on the consultants surveying the EIRPD irrigation scheme in Jijiga whose words would fit perfectly in any standard textbook :

The most important component of sustainable development is the rational exploitation of traditional knowledge and combining it with elements of modern agricultural and other sciences so as to increase production, while striving to achieve stability, resource conservation and equity. Such combinations impose the formulation of new development strategies in farming systems that rely significantly on local knowledge, perception and needs, and incorporate new elements that should be socio-culturally acceptable. Sustainability as a concept is based on local participation and on commitment of skills and resources of the community over an extended period of time. Thus, the two concepts, sustainability and community participation, are closely interlinked (UNDP/FAO, 1993:123).

The problem with interventions in the pastoral sector and with the irrigation schemes in Region 5 is that consultation of the intended `beneficiaries' never took place when they were conceived. The situation can not easily be changed to a more `participatory' *modus operandi*.

In a number of places in Africa, it has been NGOs that have spearheaded a more participatory approach to working with pastoralists. Through their grassroots contacts NGOs are believed to have a better understanding of local society and to be more able to work closely with local populations. Yet there remain fundamental

problems with a strongly participatory and community-led approach. Focusing more on processes than on products, such approaches may lack baseline data, clearly defined objectives and effective monitoring and evaluation systems. More importantly, what 'participation', 'institution-strengthening' and 'community' really mean and stand for, in practice, is seldom concretely defined and examined. Sustainable development must involve participation of the populations concerned, but it also needs to include government. Unless there is sufficient effective communication and mutual understanding between local populations and the government which is providing the finance, no effort is likely in the end to be successful or sustainable.

Even more than the Ethiopians in the Highlands, the Somali population in the eastern lowlands have learned to mistrust a government whose intentions were too often to control them and whose projects and services implied harsh social engineering. The degree to which the regionalization process will establish a different relationship between government and the people, remains to be seen.

So far, administrative decentralization has taken place, but the degree of political decentralization and devolution of power is still ambiguous. The newly elected Somali leaders in the Region complain about a lack of resources and of support from the central government. The ONLF stirred up the population with the claim that the TGE was a new colonizing group of 'Highlanders' who would continue the policy of neglecting their area. The internal conflicts and the incapacity of the elected Somalis so far to establish a functioning regional government and administration can simultaneously undermine the credibility of the regionalization and decentralization process. Alternatively, politicking, nepotism and patronage can lead to a complicity between so called 'community representatives' and local government officials, which leads anywhere but to development. As pointed out by Professor Pickard in a consultancy report for UNDP : 'governance is what regionalism is about' (Pickard, 1993:40). And governance, the tolerant and pluralistic meeting of interest groups and local communities with government, has been in short supply in this part of the world.

Finally, one should not overlook the fact that a participatory approach cannot always by itself generate development. There are genuine demographic, ecological and

economic pressures that can seldomly be solved at local level. Their longer-term balance, if not solution, usually depends on regional, national or even international factors (Hogg in PVO/NRMS, 1993).

4. Rehabilitation as Relief for all the Needy : The Cross-mandate Policy and Practice

Refugee and returnee camps 1988-92

Already in late 1987 some Issaq families related to SNM fighters had taken refuge around Harshin in Ethiopia, some 140 km south-east of Jijiga. In August 1988,

following SNM taking control of Burao and Hargheisha, Siad Barre's forces launched all out attacks on the Issaq clan and those two towns. Some 15,000 people were killed and tens of thousands streamed over the border to Ethiopia. All of them settled on Issaq clan territory in eastern Ethiopia, in the camps of Daroor, Rabasso and Kam Abokor to the east of Aware and around Hartisheik village, some 90 km south-east of Jijiga. For logistical reasons the Harshin camp was moved in 1989 by the UNHCR and the Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA) to become Hartisheik B.

Hartisheik rapidly became one of the biggest refugee camps in the world. Located on an open plain with little water resources and no agriculture, it required an expensive relief operation with food coming through the port of Djibouti and water being tankered from Jijiga and later from the Kebri Bayeh area.

Despite arriving in relatively good nutritional condition, the response by UNHCR and the Ethiopian authorities was poor with food distributions providing significantly less than the minimum calorie requirements for much of the first year. The level of acute protein energy malnutrition (PEM) rose to 23% and death rates during the first year were about double the normal rate for non-refugee populations in Ethiopia and Somalia (Toole, 1991). More recently, the ARRA has been managing the camps, the general distribution of rations and the health services, CARE tankers water and GTZ/TOR transports the food. Oxfam set up and maintains water storage and distribution systems in the camp, while SCF(UK) runs the supplementary feeding and the community health care programme. The UNHCR funds the ARRA, CARE and GTZ, participates in the registration and screening of refugees, and coordinates the whole operation.

A second wave of refugees and returnees arrived in late 1990 and early 1991, as Siad Barre's forces were being defeated in Mogadishu. Many ended up in camps around Dolo in the south and around Kalaffo and Gode in the Ogaden. Large numbers were also taken in by relatives in the countryside, without any outside assistance. Siad Barre's defeat allowed the SNM to establish control over northwest Somalia, which was soon to be declared the Republic of Somaliland. The better-off

refugees, mostly urban Issaq were voluntarily repatriated from Hartisheik to Hargeisha in the summer and autumn of 1991. On the other hand, the SNM sent back the Ethiopian Somali refugees in northwest Somalia, mostly of the Darood clan, who had been enlisted by Siad Barre in his struggle against the SNM and the Issaq clan. The Gadabursi also fled, particularly after an SNM move against Dilla and Boroma. Thus three new camps were set up Derwonaji and Teferi ber on Gadabursi clan land and Kebri Bayeh on the land of the Abasqul Darood. The same aid agencies replicated their operations in these new camps.

In addition, drought-affected pastoralists would seasonally or permanently move their women and children into the camps along the Wabi Shebelle and east of Aware, and to a lesser degree Hartisheik and Kebri Bayeh. And fighting displaced Rer Barre villagers to Kalaffo and Jarso and Giri agriculturalists to Jijiga and to the camps on Gadabursi clan land. Figures differ but it is estimated that by late 1991 some 650,000 ration cards, a number of them forged, were in circulation while there may have been as many as 500,000 registered refugees and returnees.

The camps and the movements of camp-dwellers were tightly controlled by the Ethiopian Government and army until their collapse in the spring of 1991. Then followed a period of acute insecurity, with tribal militias threatening the aid workers and occasionally clashing with each other, so that relief vehicles started driving in convoy and with armed EPRDF escorts.

By early 1992 the emergency phase was over and it seemed as if both camp-dwellers and aid agencies had settled into a 'care and maintenance routine', namely when the question of the resettlement of the returnees and locally displaced people was raised, as well as the need to support the host communities who had already taken on a 'hidden relief operation' and would now be expected to support more dispersing camp-dwellers. This policy development became known as the 'cross-mandate' approach.

The cross-mandate policy : The theory

There were three main reasons for advocacy of the cross-mandate policy by UNHCR's Regional Office in Addis Ababa :

- i) The fact that the camp populations received preferential treatment compared with the equally distressed host community, thus turning the camps into poles of attraction ;
- ii) The impossibility of extending the promise made in 1989 to a much smaller number of Ethiopian Somali refugees in Somalia who had chosen to return, that the UNHCR would provide a year's food assistance, a travel grant and an individual rehabilitation grant, to the much larger number that had now fled to Ethiopia ;
- iii) The UNHCR's fear of another decade of assistance to Somali camp-dwellers, after what had been a frustrating experience with the camps in Somalia in the 1980s, which it was felt had only worsened dependency (UNHCR, 1992a, b; Refugee Policy Group, 1992:35-36).

The UNHCR's mandate includes assistance with repatriation and is increasingly being extended to locally displaced people. The agency considered that, after some 12 months of continued assistance to the returnees in the camps, it would, after paying an additional travel grant, have fulfilled its obligations and that the funds available for the rehabilitation grant could be better spent on collective and regional recovery rather than as individual packages. Moreover, it felt that it had no real responsibility for these returnees and that, as Ethiopian citizens, they had to become the concern of the Ethiopian Government.

Ultimately, the objective should be to close all camps in Eastern Hararghe. They are a gross anomaly and form poles of attraction which draw in large numbers of people and divert scarce resources which could otherwise be used to develop the whole region. There has never been a problem of protection for refugees coming into Ethiopia. The government has an open door policy. For this reason it is better

to try and assist refugees through the host communities through the provision of better services and infrastructure, rather than perpetuate the problem by keeping people in artificial camps. Camps are nothing more than a logistical convenience for agencies providing relief assistance. They take away a refugee's self respect and make him a dependent beneficiary, a mere statistic (UNEPPG, 1992b:17).

