

4th Meeting

UPDATE ON REGIONAL DEVELOPMENTS IN ASIA AND OCEANIA

1. This document is divided into three chapters, as follows:

Chapter I: Regional Overview

Chapter II: Regional Special Programmes (Comprehensive Plan of Action, Myanmar repatriation, Sri Lanka repatriation)

Chapter III: Country/Area Reviews (Australia and New Zealand, Bangladesh, China, Hong Kong, India, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Viet Nam, Other countries in Asia and Oceania).

Two annexes summarize past levels and budgetary information.

I. REGIONAL OVERVIEW

A. Populations of concern to UNHCR in the region

2. As of 1 January 1996, there were some 1.5 million persons of concern to UNHCR in the area covered by the Regional Bureau for Asia and Oceania, representing an overall reduction of some 100,000 persons from the previous year. This population comprised 887,800 refugees, 357,500 returnees, 249,700 internally displaced persons and 46,800 asylum-seekers.

3. Of the refugees, the largest caseloads in 1995 were in China (288,300), India (274,100), Nepal (126,100), Thailand (101,550) and Bangladesh (51,100). Among the assisted returnees, significant caseloads were in Myanmar (196,300), Sri Lanka (54,000) and Viet Nam (18,200). The largest group of asylum-seekers were some 36,500 Vietnamese in ASEAN first asylum countries and Hong Kong who did not fulfil internationally recognized refugee criteria under the Comprehensive Plan of Action for Indo-Chinese Refugees (CPA) and were expected to return to their country of origin.

B. Highlights

1. The Comprehensive Plan of Action for Indo-Chinese Refugees

4. The CPA, adopted at the International Conference on Indo-Chinese Refugees held in Geneva on 13 and 14 June 1989, was established as a framework for international cooperation at a time when asylum in South-East Asia was in crisis. At its seventh and final meeting in Geneva on 5 and 6 March 1996, the Steering Committee of the International Conference on Indo-Chinese refugees confirmed that the CPA should formally come to an end as of 30 June 1996.

5. During its seven year life span, the CPA provided temporary refuge for some 112,000 asylum-seekers from Viet Nam and the Lao People's Democratic Republic, reduced clandestine departures, expanded legal departure possibilities and introduced region-wide refugee status

determination procedures which helped stem the flow of asylum-seekers. The CPA facilitated the recognition and subsequent resettlement of over 74,000 Vietnamese refugees, and supported the repatriation to their country of origin and subsequent reintegration of over 88,000 Vietnamese who did not fulfil internationally recognized refugee criteria. The CPA also facilitated the resettlement of some 51,000 Lao and supported the voluntary repatriation and reintegration in their country of origin of some 22,400 Lao, most of whom were recognized as prima facie refugees.

6. During the post-CPA phase-out period from 1 July to 30 September 1996, UNHCR will support, on a good offices basis and subject to the availability of funds, transitional arrangements in ASEAN countries of first asylum aimed at the completion of repatriation or the provision of alternative solutions for the residual Vietnamese non-refugee populations. Pending return, UNHCR will also continue to support voluntary repatriation and care and maintenance assistance in Hong Kong, and will maintain its support for returnee reintegration and monitoring activities in Viet Nam and the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

2. Myanmar repatriation

7. The voluntary repatriation of refugees from Bangladesh to Rakhine State in Myanmar continued, albeit at a much lower pace than had been anticipated. Some 5,300 persons repatriated between January and June 1996, bringing the total number of returns to 201,000 as at the end of June 1996. As of this date, there remained some 47,000 refugees in five camps in Bangladesh.

8. Between March and May 1996, several thousand Muslim residents from the Rakhine State in Myanmar are reported to have arrived in Bangladesh. From interviews with new arrivals and the monitoring of circumstances in areas of origin, it would appear that poverty and food shortage constitute the principle reasons for departure. While there is no conclusive evidence that other factors constitute reasons for departure, UNHCR is concerned at reports of possible human rights infringements within the Rakhine State and is closely monitoring the situation. UNHCR's principal operational aim is to alleviate the poverty gap in areas of origin through the expansion of income generation and other self reliance assistance measures aimed at anchoring economically vulnerable communities which include returnees.

3. Sri Lanka repatriation

9. Between 1992 and 1 January 1996, 54,059 persons returned from India and benefited from UNHCR's Special Programme in Sri Lanka. Of this number, 7,464 persons were staying in government centres as of 30 April 1996, while the remainder had returned to their home areas. A total of 10,013 persons returned in the first quarter of 1995. There have been no new returns to Sri Lanka from the southern Indian State of Tamil Nadu following the breakdown of peace talks and resumption of hostilities between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the Government of Sri Lanka on 19 April 1996. There are some 56,000 Sri Lankan refugees accommodated in camps in India and a further 45,000 who reportedly reside outside the camps.

