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UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND
Programme Committee

Recommendation of the Executive Director for an Allocation
SOMALILAND UNDER ITALIAN ADMINISTRATION

Feeding: Maternal, Pre-School and School ^{a/}

1. The Executive Director recommends an allocation to Somaliland under Italian administration of \$32,000 to cover freight costs on 924,000 pounds of skim milk powder and to provide fish-liver-oil capsules, milk distribution equipment, simple equipment for three small pilot dairies in the schools, and a vehicle for supervision to help continue and expand during the next two years (1957-59) a programme of supplementary feeding initiated by the authorities in the territory during the last year. The implementation of this allocation will be dependent upon the availability of United States surplus skim milk powder free of charge at the time shipment by UNICEF is required. The matching cost to the Government would be equivalent to US\$44,000 for the two-year period.
2. The plan for the period 1957/59 is to provide a daily supplementary snack for at least 15,000 needy children in elementary schools throughout the territory, and for 5,000 pre-school-age children and infants, pregnant and nursing mothers through the existing network of health centres. This activity was started on a small scale by the Government in 1956/57, reaching 6,000 school children and about 400 other children and mothers, in addition to an emergency food distribution to some 6 to 10,000 mothers and children during the 1956 famine. (See Annex to this paper.) While the planned extension will to a great extent relieve an acute need for better nutrition among the groups to benefit, the next period will also be used to work out further methods by which local resources can be

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a/ First request for UNICEF aid to this programme.
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applied to solve on a long term basis the urgent nutritional problems in the territory. Depending on further experience to be gained during this period, it is foreseen that a further request to UNICEF may be made at a future date.

3. The annex attached to this document outlines the problem of malnutrition in Somaliland and efforts of the Government to improve the feeding of children and mothers through canteens and school feeding schemes.

Plan of operations

4. The objective of this plan is to meet the recognized urgent need for supplementary feeding to pregnant and nursing women, infants and children as quickly as possible within the limitations of local resources and organization. During the period of the first two years of the proposed programme, methods would be explored to teach and demonstrate better feeding habits, with a view to improving resistance to disease and the general state of health by more adequate use of local food resources. As part of this endeavour efforts will be made to improve local milk production and to develop simple methods to process and preserve locally available milk for more general use.

Supplementary feeding

5. Through health institutes: The Department of Public Health maintains 140 institutions and centres of varying capacity, ranging from regional hospitals with out-patient clinics to small village centres. Some of these centres and institutions are already familiar with what is required for the establishment and supervision of supplementary feeding. The five regional hospitals in Chisimaio, Baidoa, Belet Uen, Galcaie and Bosaso, as well as two of the institutions in Mogadiscio, are operating canteens for mothers and children as a special and permanent responsibility separated from normal hospital functions. (See Annex.) All the centres in Midjertein, Mudugh and Iran have experience in the setting up of temporary feeding schemes during the yearly emergencies.

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6. Without impairing the medical work of these centres it is intended that they all undertake as part of their regular duties the distribution of reconstituted skim milk and vitamin capsules for mothers with infants and pre-school children. The numbers to be reached in this way will vary from 20 to 100 beneficiaries daily per feeding point, with a total average daily distribution of 5,000 rations throughout the Territory. Distribution will take place during 300 days of the year.

7. Through schools: There were 15,000 pupils in 130 elementary schools in the scholastic year 1956/57. Of these 12,500 were in 110 Government schools, the balance in private registered schools. About 35 per cent of the pupils were girls. Considering the annual increase in attendance it is safe to calculate that there will be 16 to 17,000 children attending elementary schools in the Territory. in 1958/59. The Education Department disposes of a special fund (Cassa Scolastica) which can be used to encourage extra-curricular activities, including school meals, school gardens and vocational training.