The policy as such was not entirely new. Labelling it as 'cross-mandate' only sharpened an understanding that had been present in previous years. As noted earlier, the WUSC/UNHCR rehabilitation programme specifically targeted returnees for certain activities, but on the whole was intended to strengthen the overall ecological and economic carrying capacity of the region. The *Greater Ogaden Development Programme* report, the outcome of an IFAD/UNHCR mission in July 1989, was even more explicit. In the expectation of the return of some 20,000 families, it stated that promoting the socio-economic development of the area as a whole 'would be the most effective means of achieving acceptable long-term rehabilitation of the target group and of increasing (or at least stabilizing) the human support capacity of this vast and fragile area'. Anticipating the cross-mandate approach it recommended that 'a programme to assist returnees only is neither practical nor desirable' (IFAD/UNHCR, 1989 Summary:1).

The UN agencies cannot dictate policy in a host country, however. The cross-mandate policy had to be adopted by the new Transitional Government, which agreed with the UNHCR about the need for more equitable assistance, irrespective of whether a needy person was a refugee, a returnee or locally displaced by drought or conflict. But government documents do not mention closure of camps. They interpret the cross-mandate policy as a means of establishing the link between relief and rehabilitation and of mobilising agencies to start or expand rehabilitative and development programmes (RRC, 1992b:3). The main objectives of the policy, as identified by Ato Mandefro, the head of the ARRA, therefore carry a somewhat different emphasis : 'to restore the damaged eco-system and infrastructure of the refugee-hosting area, to promote income-generating activities for the large refugee populations, to start regional development activities to alleviate the strain on the socio-economic institutes of the host region and to promote self-reliance' (Mandefro,

1992). What went on between the government and the UN agencies has not been made public, but there must have been wrangling about the issue of the camps and the levels of continued assistance to them. In May 1992 the *Ethiopian Herald* announced a tripartite agreement between the RRC, the ARRA and the UNHCR but the actual Memorandum of Understanding was not signed until 6 November (RRC, 1992b).

The government and the UNHCR agreed, however, that the need and the difficulties in the region were such that no one agency would have sufficient capacity. The cross-mandate policy would therefore lead to a pooling of financial, human and material resources, and a sharing of expertise among the different agencies and institutions, for the single common aim of assisting all the needy people in the area (RRC, 1992b:3). The mechanism to achieve this would be enhanced coordination between different levels within agencies and between agencies. At the time some observers even hoped that the cross-mandate policy would come to provide a model framework for cooperation and collaboration between the operational and non-operational UN agencies such as the FAO and UNDP, between the UN family and NGOs, and between international agencies and the host government :

In reality, it is nothing new or particularly special : it simply means a system of programming that brings together the expertise and resources from a number of different agencies or organizations in a highly complementary and coordinated manner. For years within the UN family there has been plenty of talk about coordination but, in practice, each agency has protected its own area of expertise or perceived responsibility very jealously. Past relief operations in the Horn of Africa have been characterized by a ... scramble by the various operational arms of the UN to achieve the vaunted position of "lead agency". ... While the UN battles with itself for supremacy, there was never a hope of joining with the NGOs in any meaningful way. ... By very definition, under the cross-mandate approach there can be no UN lead agency ; the government is very much in the driving seat, and is expected to provide leadership and coordination at all levels through the RRC (UNEPPG, 1992b:17).

Coordination and a commonality of policy under the cross-mandate approach would inform not only the programmes in-country but also the relief and rehabilitation assistance in adjacent countries. Indeed, in this part of the Horn, where populations are highly mobile and international boundaries easily crossed, the notion of 'poles of attraction' was felt to apply not only to camps in-country but also to differing levels of assistance on either side of borders. Better services in camps in northern Kenya, for example, could impede Ethiopians from returning and even be a 'pull' factor for more Ethiopians to seek refuge and assistance in Kenya. Regional coordination between neighbouring countries and adjacent UN country programmes should therefore be stimulated to achieve a balance of assistance on both sides of borders.

This too was not a new consideration. A UNICEF mission to the Ogaden in May 1980 reported :

The UNHCR representative ... feels that on both humanitarian and pragmatic grounds a comprehensive approach is needed ; this would include assistance for both the displaced and affected population in Ethiopia thus reducing the incentive to swell the numbers of refugees in neighbouring countries. ... [The Ethiopian government] feels that the UN system is taking a one-sided view of the situation by launching a large-scale assistance programme in Somalia and doing almost nothing in Ethiopia. They feel that this will only aggravate the situation in attracting a large number of people to cross the border (quoted by Africa Watch, 1991:97).

The cross-mandate policy : The practice

Although in theory the cross-mandate policy offered assistance to all needy people, in practice its more immediate objective became the dispersal and resettlement of those who were registered as returnees and who were receiving UNHCR and ARRA assistance in camps or in towns like Jijiga, Dergahbur and Gode. The 'returnee

cards', on which the UNHCR's 1989 promise of a repatriation package had been printed, were to be declared invalid. Henceforth, assistance would be provided on a 'community' basis, through community leaders and local representatives, who would assume responsibility for internal distribution among all the needy people, but in return for work rather than as a free hand-out.

In Dolo, formerly Borena Province, some 70,000 refugees and locally displaced people had never been registered for fear that the locals would pose as refugees. Food was being distributed through the clan elders. The announcement that the returnee cards were no longer valid was first made in the Ogaden. As was to be expected, returnees holding cards entitling them individually to a free rehabilitation package, were angry and felt betrayed. Although in most places the situation gradually calmed down, in some the resentment escalated. In March 1992 the UNHCR representative in Gode was murdered, and the UNHCR handed over the camps to the RRC which continued the free food distributions; thereafter UNEPPG was to be the coordinating agency in Dolo and the Ogaden. The threats in Dergahbur became such that the UNHCR closed its office there in the autumn of 1992. Again, the RRC continued some free food distribution there, and UN lorries transporting supplies to the Aware camps via Dergahbur were harassed. Threats and harassment also occurred frequently in Kebri Bayeh camp which, as an exclusively returnee camp, had never received the same level of assistance as the other Jijiga camps. Unfortunately the UNHCR was sending genuine Somali refugees belonging to the Darood clan to Kebri Bayeh and extending assistance to them, while assistance to the returnees, a hundred yards away, was simultaneously being cut down.

However, declaring returnee cards invalid and so reducing or stopping the provision of rations does not necessarily lead people to disperse, let alone resettle in a sustainable way. The first organized dispersal and resettlement operation took place in the summer of 1992 and concerned the Jarso and Giri, living in and around 9 villages northwest of Jijiga, in the area of the EIRPD irrigation project.

The Giri are Somalis belonging to the Darood clan, while the Jarso are of Oromo descent. The Giri were originally pastoralists but then developed an interest in the

produce of the sedentary Jarso whom they allowed and even invited to come and cultivate their land. The Giri claim superior status and traditional ownership rights to the land. Several generations ago both groups came to a social agreement that established mechanisms to regulate all matters of common interest. The first disruption of this unequal but balanced relationship came with the Rural Land Proclamation of 1975. The Jarso seized the opportunity to establish rights over the lands they were tilling and competed for leadership positions in the new local committees of Revolutionary Ethiopia. The relationship between the two groups suffered further during and after the Ogaden war. Both had militias within the WSLF, who occasionally raided each other's lands. When Siad Barre armed the Darood in northwest Somalia against the SNM, the Giri militia was included but not the Jarso (Yusuf, 1993a).

Heavy fighting between them broke out in September 1991 and escalated over the next two months. Villages were extensively looted and damaged, livestock were sold for arms and the crops were looted or died from drought. Thousands became displaced and fled to the Sheik Sharif camp on the outskirts of Jijiga. Smaller numbers congregated in Chinaksen, and Jarso and Giri together sought refuge on 'neutral' adjacent Gadabursi land in Herergel and in the already existing camps of Derwonaji and Teferi ber. Médecins Sans Frontières - Belgium and the Ethiopian Red Cross Society (ERCS), with support from the International Federation of Red Cross Societies (IFRC), organized the relief programme, with occasional additional food donations from the UNHCR and SCF(UK). Already in January 1992 concern was raised about the provision of services to these camps when the population of the whole area was affected by drought, ethnic conflict, underdevelopment and insecurity (UNEPPG, 1992a).