10. UNHCR, together with other United Nations agencies and international and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), continues to complement government assistance in providing relief assistance to the displaced persons, including some 200,000 persons who were displaced from the Jaffna Peninsula and entered the Vanni region. The implementation of community based micro-projects to facilitate reintegration of both returnees and internally displaced persons also continues to be emphasized in their areas of origin. The bilateral agreement between the Governments of Sri Lanka and Switzerland governing the return of rejected Sri Lankan asylum-seekers has been extended for a period of two years as of 2 April

1996.

4. Bhutanese asylum-seekers in Nepal

11. There has been limited substantive progress with respect to durable solutions for some 90,000 Bhutanese asylum-seekers in camps in Nepal during the reporting period. However, it is encouraging to note that the bilateral negotiations are continuing between the concerned Governments. In all, seven rounds of bilateral talks were held to date, with the last one having taken place in Kathmandu in early April 1996. It is expected that the next (eighth) round will be held in Thimpu in the second half of 1996.

5. Consultations on Refugee and Migratory Movements in South Asia

12. The third informal Consultations on Refugee and Migratory Movements in South Asia are scheduled to be held in New Delhi from 9 to 11 September 1996. This consultative process was launched in 1994 with the objective of developing an informal regional forum in which eminent persons from South Asian countries could consider issues relating to migration and displacement of populations in the region. The agenda for this meeting will include consideration of legal aspects of asylum, the internally displaced and the stateless, as well as a draft regional declaration on refugees in South Asia. The declaration has been drafted on the basis of discussions at the Second Regional Consultations held in Colombo in September 1995.

6. The Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee (AALCC)

13. The AALCC, in collaboration with UNHCR, will host a seminar in December 1996 to commemorate 30 years of the adoption of the Bangkok Principles concerning Treatment of Refugees. The Bangkok Principles were an important landmark in the development of basic standards for the reception and treatment of refugees in Africa and Asia. The purpose of the seminar is to take stock of legal and policy developments regarding the treatment of refugees and protection related issues since 1966 within the regions of AALCC member states. The opportunity will be taken to review the impact of the Bangkok Principles, as well as to revisit and/or elaborate some of these principles through the adoption of conclusions or a declaration. A Preparatory Meeting is scheduled to be held in September 1996 involving selected government officials from several AALCC member states.

7. Regional Colloquium on Refugee Status Determination Processes

14. A regional colloquium on refugee status determination processes, initiated by the Australian Government and with which UNHCR is cooperating, is scheduled to be held in September 1996 in Australia. The invitees include a diverse range of States from the South East Asia, Oceanic and Southern Pacific regions, both party and non-party to the 1951 Refugee Convention and/or to the 1967 Protocol. The purpose is to share experiences and information on issues relating to the protection of refugees, specifically on the basis of refugee law and the role of status determination procedures. Areas of common concern will be identified, including a regional analysis of policies and mechanisms to deal with refugee issues.

8. Resettlement consultations

15. Formal consultations on resettlement were held on 24 June 1996 in Geneva involving the main resettlement countries. Under the CPA more than 74,000 Vietnamese and 51,000 Lao refugees have been resettled in third countries since its inception in June 1989. Approximately 1,600 refugees remain in camps in South-East Asia. Two thirds of this caseload, however, is inadmissible for resettlement, and other solutions, including the possibility of voluntary repatriation to their countries of origin, are being considered. One third (approximately 500) are

actively being processed for resettlement at the time of the closure of the CPA on 30 June 1996. Special groups included in this caseload are refugees with family links, medical cases, unaccompanied minors and women who have suffered from traumatic events. Extraordinary efforts are being undertaken to seek an effective and durable solution for this group. With the end of the CPA, resettlement needs for this region have diminished substantially. Resettlement will, however, continue on an individual basis for persons of concern. One exceptional residual post-CPA caseload, the 6,400 Lao refugees in Thailand, have been offered a time-limited resettlement opportunity by the Government of the United States.

C. Programme budget

16. Total programme expenditure in the region for 1995 amounted to \$ 95.8 million, comprising \$ 41.2 million under General Programmes and \$ 54.6 million under Special Programmes. The revised 1996 requirements as at 1 May 1996 amount to \$ 105.9 million, comprising \$ 35.6 million under General Programmes and \$ 70.3 million under Special Programmes (see Annex 1). Tentative initial 1997 requirements for the region amount to \$ 52.2 million, comprising \$ 33.4 million under General Programmes and \$ 18.8 million under Special Programmes. These initial 1997 estimates will be reviewed further in November 1996 during the Regional Operations Review.