8. The success of the existing limited school-feeding scheme and the resulting effects which have been observed in the children's general appearance, health records and learning aptitude, make it desirable to continue the more elaborate feeding programme in eighteen schools and to extend milk distribution at least to all existing schools. Where this is possible, locally produced food will be provided in addition to the milk. Due to financial restrictions, it may be difficult in all places to use funds from the "Cassa Scolastica" for this purpose. On the other hand, past experience has shown that where such funds are lacking contributions in kind or cash have come forth from parents' committees or from other local initiative.

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9. The school feeding programme will make the following distribution:

a) Complete meal (600 calories) for 1,000 pupils in 18 schools

0.5 litres milk
15 grammes sugar
100 grammes bread
plus fruit (banana or papaya) when available

b) Milk and sugar to 14 or 15,000 pupils in 80 to 112 schools

0.5 litres milk
15 grammes sugar
plus other foods if locally contributed

Nutrition education

10. Education in nutrition is on the whole a new field in Somaliland. Elements of nutritional theory are contained in the regular curriculum for training of health auxiliaries (dressers, midwives and medical assistants) and of school teachers. Practical demonstrations in food values and preparation are taught to the female students of Mogadiscio School for Home Economics and Housekeeping. The present programme of supplementary feeding will be co-ordinated with these efforts and simple notions of food hygiene will be given with the distribution in schools and in health centres. Subject to further investigations and technical advice to be obtained from the competent United Nations agencies, a broader programme of nutritional education may be developed in the second year of the present plan.

11. School dairies: It is of interest to note an undertaking started by local initiative in the school of Baidoa, a town located in an area with considerable surplus (and corresponding seasonal shortage) of camel and goat milk. The head-master there has set up a small dairy which, with practically no other equipment than milk cans, containers and a boiler, is used for the training of the school children in clean handling of locally produced milk and in processing milk into yoghurt or cheese. In view of the importance of seasonal milk production in these areas of Somaliland which are most severely stricken by famine, this inexpensive and commendable initiative may develop

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into an excellent method for wider application. It is proposed to establish an additional three school dairies of this type. UNICEF has been requested to provide a limited range of equipment for these additional pilot trials.

12. Administration and supervision: The present programme will be administered by the Ministry of Social Services under a Somali Minister. The school projects will be the responsibility of the Educational Department, where the inspector for primary education, assisted by the school health doctor, will have the direct administrative and supervisory responsibility. The distribution through health centres will be centrally organized by the Inspector for Public Health. Following the established pattern of the health services, responsibility for setting up feeding centres will be delegated to the regional medical officers.

UNICEF commitments

13. UNICEF would provide the following for the two school years 1957/58 and 1958/59:

	<u>US\$</u>	<u>US\$</u>
a) <u>Skim milk powder, 924,000 pounds</u>		NO COST
i) for distribution in health centres: 50 grammes per day for 300 days a year, 5,000 children		
ii) for distribution through schools: 50 grammes per day for 180 days a year, 15,000 children		
b) <u>Fish-liver-oil capsules, 1.9 million capsules</u>		4,450
i) for distribution in health centres: one capsule per day for 100 days a year		
ii) for distribution in schools: one capsule per day for 30 days a year		
c) <u>Milk distribution and heating equipment</u>		3,300
i) thirty-litre pots and ladles, 100	1,050	
ii) drinking bowls, 8,000	1,250	
iii) equipment for school dairies, 3 sets	1,000	

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UNICEF commitments (continued)	<u>US\$</u>	<u>US\$</u>
d) <u>Transport</u>		2,200
Station wagon, 88-inch wheelbase, with extra set of tires and spares, 1		
e) <u>Contingency</u>		<u>260</u>
Total supplies and equipment		10,210
f) <u>Freight</u>		21,790
i) on skim milk	20,790	
ii) on other items	<u>1,000</u>	
Total recommended allocation		32,000

Co-operation with other United Nations agencies

14. The Social Affairs Officer assigned as Adviser to the United Nations Advisory Council in Mogadiscio will assist in the implementation of this plan, serving as Adviser to the Minister of Social Affairs, assisting as far as possible in its local implementation.