By mid-June 1992, the EPRDF forces had successfully sponsored a reconciliation meeting between the Jarso and Giri. A high-level meeting then took place in Addis Ababa, involving the RRC High Commissioner, the Minister of External Economic Affairs (a Somali) and some UN agencies, which agreed on a two-phased plan. First, the displaced Jarso and Giri would be quickly returned to their villages to take advantage of the *krem* rainy season which was expected to start in August. The operation would then be expanded into a comprehensive dispersal and resettlement

programme for returnees and displaced people in other camps in the area.

On 1 July a task force was formed in Addis Ababa with the ERCS, the IFRC, MSF-Belgium, UNHCR, UNEPPG and UNICEF, under strong RRC leadership. An equivalent field level task force in Jijiga included the EPRDF. Between 24 June and 10 July, the displaced Jarso and Giri in the Chinaksen and Jijiga camps returned to their villages, to which food and water were being trucked in. Those in Herergel would gradually trickle back over the next 12 months. At very short notice, seeds and tools worth around \$ 500,000 were purchased and airlifted to Jijiga. As the deadline for planting was very near, subsidies were provided for the rent of private tractors to prepare the land. MSF-Belgium and the local Ministry of Health started rehabilitating the clinics which had been looted and/or destroyed during the fighting, and for several months ran a supplementary feeding programme in some villages until the nutritional status of the population had stabilized. In 1993 Africare was contracted by the UNHCR to repair damaged water boreholes or drill new ones.

The ERCS and the IFRC phased out their resettlement support by the end of 1993, some 18 months after the dispersal from the camps. In many ways the Jarso and Giri dispersal and resettlement exercise can be regarded as successful. Resources had been pooled, there had been a high degree of coordination, multi-sectoral rehabilitation and recovery work had been carried out and assistance was provided to and through the communities and not on the basis of individual entitlement. Although occasional tensions broke out, the peace agreement remained in force and locally influential people were able to prevent the spread and escalation of any conflictual incidents (Yusuf, 1994a).

Having successfully organized the resettlement of the Jarso and Giri, the UNHCR now hoped to repeat the operation for the returnees and displaced people in the older camps of Derwonaji, Teferi ber, Kebri Bayeh and Babile, and those living in Jijiga town. The planning figures varied between 150,000 and 200,000 individuals.

During the spring of 1992 the UNHCR had been handing out travel grants to registered returnees amounting to a total expenditure of a few million dollars. In mid-June, an 'open letter' to the returnees, signed by the UNHCR, the ARRA and

the RRC, was drafted. It explained that financial constraints prevented the UNHCR from honouring its 1989 promise of a rehabilitation grant, on top of the food assistance and the travel grant they had already received, and also that such a grant would unjustifiably privilege card-holders over other people equally in need. The yellow returnee cards would therefore become invalid and rehabilitation would take place as community-based projects, with food-for-work support (UNHCR, 1992c). The letter was not circulated to the aid agencies in Jijiga until 27 July, when they were informed that food assistance to the returnees and locally displaced people in the camps, who were expected to disperse within 4 weeks, would stop as of that date. The argument for the haste, repeatedly used in the months to follow, was that the donors were tired of putting resources into these camps, and that the food pipeline would dry up by the end of 1992.

This letter, and the virtually immediate deadline, had not been presented to the agency headquarters in Addis Ababa, and no representatives of the Ministries of Agriculture, Health or Education were involved. This did not prevent the agencies in Jijiga from immediately drawing up a response to the UNHCR Regional Office in Addis Ababa, in which the NGOs, the Ethiopian ARRA and the SERP expressed their agreement in principle with the shift in policy. Their reservations concerned the unrealistic time-frame, and the fact that the programme had been unilaterally imposed without any consultation with those who would be called upon to implement it. It was pointed out that the reintegration areas had not been assessed, and that no extra resources had yet been mobilized, nor discussions taken place with locally influential people. The local RRC, expected to become the lead agency in the resettlement exercise, had virtually no operational capacity and there was no action plan. A gradual scaling down of assistance in the camps could be envisaged after a prior build-up of reintegration support schemes in the resettlement areas. The letter also asked the UNHCR to define more clearly its role and responsibilities within the whole resettlement programme. It recommended a postponement of the deadline so that a plan could be worked out and task forces formed.

In a discussion on 29 July in Kebri Bayeh, representatives of the returnees, the local population and women's groups also opposed the UNHCR's approach on similar grounds : there had been conflicting statements on decisions and policy from

different UNHCR and ARRA personnel, the economic carrying capacity of the surrounding area was much lower now at the end of a three-year drought, than when they fled in 1977, and they wanted to see rehabilitation work started before they would lend credibility to these new promises by the international community. They also wondered what former nomads and town-dwellers would do, as the resettlement support seemed primarily directed to farming, and they asked what the international community had planned for the sick, the malnourished and the handicapped ?

The letter from the Jijiga agencies upset some UNHCR staff members in Addis Ababa, and led to a number of meetings and memoranda. The UNHCR did circulate its open letter, however, and set up a 'Returnee Resettlement Task Force' in Jijiga in mid-August. It stopped providing individual rations against yellow returnee cards in September 1992. In mixed returnee and refugee camps, where individuals and families might have both cards, the size and the frequency of the food basket were gradually reduced towards what was deemed a realistic estimate of 'real' refugees. The total camp allocation was not changed so that the difference could be channelled to communities in the 'reintegration areas'.

A particular point of dispute developed between the UNHCR and SCF(UK) regarding the vulnerable groups in the camps. Kebri Bayeh camp in particular from its inception in February 1991, had been scheduled for dispersal by the UNHCR, as it was considered an exclusively returnee camp. When the resettlement plan was announced, the general health and nutritional status of the population was 'poor', according to governmental criteria. The malnutrition rate was 16% and there were 1,500 children in the wet supplementary feeding programme. Food shortages in previous months had completely stopped the distribution of dry supplementary rations in mid-April. For the same reason, the wet supplementary feeding since early June had to be reduced to two, and sometimes only one, feeds a day, with not all ingredients being available and stocks continuously on the point of depletion. There were also some 180 children on TB treatment, which would be interrupted if the families dispersed. Kebri Bayeh houses a poor population that it was felt needed special attention. The criteria that the UNHCR had itself set for scaling down a supplementary feeding programme had not been met. Yet its staff continued to

insist that the supplementary feeding programme was a 'pull' factor preventing people from leaving the camps. Sufficient evidence exists, however, to demonstrate that people in general stay or move in relation to perceived risks and opportunities. That coverage and default are perennial problems in supplementary feeding programmes contradicts the notion that such programmes constitute a powerful 'pull' on camp populations. Under pressure from the NGO, supplies for the supplementary feeding programmes in all camps, including Kebri Bayeh, were maintained.

The 'Returnee Resettlement Task Force' in Jijiga, chaired by the local UNHCR office, did not operate very efficiently, with no terms of reference or stipulated methods of working. Throughout 1991 and 1992 the UNHCR office in Jijiga had shown admirable flexibility and pragmatism in the use of its resources, notably food aid. When required, donations had been made to the Red Cross, the town administration or SERP for some urgent relief or repair works. Now that the UNHCR had taken the lead in promoting implementation of the cross-mandate policy, the initiative was reversed and the Jijiga sub-office looked around for implementing partners. The nearest was the local RRC branch which was completely understaffed and under-resourced. Villages in the surrounding area were visited to assess the state of the access roads and in a rather superficial attempt to estimate their needs and absorption capacity. Subsequently small repair and rehabilitation activities were supported with food-for-work. Yet not even the UNHCR and the RRC together really had the capacity to organize much beyond what was in essence a decentralized food distribution system, not a recovery support programme.

More significantly, though, the UNHCR also entered into a \$ 3.7m contract agreement with SERP for 1993. The aim was to strengthen SERP's technical, infrastructural, logistical and communications capacity to allow it to expand more rapidly into the remoter areas of the region. The relationship became strained, first when the UNHCR failed to disburse cash on time, and later when SERP vehicles and radios, donated by the UNHCR, were commandeered by Region 5 politicians and therefore confiscated by the EPRDF forces when they launched their campaign against the ONLF and Ittehad. In October 1992, SCF(UK) had proposed the

creation of working groups within the task force, to establish standards of work, develop common policies, and attempt forward planning. One on food supply, food use and logistics, and another on agro-pastoralism, never came to anything, but those on water and health served a useful, though limited, role. Short-term and issue-specific subgroups, such as for cholera preparedness and to prevent a locust outbreak, worked best.

