

NEPAL

INITIAL OBJECTIVES

Bhutanese Refugees

- Facilitate the bilateral verification process being conducted by the Governments of Bhutan and Nepal and seek durable solutions for the Bhutanese refugees.
- Provide protection and assistance to the Bhutanese refugees until a lasting solution is found.
- Promote self-reliance of the Bhutanese refugees and encourage their active involvement in camp management.

Tibetans

- Continue to assist Tibetans in Nepal.

Other Asylum-seekers

- Conduct refugee status determination of asylum-seekers and provide legal advice and assistance to urban refugees.
- Promote accession to the 1951 Refugee Convention and the adoption of a national law on refugees.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS, PROGRESS ACHIEVED, AND CONSTRAINTS

Bhutanese Refugees

The verification of over 12,000 Bhutanese refugees residing in Khudunabari camp (one of the seven refugee camps in Nepal) was completed by mid December 2001. The Governments of Bhutan and Nepal were to hold the 12th round of ministerial level talks after the completion of verification of the first camp to discuss further the harmonisation of their positions on the four categories of refugees eligible to return. Since this ministerial level meeting failed to take place, further verification of refugees has been halted from mid-December 2001 until now.

Without further progress in the joint verification exercise, the refugees had no other option but to remain in the camps, where they are almost entirely dependent on assistance provided by UNHCR and NGOs. UNHCR, together with NGOs, continues to deliver assistance in the camps with an increasing degree of refugee participation. For example, school teachers, health workers, food-distribution personnel as well as those who are responsible for maintaining the water supply system and other services in the camps are all refugees. This has contributed to the cost-effectiveness of the UNHCR operation in Nepal and promoted self-reliance among the refugees.

During the first six months, UNHCR procured and distributed a total of 1,789 metric tons of fresh vegetables and condiments in all camps, complementing the basic food basket provided by WFP. UNHCR also provided dried skimmed milk, blended food and sugar to under-nourished refugee children under five years of age. UNHCR carried out routine maintenance and repair of refugee shelters. In order to protect the surrounding environment, UNHCR distributed a total of 1,859,146 litres of kerosene as cooking fuel to all households to discourage refugees from collecting firewood outside the camp. Basic hygiene standards were upheld through the repair and maintenance of latrines, garbage collection and vector control. All school-age children had access to education in camp refugee schools staffed by refugees.

Basic preventive and curative health facilities were available in all camps. UNHCR closely monitored medical cases referred from camp clinics to district hospitals in Jhapa and provided financial support to those hospitals, enabling them to procure the necessary medicine and cover related costs. UNHCR organised information dissemination and awareness raising activities on reproductive health, STI and HIV/AIDS targeting children and youths in all camps,

and a random sample survey on knowledge, attitude and practice was recently completed.

Tibetans

After receiving authorisation from the Nepalese authorities in September 2001 to resume border-monitoring missions to the northern border of Nepal, UNHCR conducted a mission in February 2002 for the first time since December 1999.

During 2002, UNHCR continued to urge the Nepalese authorities to release a group of Tibetans who have been detained since August 2001. They have been arrested and detained for having entered Nepal from India illegally. UNHCR appealed in writing

to the Prime Minister of Nepal on two occasions in this regard without yielding results.

Other Asylum-seekers

UNHCR continued to conduct refugee status determination for individual cases during the first half of 2002. It appears that Nepal continues to be used as a transit country to Europe and North America by asylum-seekers. As of the end of June 2002, there were nine individual asylum-seekers with cases pending.