17. The revised 1996 General Programmes estimates show a modest decrease compared to 1995 expenditure reflecting a reduction in the requirements of the Bangladesh programme due to the high level of repatriation during 1995, and initial cost reductions due to the commencement of the reduction of UNHCR's post-CPA presence. The significant increase in Special Programmes, however, reflects the delayed implementation of repatriation operations under the CPA during 1995 and the consequent extension of care and maintenance into 1996 for Vietnamese non-refugees pending return and the re-budgeting of repatriation allowances and transportation costs. Upwards revisions were also required under 1996 Special Programmes in view of the need to continue returnee reintegration assistance in Myanmar and Sri Lanka, as well as contribute to relief efforts for large numbers of newly displaced persons in Sri Lanka.

D. Post situation

18. The revised 1996 post requirements (see Annex 2) for the region as of 1 January 1996 stand at 448.8 work-years (466 posts) as compared to 480.1 work-years (496 posts) for the previous year as at 1 January 1995. There is thus a net reduction of 30 posts resulting from decreases in most of the CPA countries, Cambodia and Bangladesh; this is partially offset by an increase of one post in China, two in Nepal, one in Viet Nam and eleven in Sri Lanka due to the opening of a new Field Office in Kilinochchi and the strengthening of the Jaffna Field Office (which has been relocated to Point Pedro) with one additional international Officer for field monitoring. There are no changes in Australia and New Zealand, India or Japan. The initial 1997 post requirements are 338.8 work-years (373 posts). This major reduction in 1997 is subject to further review during the Regional Operations Review in November 1996.

II. REGIONAL SPECIAL PROGRAMMES

1. Comprehensive Plan of Action

19. The Steering Committee of the International Conference on Indo-Chinese Refugees, at its seventh and final meeting in Geneva on 5 and 6 March 1996, confirmed that the CPA would formally come to an end as of 30 June 1996 and that UNHCR would phase down its care and maintenance activities with respect to Vietnamese non-refugees in ASEAN first asylum countries as of that date. With respect to Hong Kong, UNHCR would make other appropriate arrangements aimed at solving the Vietnamese boat people problem as soon as possible.

20. An appeal for \$ 51.9 million was launched in February 1996 to cover the costs of care and maintenance and repatriation-related assistance for Vietnamese non-refugees in ASEAN countries for six months, and to continue such assistance in Hong Kong. The appeal also covered the continuation of returnee monitoring activities and reintegration assistance in Viet Nam and the Lao People's Democratic Republic until the end of 1996.

21. Since the beginning of 1996, considerable progress was achieved towards the repatriation of residual populations of Vietnamese non-refugees in first asylum camps in ASEAN countries and Hong Kong. As of 30 June 1996, the overall screened-out population had been reduced from 36,400 to 24,000. In Malaysia, virtually all non-refugees were repatriated by the end of June, permitting the closure of the Sungei Besi camp. With the formal completion of the CPA, UNHCR will continue, on a good offices basis and subject to the availability of funds, to support repatriation and care and maintenance assistance pending return up to 30 September 1996 in Indonesia and Thailand, where a positive repatriation momentum existed at the end of the CPA. UNHCR will contribute on a one-time basis to repatriation and other solutions in the Philippines where the possibility of meaningful levels of return did not exist at the end of the CPA. UNHCR will also continue to support voluntary repatriation and care and maintenance pending return in Hong Kong and will maintain its support for reintegration and monitoring activities for returnees in both the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Viet Nam for as long as necessary.

22. With regard to the residual population of 6,162 Lao in Thailand, an agreement was reached between the Governments of Thailand and the United States to facilitate a final time-limited resettlement opportunity for this caseload. It is envisaged that those accepted will be resettled by October 1996. Tripartite technical meetings between the Governments of Thailand and the Lao People's Democratic Republic, and UNHCR have taken place periodically to facilitate consultations on durable solutions for any residual population remaining after the completion of the United States' resettlement initiative.

23. In conjunction with the formal closure of the CPA on 30 June 1996 and the complete phasing out of UNHCR care and maintenance and repatriation-related assistance in ASEAN countries as of 30 September 1996, UNHCR will progressively reduce its staffing levels in ASEAN countries of first asylum in the second half of 1996, commencing with the closure of the UNHCR Liaison Office in Singapore in July 1996.

2. Myanmar repatriation

(a) Beneficiaries

24. Some 250,000 former residents of the Rakhine State in Myanmar are estimated to have fled to Bangladesh during 1991 and 1992. Repatriation began, under a bilateral arrangement and on a limited scale, in September 1992. Voluntary repatriation under UNHCR auspices started after the signing of two Memoranda of Understanding: the first between UNHCR and the Government of Bangladesh on 12 May 1993; and the second, on 5 November 1993, between UNHCR and the Government of the Union of Myanmar, which enabled the establishment of an operational presence in Rakhine State in early 1994.