MSF-Belgium was already active in the health sector in Jijiga zone and repeatedly explored possibilities of going beyond the camps in the Ogaden. But whereas coordination with the zonal MoH in Jijiga was smooth, the absence of realistic planning and prioritizing, and later security problems, constantly interfered with any rehabilitation-oriented work in the Ogaden. UNICEF had been involved with health and water in the Ogaden prior to 1991, but the institutional weakness of the new regional government limited a serious relaunch of that programme. From the outset, Oxfam directed its operations in the water sector to a geographical area roughly between Babile and Kebri Bayeh, focusing on shallow wells, cemented cisterns (*birqah*) and some ponds, but avoided involvement with boreholes. The Red Cross decided to limit itself to the rehabilitation programme with the Jarso and Giri. SCF(UK) took time to develop its analysis of the situation and to prepare itself strategically for a recovery-support and resettlement programme in Region 5. It joined in actively only in the summer of 1993, when it entered into a tactical alliance with SERP for a variety of region-wide projects, involving agricultural inputs, veterinary supplies, logistical and managerial support and training on food security and market analysis. Instability within the regional administration forced it to suspend a proposal for institution-strengthening support. In 1992 and 1993 UNHCR/RRC food-for-work schemes had led to the (re)construction of some school buildings by local communities. In 1994 the UNHCR also became interested in providing financial support to the Ministry of Education in Region 5.

Limited results : The camps revisited 1993-94

Almost two years after the start of the resettlement programme, the numbers of camp-dwellers have dwindled. The figures of those seeking relief in and around Gode fell from around 87,000 in July 1992 to some 23,000 in early 1994, mainly

because the drought-affected pastoralists left. The remaining population in the three Aware camps is estimated at around 17,000 and in the four Jijiga camps at around 175,000. Although this is a significant reduction from the 450,000-500,000 official beneficiaries of relief in early 1992, there still remain more than 200,000 people in camps. Why ?

Discussions about the Somali camp-dwellers tend to be in general terms. International law and institutional mandates obliged the grouping of these people into 'refugee', 'returnee' and 'local or locally displaced' categories. But this categorization does not fit the logic and the life stories of the many Somali families who exploit what, for them, is one regional economic space, and who have been driven back and forth across the border in search of refuge (Hogg, 1992). The international community may feel that the Somalis exploit and manipulate the relief assistance. The Somalis, in their turn, often feel cheated and deprived of their rights by the international relief system. Mutual stereotyping and generalizations are common. Such generalizations cannot, however, provide a basis for policy development and operational planning.

With the gradual improvement of the situation in Somaliland, the UNHCR's wish to repatriate the refugees grew throughout 1993. Almost simultaneously two pieces of research into the profile of the remaining populations in the camps of Jijiga and Awara were carried out in the winter of 1993 : a shorter one by a Somali woman sociologist commissioned by UNHCR (Abdulkadir, 1994) and a longer one by a Somali anthropologist and SCF Somali staff, on behalf of the ARRA and SCF (Yusuf, 1994b). The first report pays relatively more attention to current conditions in the camps and the problems women face, the second analyses in more detail the different clan subsections in each camp, their geographical origin and their reasons for staying.

In July 1993 an attempt had been made by the Gode Task Force to inquire into the origins and motives of the people remaining in the Gode 1 and 2 camps. Poorly prepared and supervised, the formal questionnaire did not produce very useful or reliable answers, and the report was never circulated. The choice of an informal

method in the subsequent research studies was deliberate, as it was felt that the relationship between the aid agencies and the camp populations was too fraught with ambiguities to obtain reliable answers to formal questioning.

Similar attempts to research the profile of the camp populations had been tried earlier by SCF in 1992 (Ryle, 1992a, b ; Mohammed Abdi, 1992). While valuable, the amount of detail obtained had been limited by time constraints. The conclusions were not sufficiently widely disseminated and did not lead to a clear shift of strategy and policy within the organization. Since then many changes had taken place and the time was now ripe to draw fully on new research.

Together the reports of Anab Abdulkadir and Ahmed Yusuf provide the first in-depth insight into the composition of each camp population and the specific factors that affect the different subgroups. On the basis of these reports it now becomes possible to design appropriate projects for specific target groups. The key conclusions arising from the two reports were very similar and can be summarized as follows :

- a) With relief assistance dwindling, the people in the camps survive thanks to the support of their kin in the area or of family members working elsewhere. The importance of mutual support and charity within Somali society has been a crucial, and underreported, factor in the survival of hundreds of thousands of people, and provides an important counter-image to the prevailing one of a manipulative and conflictual people.
- b) In several camps there are various refugee groups who face a security problem in their area of origin. Protection therefore remains a genuine issue, and complete closure of the camps is not possible at present.
- c) A majority of camp-dwellers are women and children. The aid institutions and the camp committees are dominated by men. An effort must be made to see that all communications reach the women, and to understand the realities of their situation.

- d) Camp-dwellers can be categorized as of urban origin, agro-pastoralists or pastoralists. In each camp, one or other socio-economic group tends to dominate.

- e) Since the autumn of 1992, the pastoral economy in Somaliland and eastern Ethiopia is recovering. However, this recovery should not obscure the fact that there are sizeable numbers of pastoralists who are still impoverished by the drought and the civil strife. Ethiopian Somali pastoralists who have spent a decade in camps in Somalia have thereby become accustomed to a more sedentary life and to having access to social services. They want to resettle as agro-pastoralists and retain that access. Several surveys of the Somali Region 5 and of Somaliland have referred to the social and economic linkages between pastoralists and town-dwellers. They have illuminated how important the support of the former has been for the latter (Holt and Lawrence, 1991, 1992). Pastoralism is under pressure, however. Historically there is a gradual shift to agro-pastoralism (e.g. Tellehun et al., 1993), but this trend has been accelerated by the influx of refugees and returnees. Increasingly grazing land is being brought under cultivation. Apart from being a source of conflict with pastoralists, the expansion of cultivation into increasingly marginal land creates a new vulnerability in this drought-prone area.

- f) Several of the camps play an important role as markets in the regional economy. Some, especially Hartisheik, have become centres for the cross-border trade between eastern Ethiopia and Somaliland. Others, like the Aware camps, are grain markets for the local pastoral economy. As economic and population centres, the camps have inevitably become power centres for influential people with political and business interests. There is no doubt, however, that most camp dwellers would genuinely like to leave but cannot do so for economic or security reasons. Lack of shelter and of jobs or casual labour opportunities, and poverty in general, are an important impediment to resettlement or repatriation. The most vulnerable groups in the camps suffer disproportionately from untargeted ration cuts. A food basket of mostly wheat alone is not sufficient for survival.

- g) The cross-mandate resettlement policy for returnees and locally displaced people has sent an ambiguous message to the refugees. They wonder whether their repatriation package has been forgotten or whether they are expected to stay in Ethiopia. Separate returnee resettlement and refugee repatriation programmes again invite people to change tack. The absence of a clear, open, comprehensive and consistent repatriation policy and the existence of an unrealistic package have hampered repatriation and increased the ambiguity and suspicion. There is need for a clear, well-communicated policy, which includes an acceptable package and a definite time-frame. The recommendation is for assisted but individual repatriation. Reception centres in Somaliland are likely to lead to a repetition of the camp scenario. Resettlement support in Somaliland should focus on food production, job opportunities, and access to water, health and education.
- h) Food security is a regional issue. Notably, SCF recognized early on (Ryle, 1992a, b) that the relief food from the Ethiopian camps contributed to food security in Somaliland. Subsequent surveys in the towns of Somaliland (Nathanail and Samater, 1993a, b) have confirmed that a significant percentage of the urban population either received or bought this relief grain. Market monitoring and, if required, intervention preferably with locally purchased food, should therefore accompany the repatriation exercise for a time, to stabilize food prices at a level that guarantees wide access.
- i) Notwithstanding resettlement and repatriation assistance, a residue of poor people can be expected to remain at the current camp sites. Investment in the social and economic infrastructures of the villages around which the camps sprang up will facilitate their absorption and self-reliance.
- j) As no agency on either side of the border has sufficient capacity on its own, coordinated programming is required. As will be discussed in a following section, the planning and coordination in eastern Ethiopia have been weak for a variety of reasons. In Somaliland, the Ministry of Resettlement and Reconstruction, as well as regional institutions, will require significant material and technical support.