15. The UNESCO-assisted project of fundamental education in Dinsor will co-operate in that area. The women's club created within the UNESCO project will take part in the programme and will be in charge of feeding centres in Dinsor and in a neighbouring locality.

16. The UNESCO-assisted project for education of nomads will, as an experiment, set up a feeding centre for mothers and infants in Agmedu with a view to convey simple nutrition education to the nomads of the area.

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FAO participation

17. The present proposal is based on the findings and recommendations of an FAO special consultant who visited Somaliland in 1953. During the course of the implementation of the plan it is hoped to investigate further with FAO's assistance, the nutritional needs of mothers and children in the Territory.

Government commitments and matching

18. The Government will ensure provision of personnel, facilities, reception, warehousing and internal transportation required to move the UNICEF supplies to the feeding points, as well as the local materials and the labour required for its preparation and distribution at an estimated total cost of Somalos 40,000 each year. The major part of these costs will come from the central budgets for education and public health in proportion to their respective shares. In addition, the Government will make provision to continue the distribution of full meals in eighteen schools and seven health institutions at a cost of Somalos 30,000 and 20,000 respectively from the Departments of Education and Public Health.

19. Sugar for the school milk distribution would cost Somalos 60,000 each year. Subject to final approval, this is to be provided from the special providence fund, the "Cassa Scolastica", which is available to the Department of Education for social assistance.

20. No reliable attempt can be made at this stage to evaluate in money the local participation in terms of contributions in kind. In the scholastic year 1956-1957 more than Somalos 30,000 were contributed by parents' committees in cash and kind to match grants from the Cassa Scolastica. It is expected that this figure would increase considerably during the implementation of the present plan.

21. The total costs to the Government for the two-year programme would approximate the equivalent of US\$44,000, which is taken as matching for the proposed UNICEF allocation.

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ANNEX

Somaliland under Italian Administration

The Nutrition Problem

1. Somaliland under Italian administration suffers generally from an inadequate food supply. The Territory has been thoroughly surveyed from an economic and ethnographic point of view, including observations on staple foods and their availability. Except for the sedentary farmers along the rivers of Webi Shebelli and Juba, comprising fourteen per cent of the population, the urban population (fifteen per cent), and a small group of fishermen (one per cent), the problem of food needs and food availability is related to the economy of nomadism, as animal stock represents riches and stability with which the nomad is reluctant to part. Improvement of livestock and irrigation and the better utilization of underground water resources are basic conditions for the production of more and better food.
2. Famines occur frequently in the Territory, chiefly in Midjertein in the north; in exceptional cases they spread over the whole inland belt between the rivers. The last severe famine occurred in the drought March-June 1956, when an estimated ten thousand persons, especially infants and young children succumbed. There was also a loss of about 100,000 head of cattle.
3. In 1953, which was a good year, FAO sent a medical nutrition specialist who analysed particularly the clinical aspects of the problem of malnutrition. A representative sample of 788 infants and pre-school children, 2,698 school children, and 700 adults were examined for weights and heights. Furthermore, 3,407 persons, mainly children in school, were checked for signs of malnutrition. The recorded ratio between heights and weights would have been alarming if compared to standards of most other areas in the world. On the other hand, it is difficult to draw definite conclusions from the findings since little is known about the racial characteristics of the Somalis.
4. The clinical examination of malnutrition and deficiency did however disclose an incidence of over thirty-three per cent of mediocre or poor skeleton conformation and muscular trophism, twenty-five per cent cutaneous signs of riboflavine deficiency, sixteen per cent anaemia (probably due to malaria) and eight per cent lesions of the gums.