25. Between September 1992 and April 1994, 54,571 persons repatriated under the bilateral arrangement. Between April 1994 and June 1996, more than 147,000 persons returned under UNHCR auspices to the Rakhine State. This return of over 201,000 persons enabled the closure of 15 out of 20 camps in Bangladesh. Some 47,000 refugees remained in the camps at June 1996.

26. At 1 January 1996, 196,300 returnees were being assisted by UNHCR in Myanmar. Of the overall caseload, 49 per cent are male. Some 60 per cent are children under 18 years old. With only two out of the initial five reception centres in Myanmar now being used, UNHCR staff

are able to focus more on monitoring and the implementation of small-scale reintegration projects. An elaborate programme including a World Food Programme (WFP) food-for-work component is now taking shape.

27. UNHCR promotes voluntary return in the camps in Bangladesh through separate information sessions for males and females and ensures the voluntary nature of the decision to return by interviewing privately each head of family prior to return. Persons who wish to change their mind and who do not want to repatriate are able to do so during the interview and/or up until departure. Each person has to receive clearance from the Myanmar authorities prior to return. In spite of the current difficulties regarding a more time-consuming clearance process for those former residents who volunteer to return, it is nevertheless anticipated that the movement phase will be completed during 1996.

(b) Recent developments and objectives

28. During the period March to May 1996, several thousand persons from Myanmar reportedly arrived in Bangladesh. While the exact cause for their departure is not known (no significant changes in the area of operations could be observed), poverty is thought to be the main factor. UNHCR thus continues to focus its attention towards improving the situation in the villages of origin in Myanmar.

29. UNHCR also continues to monitor actively the reintegration process of the returnees. The most important aspect of this monitoring role is to ensure, through continuous dialogue with the Myanmar authorities, that the rights of returnees are respected and that they are not treated differently from other residents of Rakhine State. UNHCR staff (at present 15 in Rakhine State and 4 in Yangon) have unhindered access to the returnees and can travel freely in the area of operations. Protection cases brought to the attention of UNHCR during these visits, or by returnees visiting the UNHCR Office in Buthidaung or Maungdaw, have been addressed promptly by the authorities and resolved in a satisfactory manner.

30. Since the beginning of the UNHCR-assisted repatriation, only a few cases of physical abuse and extortion of returnees by local authorities have been reported. In all cases, UNHCR's intervention was successful and resulted in decisive administrative action by the Myanmar authorities aimed at preventing any repetition of such incidents.

31. In order to improve the livelihood of the population at large in the returnee receiving areas, some 2,000 activities are in progress or have been completed in the sectors of agriculture, income generation, health, education and rural infrastructure. Subject to the availability of funds, reintegration projects are expected to continue in all sectors and geographical areas during the remainder of 1996 and in 1997, making use of simple replicable project designs. The main challenge for UNHCR and the authorities continues to be the stabilization of the returnees and other residents of the Rakhine State through improving the availability of community services and, especially, by improving individuals' economic and social well-being.

32. It is planned to complete the movement phase during 1996. The focus of the 1997 programme will be the continuation of the implementation of the small-scale reintegration projects in the Rakhine State in order to improve and stabilize the situation of returnees and their host communities. The small-scale projects are most effective as a bridge between short-term needs and long-term development in the Rakhine State.

33. It is nevertheless realized that the improvement of the economic and social living conditions is a long-term process which goes well beyond the capacity of those agencies and departments who are currently involved in the repatriation and reintegration operation. The international community is to be encouraged to provide bilateral and/or multilateral funding for the implementation of development projects to ensure the continuation of a development programme following UNHCR's eventual phasing out. Priority areas are in the sectors of agriculture, health,

education, water and sanitation, community services and income generation.

34. It is anticipated that, by the time UNHCR phases-out, a system will be in place to enable the Government, with assistance of other United Nations agencies as well as the NGOs introduced to the area, to implement longer term development projects building upon the groundwork laid by UNHCR and its partners.

(c) Implementing partners/arrangements

35. The Immigration and Manpower Department (IMPD) of the newly created Ministry for Immigration and Population continues to be UNHCR's implementing partner for the overall programme. The IMPD implements its reintegration projects through the use of Village Development Committees in the sectors of health, education, community development and infrastructure.

36. Other implementing partners include the Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS), with support from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies for assistance to vulnerable groups, Bridge Asia, Japan (BAJ) for mechanical support to the entire operations and vocational training, and Action Contre la Faim (ACF) for a water supply and sanitation programme, as well as some income generation activities. Implementing arrangements also include cooperation with UNICEF and WHO in addition to locally created committees for health and education. Some 1,100 metric tons of basic food supplies will be made available by WFP in 1996 for returnees and other vulnerable individuals, in addition to 1,800 metric tons for the implementation of the food-for-work schemes which provide numerous employment opportunities in the implementation of mainly small-scale access road construction and repair, pond digging, reforestation and land preparation projects.