Limited results : Planning and coordination

Centralization was a key characteristic of the Ethiopian empire-state and central planning became even more pronounced under the socialist Dergue regime between 1974 and 1991. As mentioned earlier, a limited attempt at decentralization took place with the reform of the country's administrative structure in 1987-9. Before that, the Hararghe Provincial administration and line ministries were located in Dire Dawa and Harar, while a Regional Planning Office has now been added in Gode for the Autonomous Region of the Ogaden. Exceptional among all the rehabilitation and recovery programmes was the report of the IFAD/UNHCR mission in 1989 which proposed a programme area called the 'Greater Ogaden'. Recognizing that what till 1987 had been Hararghe Province had now become subdivided into three administrative regions, it proposed the establishment of a Greater Ogaden Development Council, to review the interdependence of the three regional development plans (IFAD/UNHCR, 1989a:3). A Greater Ogaden Development Fund could be established, for which donors would provide the foreign currency. The regional administrations would prepare annual work plans and budgets which, after approval by the central government, would be presented to the donors.

The military defeat of the Dergue in May 1991, however, led to a complete institutional collapse in eastern Ethiopia, which has still not recovered. It took the EPRDF forces about a year to restore a reasonable degree of security. They then gradually shifted responsibility to local Peace and Stability Committees, which replaced the Dergue's peasant associations as the lowest level of administrative organization in the countryside. Their members were proposed by the locals, but screened by the EPRDF for active collaboration with the previous regime. Rooted in neither a traditional structure nor a modern one, the motives and competence of members of the Peace and Stability Committees varied greatly; not all of them were peaceful or stable. Nevertheless, they did provide a forum, however inadequate, for the EPRDF and the aid agencies to communicate and negotiate with the local population.

From its own development approach and in the absence of public administration

structures, the Southeast Rangeland Project in 1992 started developing a planning approach based on traditional Somali social structures. The lowest, territorially localized, unit in Somali society is a *rer*, an encampment or hamlet of agnatic kin. At two levels above that there is the *degan* which we might translate as 'community'. Again based on kinship and solidarity obligations, it has a larger identified territory, although adjacent *degans* may dispute boundaries. SERP extension staff had carried out participatory research in the Teferi ber area, which had provided them with a map of the *degans* and a list of people whom the locals identified as genuine representatives. In a collaborative process, these formed a Degan Development Council. Such councils would discuss the priorities for rehabilitation in their *degan*, and take formal responsibility for any project work undertaken there. In a later phase, it was intended that different *degans*, more or less comprising a district, would meet and discuss a district development plan.

The *degan* development approach is in many ways well adapted to the current situation in Region 5, where the public administration has historically been experienced as alien, imposed and coercive, and where traditional structures provide the best source of support, protection and survival in the face of widespread unrest and instability. Unfortunately, SERP failed to advocate its approach broadly enough. As a project within the Ministry of Agriculture, it does have the formal authority to decide on a planning approach.

Throughout, the relief operations and the cross-mandate shift to resettlement and recovery relied on task forces to coordinate agencies operations. The most successful use of this mechanism had been the resettlement of the Jarso and Giri in the summer of 1992. The key reasons for its success were said to be:

- full support from the government and the UN agencies and the NGO involved;
- an RRC with capable staff and sufficient material resources to provide strong chairmanship ;
- a task force in Addis Ababa and in Jijiga, which maintained daily

communication in the phase when the displaced people were moved and the reintegration inputs mobilized ;

- significant delegation of authority to the task force in the field to choose priorities and make operational decisions (UNEPPG, 1992b:10/16).

This effective use of a task force was not repeated, however, when a month later the dispersal and resettlement of the returnees and locally displaced people in the other camps was initiated.

In December 1992 the Returnee Resettlement Task Force, created in August, became the Jijiga Regional Task Force. Co-chaired by the RRC, UNHCR and ARRA, it has always had difficulty in going beyond the mere exchange and updating of information. Mandated to organize the implementation of the cross-mandate policy in its area, it worked for several months without terms of reference, a clear agenda, priorities, criteria or even a defined target group. Even its geographical delineation had not been clarified. It therefore started out as a cumbersome and frustrating forum. Only in February 1993 did the RRC in Addis Ababa recommend a structured agenda, which was then followed. The task force thereafter produced regular updates on security, food stocks, food-for-work projects, water and health issues, etc. It proved useful in responding to particular issues, such as cholera preparedness and preventing a locust outbreak. Yet it never managed to produce action plans and broader policies. The reasons for this are multiple.

One was that at the time there were no less than four task forces in operation: the Borena, later Dollo, Task Force based in Addis Ababa, dealing with the refugees, returnees and locally displaced people around Dollo, west of the Wabi Shebelle ; the Gode Task Force based in Gode and dealing with the people concentrated there ; the Ogaden Task Force, based in Addis Ababa dealing with the Ogaden, east of the Wabi Shebelle; and the Jijiga Task Force, dealing with the northern part of Region 5, but with no counterpart at central level in Addis Ababa. For the north, therefore, there was a task force based in the field, but with no strong voice in the capital. It could hardly take a proactive stance, as its participants often lacked the power to make decisions and had to refer back to their respective headquarters. The

Ogaden proper did have a task force in the field and in Addis Ababa, but the communication and coordination between them was not always simple, and did not become easier as the regional government tried to become a player around Gode. Nevertheless, having an Addis Ababa forum meant a stronger participation of senior officials and other UN agencies, which gave the Ogaden Task Force more clout.

The division of the Region into different areas has the advantage that plans can be made, appropriate to the specific circumstances of each area. The disadvantage, though, is the absence of a common and consistent policy and procedure towards resettlement and rehabilitation. In the spring of 1994 for example, an operation was being planned to transport 12,000 returnees and locally displaced people from Dollo back to Hargele in the El Kere area. Apart from the transport, they were to receive a 3-month maize ration, seeds and tools, while water supply sources were also under repair. This is a far more generous resettlement operation than that for the people in the Jijiga or Aware camps. Other disadvantages include the absence of sectoral coordination and policies, and of a mechanism to establish priorities objectively between the areas when resources, e.g. food aid, are scarce.

Throughout, the RRC was supposed to be the lead agency for the implementation of the cross-mandate policy. The RRC was somewhat stronger on the ground in the Ogaden, but, compared with other regions in Ethiopia, it lacked material and financial resources, staff and skills. With few means of transport and communication, it could not effectively plan and coordinate. With the regionalization and the Somalis coming to power in Region 5, nepotism and patronage began to influence appointments of RRC staff. This weakness of the RRC at times tempted the UN Emergencies Prevention and Preparedness Group (UNEPPG), which has the local knowledge and the competence and can sometimes mobilize the resources, to assume the leadership and coordinate implementation. This led to friction with the RRC which came to a head in 1993, when there was talk of dissolving the EPPG unit. Fortunately it survived, albeit leaner and limited to assessment and coordination, as the UN-Ethiopia Unit for Emergencies (EUE).

The ARRA, the third signatory to the cross-mandate Memorandum of Understanding, had a large presence in the Jijiga and Aware camps, but was

effectively absent from the concentrations of population in the Ogaden. Its planning and policy-making authority was seriously impaired by the fact that it was entirely funded by the UNHCR, an advantage which the latter sometimes exploited to make its point. The ARRA did not become involved in the resettlement exercise. It started pressing for a new screening of the remaining camp populations in 1994, arguing that, after the dispersal of the returnees, only refugees were left.

Between 1991 and mid-1994, the line ministries remained present, at least in the towns of Region 5, but the change of government, the subsequent insecurity, followed by regionalization and new policies, reduced service provision to a minimum and impeded any planning or coordination. Non-Somali staff clearly worried about transfers and continued employment, and relationships between established and new - Somali - staff members were often difficult. With the ambiguity about the division of roles and responsibilities between the central and regional levels within the line ministries, nobody had the information, the authority or the confidence, to draw up a plan outline or to take major decisions. Again, in several instances, line ministry resources seemed to provide opportunities for power building and private use on the part of certain members of the regional government, rather than for service-delivery and development support.

The Peace and Stability Committees continued to exist in certain localities after the 1993 local and regional elections, but formally the focus of authority, responsibility, planning and coordination shifted to the new regional, zonal and district (*woreda*) administrations. A year later, the new public administration had not been able to take on the role expected of it. Delays in budget allocations from the centre, lack of experience and of transport and communications equipment, nepotism and factional rivalries leading to a rapid turnover of personnel, were all contributing factors. As a consequence, neither at regional nor at local level is there as yet a functioning public administration with the authority and the competence to be proactive, to make policy, to set priorities and to coordinate the different inputs and initiatives of the aid agencies.