Progress as measured against indicators

Impact/Performance Indicators	Actual Progress
Incidence of malnutrition and micro-nutrient deficiencies maintained at less than 6 per cent and 10/1000/month respectively.	Both malnutrition and micro-nutrient deficiencies were maintained at 2.55 per cent and less than 4/1000/month respectively.
Uninterrupted supply of chlorinated drinking water; improvement of personal hygiene of the refugees; incidence of skin disease and combined incidence of watery and bloody diarrhoea not to exceed 65/1,000/month and 35/1,000/month respectively.	Water supply system based on deep tube-wells and overhead storage tanks were regularly repaired and maintained. Provision of 22.5 lt./person/day (average). Water-borne diseases were relatively reduced. Marked improvement of refugee's personal hygiene.
Health indicators: Crude mortality rate: <4/1,000/year; Crude under five mortality rate <7/1,000/year; Infant mortality rate: <27/1,000 live births; Under five mortality rate: <34/1,000 live births. Reduced incidence of Low Birth Weight. Effective organisation of health education.	Health indicators kept at: Crude mortality rate at 3/1000/year; Crude under five mortality rate at 4.16/1000/year; Infant mortality rate at 19.53/1000 live birth; Under five mortality rate: 31.5/1000/live births; Incidence of Low Birth Weight – 10 per cent. A satisfactory preventive, promotive and curative health services were in place. Reproductive, immunisation and common referral health services were provided. However, major sickness like heart surgery and kidney transplant could not be supported.
Support to the refugee children, disabled refugees, single heads of household and adolescents.	The Child Play Centres provided early child development activities. Non-formal education and the "Dzonkha" literacy classes were organised in the camps. Income-generating activities such as support for establishing small shops, cotton cloth and jute mat weaving, chalk making, jute rope production and bakery were provided.
Easy access to the asylum-seekers.	81 Tibetans were transferred from the points of arrest to the Department of Immigration, Kathmandu.
Basic assistance to the Tibetans asylum-seekers in transit in Nepal and also to needy urban refugees.	352 Tibetans were assisted in the Tibetan Reception Centre. 28 cases/ 31 persons (urban refugees) were assisted.
Medical care services to the Tibetans in transit and also to urban caseload.	355 cases were treated in the Tibetan Reception Centre Clinic, and 7 cases were referred to hospitals in Kathmandu. Similarly, 6 cases/7 persons among the urban caseload received medical assistance.
Counselling services to unaccompanied minors, single women, traumatised and also seriously ill asylum-seekers.	All vulnerable cases received specific attention through counselling and medical follow-up services.
Support for the urban refugees requiring language, vocational skills training that would enable them to be self-supportive in the country of asylum or beyond.	10 cases/13 persons among the urban refugees were provided assistance to receive language and vocational skills training (mainly computer courses).

**REVISED OBJECTIVES AND
PRIORITY ACTIVITIES FOR JULY -
DECEMBER 2002**

Bhutanese Refugees

The initial objectives of the UNHCR programme in Nepal remain unchanged. However, the global funding shortfall is affecting the programme in Nepal as well and UNHCR is in the process of reviewing the entire 2002 budget to prioritise activities. This will affect UNHCR's ability to cover refugees' needs such as clothing, blankets and other domestic items and to replace several dilapidated project vehicles.

UNHCR will continue to hold regular consultations with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Home Ministry during the year to discuss strategies and explore possibilities for early durable solutions for the Bhutanese refugees. Similarly, UNHCR will maintain close communication with the embassies of interested major donors, keeping them informed of the evolving situation surrounding the Bhutanese refugees. UNHCR will also continue to make efforts to increase awareness and provide information to Government

officials, parliamentarians and legislators, on all aspects of UNHCR's role and work, including the protection of Bhutanese refugees.

Tibetans

The main priority of UNHCR is to obtain renewed permission from the Nepalese authorities to undertake border monitoring missions to the Northern Border, despite the officially stated security concerns. UNHCR continues to appeal for the early release of a group of Tibetans having been arrested while attempting to cross Nepal from India, and follow up with the Government's efforts in issuing identity cards and travel documents.

Other Asylum-seekers

The process of status determination will remain unchanged. The Office will closely monitor the number of new arrivals, their travel route and nationality in order to assess the increase of individual cases using Nepal as a transit country towards third countries. The Office will continue to seek actively durable solutions for this group, in particular, resettlement to third countries.

Annual Programme Budget			
Initial Budget	Revised Budget	Total Funds Available	Obligation Level
5,760,044	5,857,685	2,874,280	2,799,389