(d) Budget

37. The delays in the voluntary repatriation programme and the difficulties encountered in stabilizing the returnee population in the Rakhine State have compelled UNHCR to review its plan for a withdrawal during 1997. As the pace of repatriation and implementation of the reintegration programme was slower than originally anticipated, a new joint funding appeal for \$ 23.9 million (including \$ 3.6 million for WFP) was issued in November 1995 to cover a two-year extension of the period of implementation. In addition, the considerable increase in implementing capacity for the reintegration programme allowed for a greater than anticipated expansion of the programme during the current dry season (November to June). For 1997, it is expected that the main programme remaining will be the reintegration project in the returnee receiving areas of the Rakhine State.

(e) Post situation

38. At 1 January 1996, there were a total of 55 (including 15 international) posts in Myanmar, of which 36 are based in Maungdaw and Buthidaung. In addition, five international and five local sectoral specialists in the fields of income generation, health, education, community social services and rural infrastructure assist in the implementation of the reintegration programme.

(f) Implementation of policy priorities (women, children, environment)

39. Priority attention will continue to be given to those small-scale projects which primarily benefit women (health education, wells, crop and livestock projects, productive and small-scale income generation activities) and children. UNHCR will continue to promote the implementation of projects which create economic opportunities, in particular for those known to be the poorest such as the landless families dependent on casual labour and other socially and economically

vulnerable families. Income generation activities such as the establishment of small-scale enterprises, cash-for-work/food-for-work and land allocation programmes thus remain high priorities.

(g) Oversight reports

40. A three-person team, including a protection officer, undertook an inspection mission in June/July 1996 to Bangladesh (Dhaka and Cox's Bazar) and Myanmar (Yangon and Maungdaw). The report is being finalized.

3.Sri Lanka repatriation

(a) Beneficiaries

41. Between 1992 and 1 January 1996, 54,059 persons have returned from India and have benefited from UNHCR's Special Programme in Sri Lanka. At 30 April 1996, 7,464 persons were living in government welfare centres with the remainder having returned to their places of origin.

42. According to Government sources, some 829,000 internally displaced persons depended on food rations provided by the Government as of the end of April 1996. Approximately 200,000 of them were provided with limited relief assistance by UNHCR or benefited from community-based micro-projects.

(b) Recent developments and objectives

43. At 30 April 1996, the total number of internally displaced persons/returnees in government welfare centres receiving food rations was 185,870 persons. A further 653,291 were reportedly living outside with family and friends. Non-Tamil internally displaced persons in Anuradhapura and Puttalam have also benefited from both pre-resettlement (temporary shelter) and micro-project assistance (access roads, water supply, sanitation). Those displaced in and from the Jaffna Peninsula were assisted with non-food relief items, temporary shelter and relief infrastructure in the most affected areas. The implementation of the programme continued to face difficulties in that a range of items had to be transported across government controlled military defence lines into the areas under the control of the LTTE where most of the micro-project sites are located.

44. While a current focus on humanitarian relief assistance is unavoidable, efforts will be made to shift the emphasis of the assistance programme for internally displaced persons from relief and care and maintenance to rehabilitation, using a combination of material assistance aimed at their return to, and subsequent reintegration in, areas of origin and community-based micro-projects.

45. The transit facilities for returnees from India will be maintained. Provided that the security situation in the north and east of the country improves in the near future, UNHCR will assist the Government in providing care and maintenance as well as reintegration assistance to 5,000 returnees for the remainder of 1996 and up to 20,000 returnees in 1997.

46. Through its presence in the conflict zones, UNHCR has been playing a role in the protection of not only the returnees from India but also cooperating with the ICRC in providing limited protection to internally displaced persons. In order to strengthen its international presence, a Field Officer has been on mission in Kilinochchi since August 1995, and a new Field Office was opened in Kilinochchi in January 1996 to better address the humanitarian needs in these areas.

(c) Implementing partners/arrangements

47. The Sri Lankan Ministry of Shipping, Ports, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction (MSPRR) coordinates project activities related to the UNHCR Special Programme in Sri Lanka. Under the framework and parameters for project activities defined by the MSPRR, nine NGOs implement emergency relief assistance in various sectors and micro-projects, namely CARE International, Médecins sans Frontières (France), the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society Trincomalee Branch and Vavuniya Branch (SLRCS/TCO and SLRCS/VAV), Campaign for Development and Solidarity (FORUT), the Social and Economic Development Centre (SEDEC), the Rural Development Foundation (RDF), the Sewa Lanka Foundation (SLF), and Lanka Jitika Sarvodaya Shamadana Sangamaya (SARV).

48. The Northern Province Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Authority (NPRRA), set up in January 1996, should soon be taking over MSPRR functions in all districts where UNHCR is working, with the exception of Trincomalee. However, the NPRRA is not yet fully operational and has yet to define a formal relationship with UNHCR (or any other agency), but this is expected to be accomplished in the near future.