The regional authorities expressed frustration over the fact that the aid agencies did not keep them informed of their activities and bypassed them in their

implementation. The agencies, on their side, felt frustrated by the fact that there was no functioning administration to work with and through which to channel funds. As elsewhere (e.g. Egan, 1991) the agencies generally opted for short-term effectiveness and accountability rather than the longer-term goal of capacity-building and sustainability. With little strategy, planning or policy, the resettlement and recovery activities have essentially remained reactive, *ad hoc* and subjective. Resources tend to be allocated to those localities that are known and accessible, and whose representatives have expressed their needs in the firmest voice, the most sympathetic manner and the best English.

The continuation of this reactive mode has led to much wastage of time and energy. Whereas groups of local people have certainly benefited from the assistance provided, there is no guarantee whatsoever that the resources have been put into the most needy and vulnerable areas. In factionalized environments such as that of Somali society today, there is sometimes a need for 'necessary duplication'. Yet certain investments, such as in rural roads, boreholes, educational and health services, need to be rationalized on a larger scale. In the absence of any planning, this did not happen. Worse, the *ad hoc* approach, with many localized small-scale projects, threatens the efforts towards a staged planning process. Initially SERP's *ad hoc* programming of food-for-work schemes in response to individual requests bypassed and undermined the carefully built-up *degan* development councils.

Thus, in the first 18 months of the cross-mandate approach the agencies and task forces have in fact concentrated on dispersing camp populations without much structured and structural rehabilitation support. The bewildering variety of players, the multiplicity of fora for information exchange and coordination, and the absence of a functioning public administration and operational line ministries are the main reasons for this. Sustainable resettlement and regional recovery will prove short-lived illusions unless an institutional capacity is developed. SCF(UK) has obtained donor interest and is looking for the most promising level or sector of involvement. The UNDP, as part of its national programme to strengthen regional government, has been considering placing an expert on economic development in each regional administration. Ultimately, however, the ball is in the court of the Somali people. The first promising sign appeared in April 1994 when some members of the regional

government began talking about the creation of a Technical Support Unit at regional level, to bring agencies and regional administrators together in a joint planning and programming exercise.

Limited results : Vulnerability studies, early warning and decentralized disaster management

This review of 20 years of relief and rehabilitation cycles should have highlighted the increasing ecological, economic and social vulnerability in the eastern Ethiopian lowlands. Whereas it is generally understood that the area is vulnerable, the focus has been very much on drought and less so on the economic and political factors that contribute to and exacerbate the effects of drought. With a much larger population after the recent influxes of refugees and returnees, and increasing pressure on pasture and land from resettling camp-dwellers, the risk of a disaster has increased. Yet there is currently no early warning mechanism in place, and few agencies so far have paid any systematic attention to the problem.

In Ethiopia, the national early warning system (EWS) was established in 1976 and shortly afterwards incorporated into the RRC. Under the Dergue regime it was characterized by a high degree of centralization. Data were collected, analysed and interpreted in Addis Ababa, and the central RRC appealed for international relief assistance and decided on relief allocations to affected areas. Donor governments, however, suspicious that the Dergue Government was manipulating figures for political reasons or to maximize food aid receipts, often relied on alternative sources of information such as the FAO/WFP annual assessment, UNEPPG and NGO reports (Buchanan-Smith and Petty, 1992:8-9, Tables 1, 2). In the newly regionalized Ethiopia, the early warning system is likely to become more centralised, while disaster management capacity will be decentralized.

The minimum expectation of EWS is that they can predict a large-scale famine. The emphasis is then on crisis indicators such as migration, malnutrition and mortality rates. The usual response is free relief food, which tends to arrive late. A more ambitious version is a system that monitors food and livelihood security in a more comprehensive way. The latter approach permits finer local distinctions and a better

understanding of the factors contributing to stress. Interventions potentially take place earlier and strengthen local coping mechanisms to avert a crisis situation. As the local food economy is better understood, other and more appropriate interventions than free food distributions are likely to be thought of. These more sophisticated EWS, however, require more skills on the part of staff on the ground.

The new National Disaster Management Policy (TGE, 1993a) retains a National Committee for Early Warning within the central RRC in Addis Ababa. This will ensure compatibility between regional surveillance systems, exercise quality control, issue international appeals and guarantee the prioritization of allocations to the regions on objective grounds. In the regions the basic unit for disaster preparedness will be the district, with the Ministry of Agriculture in a key role. Other line ministries should also provide information, which will be centralized at zonal level and then by the regional RRC office. The intention is to place a EW specialist in each regional and eventually in each zonal RRC office.

In 1993 the TGE and UNDP commissioned a study to assess the capacity of the regions to assume responsibility for disaster management (TGE/UNDP, 1993). The Somali Region 5 was one of the case studies. Not surprisingly, the study concludes that, because of the general underdevelopment of the region and the virtual collapse of government institutions since 1991, the current capacity is extremely weak. The regional RRC has some office and transport facilities, but is understaffed and unaware of the complexities. The Regional Government does not respect the qualification requirements imposed by the national Central Personnel Administration and has turned the post of head of the regional RRC bureau into a political nomination, with no continuity. The study found that the Ministry of Agriculture had only 90 staff out of a target of 1,555, and of these most were administrative support staff. The Ministry of Health has few operational clinics apart from the referral hospitals in the main towns. Health workers should provide monthly reports on disease patterns and give some information on nutritional status; in practice, the coverage of the health posts is extremely limited and reports take a long time to reach the hospitals which serve as zonal centres, and are not analysed in the region. Moreover, many MoH staff are not ethnic Somalis, and do not speak the local language. Health workers and often local elders will alert the authorities to

perceived epidemics, but there is no organized response capacity.

The study correctly identifies SERP as the one operational institution in the region, playing the role of both the MoA and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection. In certain *woredas* and zones, but not everywhere, SERP is kept informed by the local people about livestock conditions and water and pasture availability. SERP staff also collect information on market prices, but not the contextual information needed to interpret trends, an issue on which SCF has started providing technical assistance. SERP has some warehousing capacity and has acquired experience with food-for-work schemes. The working relationship of SERP and the MoA remains unclear, however, as well as SERP's future after 1996. More important, although SERP's overall aim is to improve food security, it has not been designed or mandated to play an early warning and disaster management role.

In practice, then, surveillance and early warning rely entirely on informal and temporary methods. As before, the Early Warning and Pastoral Assessment teams of the RRC in Addis Ababa continue to visit the area every six months. Equally important are the field-trip reports of UNEPPG, WFP and NGO staff. However, valuable as they may be, warnings from such reports are not early, they may not be very analytical about the causes of the crisis, and they do not correspond to any systematic monitoring in time or in geographical coverage. Since 1993 experienced travellers in the area need to re-establish a working relationship with new public administrators and newly appointed staff, who are seldom familiar with food security monitoring and early warning.

In terms of mitigating disasters, the study recommends strengthening the coping mechanisms of the local population through the provision of veterinary services, the development of water sources and water harvesting, and extension work to train communities to improve what they are already doing. But the study accords top priority to infrastructural investments in the road network, radio communications and the connection of the major towns to the national electricity grid. The most promising opportunity seems to be the Galub gas project near Shilabo in the Ogaden, for which the World Bank approved a \$ 74m loan in January 1994 and which was scheduled to become operational in 1996. Unfortunately political and

security problems in Region 5 may cause delays in the schedule. The potential of improved marketing, especially of livestock, is also mentioned, but the authors remain puzzled about how to support livestock off-take from pastoralists who do not want to enter into an officially organized marketing system that they associate with government control and taxes (TGE/UNDP, 1993:52).

The study recognizes that there is no capacity to adopt employment-based, usually food-for-work, schemes as the major mechanism for disaster management rather than free food distribution. District and zonal government staff are not trained in facilitating and managing community participatory work, and cannot even reach many communities because there are no roads, no vehicles, and no budgets to cover running costs. They do not have telephones or radios and there are no local stocks of food and tools (ibid:83).

Creating the institutional capacity to monitor vulnerability, to provide early warning, and to plan relief and recovery support in Region 5 would require a technical assistance programme lasting at least two years. This would include a review of ongoing activities, research on local coping mechanisms, staff training, the design of an appropriate and affordable monitoring system, and the clarification of roles and responsibilities. It also needs an end to political interference in appointments and decision-making.

There is no doubt that today the UN and NGO agencies remain crucial to disaster management in Region 5. Until there is significantly more institutional capacity, free relief food distributions will remain the main mechanism to deal with large-scale crises in the Region. The experience with task-force work could be used to create and train a permanent Regional Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Committee, though its activities would need to be rooted within a regional recovery and development plan.