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5. The FAO report^{a/} concluded, inter alia:

"The agricultural production is mainly of cereals (durrah and maize) and is not sufficient to cover the requirements of the population. Livestock (cattle, goats, sheep and camels) are numerous though of poor quality. Fish reserves of Somalia are important but they affect the diet of only a low percentage of the population. Storage and processing of foodstuffs are carried out by primitive and uneconomical methods. There is no cheese industry nor processing of meat or milk. Tradition and religion both often affect adversely the diets of the people. Diets which are already poor because of poverty and insufficient food production become even poorer because of tradition or taboos. The diet is greatly influenced by occupation. Four different types of diets have in fact been observed in the following groups:

- a) people engaged in pastoral occupations;
- b) people engaged in agricultural activities;
- c) inhabitants of urban areas;
- d) fishermen.

"The diet of group a) based on animal foodstuffs, is fairly satisfactory during eight months of the year; during the four months of the dry season the diet is insufficient quantitatively. Diet of group b) is reasonably satisfactory throughout the whole year, though a certain scarcity in foodstuffs is also felt during the dry season by this group. The urban population is under-fed through the whole year, and due to lack of income, the diet is based too much on carbohydrates, which are cheap. Fishermen also receive a diet which is poor in calories and vitamins. Infant-feeding presents unusual characteristics, in that Somali babies are very rarely completely breast-fed. In the great majority of cases they are subject to "mixed" feeding (human and animal milk) from the first day of life or are altogether artificially fed. Animal milk is given to the baby undiluted, irregularly and without regard for the most elementary principles of hygiene. Milk is often supplemented with butter from the first day of life. These feeding practices are among the reasons why the infant mortality is very high!"

a/ "A Preliminary Survey of the Nutritional Status of the Population of this Territory", Report to the Government of Italy as administering authority for the trust territory of Somalia. Rome, January 1954.

Present efforts toward economic improvement

6. Important steps which in the recent years have been taken in the field of economic advancement will, in due course, have a decisive impact on the general potential for improvement of nutrition in the Territory. The Italian Trust Administration has, with United States technical and financial aid, constructed 114 deep wells and a number of silos with a total capacity of over 2,000 tons. Extension work for better soil preparation, new crops and conservation of the products has been initiated. A more even distribution of the eventually increased general food production to the deficiency areas in the north and along the coast will depend on a more permanent development of road communications.

7. In order to make the future gains of this general economic development programme available to the nation in form of improved nutrition and health, it is recognized that correlative action must be taken in regard to education so that the Somalis become aware of the elements of good nutrition. From a social policy point of view measures are at the same time required for specially needy and vulnerable groups. Whatever actions are launched to help solve the acute and persistent undernourishment and malnutrition of pregnant women, infants, pre-school and school children, these will have their value both as an immediate improvement in their state of health, and as an incentive toward a broader application of the increased resources in the future.

Present efforts to improve nutrition of needy groups

8. The 1953 FAO survey recommended as special measures:

- a) feeding programmes, atleast in the principal urban centres;
- b) school feeding programmes.

Following these suggestions the Trusteeship Administration has encouraged local initiative and voluntary efforts to provide supplementary feeding.

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9. Canteens for mothers and children: Medically certified needy mothers and children of all ages receive supplementary feeding in the five major cities of Somalia through seven centres. In the last year 405 daily beneficiaries were thus regularly provided with a substantial meal of tea, milk, bread, sugar, eggs, marmalade, and fruits, of approximately 800 calories per day. In periods and localities of temporary food emergencies, which occur practically yearly, special distributions of milk and/or grains have been organized. In 1956, during the severe famine in the north, between 6,000-10,000 women and children were reached through this action.

10. School canteens: In 1956/57 a daily regular meal of tea (with or without milk), sugar, bread and fruits was distributed to about 1,000 children in eighteen selected schools at a total cost of Somalos 58,000 (equivalent to US\$8,170), of which Somalos 28,000 were contributed by the Government, and Somalos 30,000 raised through local financing. In addition, an estimated 5,000 children in other schools received through local initiative tea or fruits as refreshments during school hours. It is common that the children who can so afford to bring a piece of bread or a bottle of milk with them for consumption at school.