(d) Budget

49. In February 1996, an appeal for the 1996 Special Programme in Sri Lanka was issued with requirements totalling \$ 8.8 million, of which \$ 2.1 million is for sectoral relief assistance for returnees and internally displaced persons, \$ 3.7 million for micro-projects and \$ 3 million for programme delivery and administrative support costs. This Special Programme covers emergency relief assistance for returnees from India and internally displaced persons in returnee areas, care and maintenance for non-Tamil internally displaced persons, and micro-projects to facilitate reintegration of both returnees and internally displaced persons.

50. In late 1995, due to the military operation in the Jaffna Peninsula, UNHCR had to temporarily relocate its Field Office in Jaffna to Point Pedro. In order to review and better monitor the implementation of micro-projects in the Vanni region and to strengthen the international presence in returnee-receiving areas in northern Sri Lanka, a new Field Office was opened in Kilinochchi in 1996.

51. Furthermore, UNHCR maintains a presence in Tamil Nadu, India, to ensure the voluntary character of repatriation of Sri Lankan Tamil refugees. The repatriation from India has however been suspended since April 1995 due to the security situation in the north and east of Sri Lanka following the breakdown of peace talks between the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE and the subsequent resumption of armed hostilities between the two parties.

(e) Post situation

52. The staffing level in Sri Lanka was also reviewed and increased as of January 1996 in that one international and eight local posts were created while two local posts were discontinued. In addition, the Regional Telecommunication Officer post was transferred from Thailand to Sri Lanka as of 1 April 1996. Thus, the 42 posts as of 1 January 1995 increased to 53 posts as of 1 January 1996, and is initially planned to reach a total of 54 posts as of 1 January 1997.

(f) Implementation of policy priorities (women, children, environment)

53. Starting from the planning phase, care is taken to consider special needs of women as well as other vulnerable beneficiaries such as unaccompanied minors, the disabled or elderly persons. To promote this approach and improve overall project design, UNHCR sponsored

People-Oriented Planning (POP) workshops for government officials, NGO representatives and UNHCR field staff. UNHCR has also funded micro-projects through implementing partners which concentrate on assistance to groups with special needs, such as war widows. Furthermore, UNHCR has implemented a number of policy and procedural modifications to address the needs of women and vulnerable groups according to the recommendations of a UNHCR-funded socio-economic review conducted in late 1995.

(g) Oversight reports

54. Information on this issue is provided under the country review for Sri Lanka.

III. COUNTRY/AREA REVIEWS

1. Australia and New Zealand

(a) Beneficiaries

55. The UNHCR Regional Office in Canberra covers Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea (from 1 July 1996) and twelve other countries in the South Pacific. There are currently some 35,600 refugees and asylum-seekers in Australia and New Zealand to whom assistance is provided by the respective Governments, with the help of NGOs. Australia and New Zealand are among the ten countries which provide annual quotas for refugee resettlement.

(b) Recent developments and objectives

56. During the reporting period, there were several boat arrivals in Australia from China. Vietnamese refugees settled in China who had travelled to Australia on boats were returned to China in accordance with a Memorandum of Understanding between the two countries.

(c) Budget

57. The UNHCR Regional Office in Canberra implements a modest project covering the promotion of refugee law and related training in the region. No significant budget variations are anticipated.

(d) Post situation

58. No creation or discontinuation of posts took place during the reporting period. The External Relations Officer post was relocated from Sydney to the Regional Office in Canberra.

(e) Oversight reports

59. No reports were initiated during the reporting period.

2. Bangladesh

(a) Beneficiaries

60. As at end-June 1996, some 47,000 refugees from the Rakhine State of Myanmar were accommodated and assisted in five camps in southern Bangladesh. There has been a steady population increase due mainly to the high birth rate (200 to 300 per month) and the slow rate of voluntary repatriation.

61. In addition, 158 refugees of various origins lived in urban areas, of whom 142 were assisted by UNHCR (87 Somalis, 37 from Myanmar, 7 Iraqis, 5 Iranians, 5 Sri Lankans and 1 Palestinian).

62. Of the total caseload, 51 per cent were female, 24 per cent were children below five years of age, and 36 per cent were between 5 and 17 years.

(b) Recent developments and objectives

63. During the first four months of 1996, 1,031 Myanmar refugees repatriated voluntarily to the Rakhine State. Although a large scale repatriation movement during the first half of the year and completion of the movement phase of the voluntary repatriation programme by the end of June 1996 had been anticipated, a number of factors prevented UNHCR from making the envisaged progress during these first four months. The main factor was continuing delays in obtaining clearance of the applicants from Myanmar. Another was the then prevailing security situation in Bangladesh, which arose when the opposition parties declared nation-wide strikes and started "non-cooperation" movements which lasted for almost one month, during which Security Phase II was declared by the United Nations Designated Official. Furthermore, between March and May 1996, several thousand persons from Myanmar are reported to have arrived in Bangladesh.