5. The Cross-mandate : A Policy for Rehabilitation and Recovery?

As noted earlier, two years after the start of the 'cross-mandate' operation, more than 200,000 Somali refugees and returnees remain in camps, and the wider

population of Region 5 remains highly vulnerable to disaster. There is no formal regional system to monitor vulnerability and to provide warning that would be genuinely 'early'. A local institutional capacity to deal with crises is virtually non-existent. Whereas the agricultural and livestock economy in the region has been recovering since 1992, its access to inputs and export markets remains extremely fragile. The area is vulnerable to drought, and suffers from continued insecurity in Somalia and in the Ogaden. One can reasonably assume that a crisis can be expected to re-occur. As the situation stands now, it looks very likely that the international community will have to mount another big relief operation, which will inevitably be too late to prevent people from congregating in camps, and will be forced to rely on free food distribution. It is doubtful therefore, that the cross-mandate policy - so far - has led to sustainable resettlement and recovery. The question is whether it ever could have done so ?

There are external but also internal reasons why the cross-mandate policy has produced only limited results, results that possibly came about indirectly because of reduced assistance to the camps, rather than directly through focused support for resettlement. Among the external reasons, we should note the very small number of players. Compared with elsewhere in Ethiopia, there are very few international NGOs operating in Region 5. Local NGOs, such as Gurmud, the Ogaden Welfare Society, and Guardian, are small, have limited resources and programmatic expertise, and have an ethnic focus. The UNHCR, the WFP, UN-EPPG and UNICEF have mobilized and invested resources in the Region, but not the FAO or the WHO. The UNDP concentrates on the irrigation schemes, but has an urgent role to play in the sectors of transport and communications infrastructure and in institution-building. Bilateral donors, understandably, are hesitant to invest resources in what, certainly from the Addis Ababa vantage-point, seems a very volatile and insecure region. The continuing institutional vacuum means that there are basically no regional recovery and development plans, nor national authorities to coordinate the resources and activities of the international community within a planning framework. There are also the logistical difficulties of operating in such a vast and inaccessible region, and the recurrent security problems.

But there are also internal reasons. Inevitably, the focus here has to be on the

UNHCR, as the main proponent and interpreter of the policy. In many ways the UNHCR in Ethiopia has got caught up in the ambiguities and contradictions of the policy it has advocated. This happened because of problems of style and communications, the lack of an operational translation of the policy, and contradictions in the way it was implemented.

A problem of style and communications

In the first place, the articulation of the policy, and certainly the decisions on time-frames, have been too exclusively a UNHCR exercise. Had other governmental and non-governmental agencies been actively involved from the beginning in the planning and policy-formulation process, they would have been less taken by surprise and would have shown less resistance to what they often felt to be bullying by UNHCR. NGOs did not sign the Memorandum of Understanding on the cross-mandate policy, which was an agreement between the government and the UN. Nevertheless, NGOs would inevitably be important players in the whole exercise.

UNHCR continued to assign itself the role of lead agency, perhaps because it felt that the government, and notably the ARRA, as well as some NGOs were dragging their feet, but perhaps also because of its own self-image. This stance was not difficult as both the RRC and the ARRA were dependent on it for resources. Yet because the UNHCR has to rely on other agencies to implement project activities, some arm-twisting was taking place which was not always appreciated. Impatient UNHCR staff accused partner agencies of defending their own vested interests in the camp situations. They did not realize, or were unwilling to accept to do so, that the policy-formulation process and the ambiguities in the whole cross-mandate concept led to concerns and fuelled suspicions which were never constructively discussed.

For a long time it was left unclear whether the cross-mandate meant a new mandate, or an additional mandate. Thus, while the UNHCR advocated broad-based assistance to all the needy people in the area, irrespective of category derived from an institutional mandate, its staff simultaneously insisted that the returnees were

Ethiopian citizens and no longer their concern, thereby reaffirming the UNHCR's core mandate. Not surprisingly, doubts arose about the real commitment of the agency that had cast itself in the leadership role. The Memorandum of Understanding recognizes the continuation of a core mandate, and articulates the cross-mandate policy as an invitation to other players to go beyond (i.e. in addition to) their traditional roles. But this Memorandum did not circulate broadly until November 1992, ten months after the first announcements of the policy, and two months after the returnee ration cards had been declared invalid.

Furthermore, the cross-mandate is an institutional, legalistic, concept, with no relevance for many agencies. It applies to the UNHCR, the ARRA and the RRC, each of which has circumscribed areas of responsibility. But other UN agencies, such as UNICEF, the WHO or UNDP, and NGOs, do not have mandates that force them to differentiate between refugees, returnees and locally displaced people. For them the concept unnecessarily complicated things, and it would have been easier, and probably more acceptable, to call the exercise simply what it intended to be : a dispersal and resettlement scheme.

It has been said that the cross-mandate policy was a UNHCR invention to deal with a self-created problem :

Refugees and returnees are products of an official bureaucracy. The procedures to deal with them are products of the same bureaucracy. To the people themselves however they only become refugees and returnees by entering the world of UNHCR (Hogg, 1992:7).

This statement ignores the fact that the UNHCR's mandate derives from a body of international law underwritten by governments. Taking it out of context would mean questioning the right and possibility of asylum. But as this review has attempted to show, it does - to a large degree - apply for the Somali people who live in a single social and economic space that very much ignores international borders, and for whom the long-term solution can only be regional peace and the recovery of the regional economy. There is not, however, a single political space, and this has given them the opportunity to seek refuge and obtain asylum across borders.

The UNHCR's commitment to a serious rehabilitation programme did not come out in its promotion of QUIPS or 'quick impact projects'. In 1992 it invited potential implementers to submit proposals to a QUIP fund. These were to be one-off donations, of limited amounts, for quick and localized rehabilitation works. The concept of QUIP would seem to be internally contradictory. What we can quickly obtain is visibility : a school building repaired, a shallow well dug, a pond desalted. Calling this 'rehabilitation', and claiming, and believing, that it will be a significant support to the sustainable resettlement of tens of thousands of people, seems an exaggeration. 'Impact' in an environment as destitute and underdeveloped as this, is never quick. The UNHCR would have done itself a service by better advertising its commitment and its subsequent initiatives, such as its support for seed and tool distributions, its \$ 3.7m contract with SERP, and its investments in the regional Ministries of Health and Education.

The style and approach with which the cross-mandate policy was communicated created a widespread feeling among the Somali population, Ethiopian government officials and NGO staff, that the UNHCR's hidden aim was to disperse people and then leave them to their fate. People felt strengthened in their suspicion when the returnee cards were declared invalid before any operational plan had been outlined or any rehabilitative work had started.

A policy without a strategy and without a plan

A major mistake was that the cross-mandate policy was never translated into an operational plan. Being an institutionally self-referring concept, the cross-mandate could never be, on its own, an operational policy. Claiming to target the needy irrespective of category is a meaningless statement, from an operational point of view, as everybody is 'needy' and needs are in principle unlimited. Moreover, the selection of the needy was to be left to the 'community representatives' in the countryside, whose counterparts in the camp committees had earlier been discredited as corrupt and unreliable.

No thought was ever given to how to identify the most needy and in what way they could be targeted. There was no area-wide assessment nor operational criteria of

what might be considered an 'acceptable situation', e.g. access to water, health and educational services within a certain radius or time span, a minimal inventory of tools and utensils per family, a certain measurable nutritional status, etc. Consequently there was no mechanism to identify, and no criteria to compare and prioritize, more and less vulnerable or disadvantaged localities. In the absence of forward planning, there could be no phased operation, nor any monitoring of progress or evaluation of impact. Inevitably, then, resources became allocated on the basis of *ad hoc* and subjective criteria, and one can only hope that by chance, or through the Somali support mechanisms, the most needy benefited from them.

There was also never a time-frame estimated that would indicate the duration of the commitment of different players. Even within UNHCR-Ethiopia there was significant disagreement about what would constitute a responsible and operational time-frame for resettlement assistance, and what levels of assistance would be required or could be provided. Some staff were fed up with the camps and with the Somalis, and wanted to get rid of them as soon as possible. Others advocated a gradual scaling down of assistance to the camps, and resettlement support over at least three years.

The sudden announcement of the start of the cross-mandate policy overlooked the time needed for agencies to shift from a relief to a recovery-support programme. Only on the most superficial level can resources and skills be easily transferred. In practice, one needs to learn the social, political and economic dynamics of the host environment, which is different from that of camps. A new network of contacts has to be established and different approaches to work conceived and tried out. Technical engineering work uses the same skills inside or outside a camp, but for many other activities, e.g. related to livestock productivity, agricultural production, water harvesting and soil conservation, new skills are needed, which may require new staff. Moreover, whereas work in camps easily functions within a project framework, rehabilitation and recovery support often requires a programme approach, which may imply changes in the management structure of an organization.

Finally, task forces came into being, but their terms of reference and their mutual

relationships were not reflected upon or broadly agreed. Nor were levels of authority and decision-making powers clarified, all of which could only turn their meetings into long and generally frustrating affairs. In the excitement about the forthcoming pooling of resources and expertise, nobody in 1992 considered the problems that regionalization would bring about for national government policies, e.g. on disaster management, or the need to strengthen the line ministries and institutions in the Region. These topics only came to the fore in 1993 and 1994, when they were discovered to be major issues affecting the resettlement and recovery projects.

The cross-mandate was therefore a policy without a strategy and without a plan.

Total recall ?

One of the most incomprehensible aspects of the cross-mandate approach was the total absence of any reference to previous resettlement and rehabilitation programmes. Nobody dug out any of the various proposals that had been formulated in the 1980s, or referred to the project reports and evaluations that undoubtedly must be on file. This is particularly surprising in the case of the RRC and the UNHCR, both of which had been actively involved in previous resettlement exercises. Inevitably, individuals and task forces acted and took decisions as if they were starting a rehabilitation programme in virgin territory, unaware of how the attitudes and perceptions of the Somali population must have been affected by previous styles and experiences of work.

Inconsistencies in the implementation of the policy

The first major inconsistency in the implementation of the policy relates to the fact that assistance to the returnees in the camps was cut off before any resettlement support projects had been started up. As the resettlement support could not be properly targeted geographically or to the needy, many returnees delayed leaving the camp site or stayed altogether.

The second inconsistency concerned the fact that the policy had claimed that everybody in need would be assisted, irrespective of whether they were refugees, returnees or local. Yet while the returnee cards were cancelled, the refugee cards were not declared invalid and free relief assistance continued to be provided to the refugees. As noted earlier, nowhere were these inconsistencies more visible than in Kebri Bayeh camp. Originally a camp solely of returnees, in the course of 1992 and 1993 it was assigned some 9,000 Darood clan members by the UNHCR, which the agency recognized as genuine refugees. In September 1992, the UNHCR stopped the distribution of rations to the returnees and gradually moved out the water tanks, which were put up in the refugee section and in the village. The available health services were inadequate to deal with the concentration of people, but were not strengthened. The area belongs to the Abasqul Darood. The richest land is towards and in, the Jehrer valley. The population density is high already, in past decades more and more land has become privatized and enclosed, and gully erosion is out of control, as a consequence of which the water table is falling which affects the shallow wells. In other words, the remaining 8,500 returnees, the majority of whom are Abasqul, cannot easily settle into a productive life as the absorption capacity of the surrounding countryside is limited.

While the refugees drew rations and received water, throughout 1993 and 1994 the condition of the returnees in terms of food and water was precarious, particularly in the dry season. Yet they were not recognized as 'needy', because they had 'refused' to disperse.

Conclusion

In theory, the cross-mandate was a policy for the rehabilitation and recovery of Region 5, through the provision of employment-based assistance to the needy people in the region. In practice, the ultimate objective of the closure of the camps became the principal one. Announced as a general support programme for all the needy people, the emphasis was on the dispersal of camp-dwelling returnees and locally displaced people, ignoring the needs of those too poor to move and those incapable or unwilling to become farmers. Inevitably, coordination became effected in terms of task forces, not of a regional development plan.

The hope that the cross-mandate as such would lead to a recovery of the Region was exaggerated from the outset. Dealing with the ecological, socio-economic and political complexities of this region was beyond the capacity and authority of what ultimately continued to be very few players. Strategies, policies and large-scale investments are required that belong to the realm of intergovernmental politics, national policies and priorities and World Bank or UNDP scales of investment, all of which in the first place depends on strong and reasonably effective institutions. That, at best, requires a ten-year development plan, such as was envisaged in the IFAD/UNHCR mission report of 1989, which sensibly cautioned against overoptimism :

The cost of all development, however, is comparatively high and implementation slow. ... Interventions in similar regions in other parts of the world and in Ethiopia have been moderately successful at best, due largely to an inadequate understanding of the socio-economic environment, unsoundly based expectations of likely impact, and inadequate consideration of the interdependence of most development activities (IFAD/UNHCR, 1989b Summary:5).

Obviously, the assistance channelled over the past two years outside the camps and into the Region, has been helpful. Yet, given the effort and the cost, the absence of any careful targeting, and the lack of monitoring, it is doubtful that it has been provided in a very cost-effective way. The institutional vacuum is a major impediment to sustainability, but the aid agencies could have done more to develop and strengthen grassroots organizations.

All in all, one must come to the conclusion that the articulation of the cross-mandate policy was not necessary. There was a general consensus that camps - in the medium term- were not the answer to people's needs nor the best use of available resources. Instead of working out a broader operational strategy and resettlement plan, the UNHCR entangled itself in articulating a policy that created suspicion and confusion. The exercise is all the more regrettable in that time the government was launching its Ethiopia Rehabilitation Campaign (RRC, 1992a) and was working on the National Disasters Management Policy, which establishes linkages between

relief, recovery and development.

It would be unfair, however, only to criticise the UNHCR. The fundamental premise that the camps were becoming an inappropriate and inadequate approach to the more general and more structural problems of eastern Ethiopia, was correct. The UNHCR did mobilize and spent significant amounts of money on rehabilitation, and it did shake government and non-governmental agencies out of a certain lethargy to which the camp routines had brought them. In that sense, it has played a valuable catalytic role, for which it should be given credit. Neither the UNHCR nor any other single institution can be blamed for the fact that the new government in Region 5 remains in crisis. And for the national government, for a variety of reasons of its own, closure of the camps does not have the same priority as overall rehabilitation and institution strengthening.

The international community could have done, and still can do a much better job than it has so far. Ultimately, however, it is the responsibility of the national and regional governments to take the lead in organizing rehabilitation and recovery, rather than continuing to rely on short-term relief measures.

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Acronyms

ARRA :	Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs
EIPRD :	Ethiopia-Italian Programme of Rehabilitation and Development
EPLF :	Eritrean People's Liberation Front
EPRDF :	Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front
ERCS :	Ethiopian Red Cross Society
ESDL :	Ethiopian Somali Democratic League
EUE :	Emergencies Unit Ethiopia
EWS :	Early Warning Systems
IFLO :	Islamic Front for the Liberation of Oromia
IFRC :	International Federation of the Red Cross
GTZ/TOR :	Gesamtschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit/Transport Operation for Refugees
LWF :	Lutheran World Federation
MSF-B :	Médecins-sans-Frontières, Belgium
OLF :	Oromo Liberation Front
ONLF :	Ogaden National Liberation Front
MoA :	Ministry of Agriculture

MoE :	Ministry of Education
MoH :	Ministry of Health
RRC :	Relief and Rehabilitation Commission
SCF :	Save the Children Fund (UK)
SERP :	Southeast Rangeland Project
SNM :	Somali National Movement
TGE :	Transitional Government of Ethiopia
TLDP :	Third Livestock Development Programme
TPLF :	Tigray Peoples' Liberation Front
UNDP :	United Nations Development Programme
UNEPPG :	United Nations Emergency Prevention and Preparedness Programme
UNHCR :	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WSDP :	Western Somali Democratic Party
WSLF :	Western Somali Liberation Front
WUSC :	World University Service of Canada

Relief and Rehabilitation Network

The objective of the Relief and Rehabilitation Network (RRN) is to facilitate the exchange of professional information and experience between the personnel of NGOs and other agencies involved in the provision of relief and rehabilitation assistance. Members of the Network are either nominated by their agency or may apply on an individual basis. Each year, RRN members receive four mailings in either English or French. A Newsletter and Network Papers are mailed to members every March and September and 'State of the Art' Reviews on topics in the relief and rehabilitation field every June and December. In addition, RRN members are able to obtain advice on technical and operational problems they are facing from the RRN staff in London. A modest charge is made for membership with rates varying in the case of agency-nominated members depending on the type of agency.

The RRN is operated by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) in conjunction with the European Association of Non-Governmental Organisations for Food Aid and Emergency Relief (EuronAid). ODI is an independent centre for development research and a forum for policy discussion on issues affecting economic relations between the North and South and social and economic policies within developing countries. EuronAid provides logistics and financing services to NGOs using EC food aid in their relief and development programmes. It has 25 member agencies and four with observer status. Its offices are located in the Hague.

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