64. Notwithstanding these delaying factors, efforts are continuing to achieve the repatriation of the residual population of some 47,000 persons by the end of 1996. However, a contingency level of care and maintenance assistance has been provided for in 1997 in light of the prevailing circumstances.

65. During the first four months of 1996, three urban cases (11 persons) were resettled in third countries. While continuing care and maintenance assistance, durable solutions will be sought for the urban caseload through close monitoring of the situation in their respective countries of origin and pursuing third country resettlement wherever necessary and feasible.

66. See also Section II, paragraph 2 for more information on the Myanmar repatriation Special Programme.

(c) Implementing partners/arrangements

67. The care and maintenance project for the Myanmar refugees in the camps is currently implemented by the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MDMR) and by a number of NGOs: Médecins sans Frontière-France, Médecins sans Frontières-Holland, Save the Children Fund- UK, OXFAM, CONCERN, and the Bangladesh and Community Development Centre (CODEC). WFP provides the main component of the food basket for these refugees. The care and maintenance project for the urban caseload is implemented by the Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM).

(d) Budget

68. Initial assumptions that the voluntary repatriation of the Myanmar refugees in Bangladesh would be completed by the end of 1995, meant that no initial provision was made in 1996 for care and maintenance programme for this caseload. However, the low repatriation movements during the second half of 1995 necessitated the continuation of the care and maintenance programme into 1996, resulting in an upward adjustment in staffing and certain non-staff costs. The revised 1996 requirements are therefore higher than the initial 1996 budget. The proposed initial 1997 budget for care and maintenance provides in the main for persons who may not have repatriated to Myanmar by the end of 1996 for lack of clearances or because repatriation is not an immediate viable solution.

(e) Post situation

69. In the light of the overall trend of low repatriation movements during the first four months of 1996 and given the need for continued assistance in the camps and a protection and monitoring presence with regard to new arrivals, the planned reduction in staffing levels for 1996 and 1997 could not be fully implemented as envisaged. Staffing levels in Bangladesh will need to be further reviewed during the second half of 1996 in light of these developments.

(f) Implementation of policy priorities (women, children, environment)

70. As in prior years, compressed rice husks are being distributed as cooking fuel to all families in the refugee camps in order to prevent, or at least limit, the collection of firewood and deforestation around the camps. In 1996, kerosene for ignition of the compressed rice husks is also being distributed to refugee families so as to ensure that they do not need to collect firewood for this purpose.

71. During 1996, financial support towards basic, non-formal, education activities was introduced, benefiting all illiterate boys and girls enrolled in various educational activities in the camps. The attendance of girls is being given priority. Special literacy programmes for young women are planned for implementation at a later stage.

72. The culturally sensitive issue of how to involve women in the distribution of food is also being addressed in an active manner by WFP and UNHCR with the involvement of camp officials, NGOs and the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society which is responsible for the distribution of food in the camps. Immunization programmes continue to be implemented in all camps, and the issue of sanitary supplies for women is currently being examined.

(g) Oversight reports

73. A three-person team, including a protection officer, undertook an inspection mission in June/July 1996. A United Nations audit is planned for July 1996.

3. China

(a) Beneficiaries

74. As at 1 January 1996, China hosted a refugee population of 288,300 persons. Among them there were 28 Somalis, 8 Burundians, 4 Rwandans, 3 Iranians, 1 Sri Lankan and 1 Sudanese. The remainder were Indo-Chinese refugees. The non-Indo-Chinese refugees reside mainly in major cities and the durable solution sought for this group is primarily third country resettlement and, in some cases, voluntary repatriation. This group continued to receive material assistance, pending a durable solution.

(b) Recent developments and objectives

75. UNHCR's presence in China was regularized as that of a Branch Office on 1 December 1995 following the signature of a Branch Office Agreement in Geneva between the Chinese Permanent Representative to the United Nations Office at Geneva and the High Commissioner.

76. Throughout 1996, the reorientation of the local settlement programme toward self-sustainability is expected to gain further momentum. Some 90 per cent of the entire programme budget for 1996 is attributed to 15 projects under the revolving fund credit scheme. In March 1996, a programme review mission was undertaken to evaluate the progress of this scheme. It

was noted that almost all the projects selected for 1995 turned out to be successful. In addition to the ongoing provision of basic life sustaining assistance to individual refugees and asylum-seekers, emphasis will continue to be placed on the promotion of international refugee law.

77. In early February 1996 UNHCR allocated \$ 25,000 from the Emergency Fund for emergency relief in the aftermath of an earthquake in Yunnan province, where a number of UNHCR-assisted refugees live.

(c) Implementing partners/arrangements

78. UNHCR assistance to refugees in China is channelled through the Ministry of Civil Affairs which, through its Office for the Reception and Settlement of Indo-Chinese refugees (ORSIR) and the provincial branches of the latter, implements the projects. At the provincial level, the Office for Overseas Chinese Affairs and the Land Reclamation Bureau are also involved. The project for the care and maintenance of non-Indo-Chinese refugees is implemented by UNHCR.

(d) Budget

79. The 1996 programme of assistance for the local settlement of Indo-Chinese refugees entails a total budget of \$ 2.1 million. A mid-term review of the implementation of the revolving fund was held at the end of June 1996. Its findings and recommendations will be incorporated into the revised 1997 country programme submission.

80. The scope of assistance under the 1996 care and maintenance programme for non-Indo-Chinese refugees generally remained unchanged. However, some variations are expected during the remaining period of the year which would entail additional budgetary requirements due to the increase in the caseload and for the purposes of refugee law training activities.

(e) Post situation

81. The existing post level will be maintained throughout 1997. However, as the currently independent office in Hong Kong will acquire the status of a Sub-Office under Branch Office Beijing subsequent to the handover of sovereignty of Hong Kong in mid-1997, the number of UNHCR posts in China will show a corresponding increase.

(f) Implementation of policy priorities (women, children, environment)

82. The proposed UNHCR/FAO project entitled "Women-Targeted Income-Generating Activities in Selected Refugee-Hosting Areas in China" did not materialize due to budgetary constraints. UNHCR will continue its efforts to promote the project with potential donors.

83. Since 1995, new programme elements in the area of community services have been introduced in the care and maintenance programme. Informal education will continue to benefit refugee children who are unable to attend normal schools in China due to current regulations.

84. At present, preliminary work is being undertaken to assess the possibility of implementing a project for the conservation and improvement of the environment in refugee-hosting areas in China.

(g) Oversight reports

85. An internal audit was carried out in 1995. Issues covered included the listing of project assets under the assistance programme, future deployment of these assets, the possibility of

using local currency for the project budget, and the loan agreements to be used under the revolving fund scheme. These issues are being pursued.

4.Hong Kong

(a) Beneficiaries

86. As at 1 January 1996, some 19,800 asylum-seekers from Viet Nam who were determined not to be refugees under the CPA and are expected to return to Viet Nam, remained in Hong Kong. In addition, some 1,500 Vietnamese refugees also remained, pending durable solutions.

(b) Recent developments and objectives

87. Although the Steering Committee of the International Conference on Indo-Chinese Refugees had agreed that the CPA would formally end on 30 June 1996, (see Section II, paragraph 1) in view of the magnitude of the residual Vietnamese non-refugee caseload of 15,000 persons, it was decided that UNHCR's repatriation and care and maintenance assistance pending return would continue in Hong Kong. Further efforts will be made to resettle as many Vietnamese refugees as possible.

88. The emphasis in 1996 will continue to be placed on the promotion of voluntary repatriation. Since the beginning of 1996, the number of applicants for voluntary repatriation has increased steadily. However, the situation in the detention centres for Vietnamese non-refugees remains volatile. In May 1996, a riot in the most densely populated detention centre resulted in considerable damage to the facilities and to property.

89. The Hong Kong authorities and the Viet Nam Government agreed that the final medical examination of voluntary repatriants will be undertaken in Viet Nam instead of in Hong Kong during the second half of 1996. This approach will simplify the pre-departure process for the voluntary repatriation of screened-out cases and contribute to cost savings.

(c) Implementing partners/arrangements

90. The projects in Hong Kong are implemented by the Hong Kong authorities, a number of voluntary agencies, and by UNHCR itself. The agencies include the International Catholic Migration Commission, St. Stephen's Management Ltd., Christian Action, Médecins sans Frontières, International Social Service and Caritas.

(d) Budget

91. The scope of assistance under the 1996 General and Special Programmes will generally remain unchanged. In the past years, UNHCR has not been able to raise sufficient funds for the care and maintenance programme in Hong Kong. The Hong Kong authorities have therefore advanced the required funds and have reported that such advances amounted to some \$ 140 million as at 1 January 1996.

(e) Post situation

92. The size of the UNHCR office in Hong Kong has experienced a dramatic reduction since mid-1995. With the continuation of repatriation and care and maintenance assistance through mid-1997, a core staffing level will be maintained. The staffing level of implementing partners was also reduced substantially, and further reductions are anticipated in 1997. Upon the change of sovereignty in Hong Kong on 1 July 1997, the Hong Kong office is expected to become a Sub-

Office reporting to the UNHCR Branch Office in Beijing.

(f) Implementation of policy priorities (women, children, environment)

93. Care and maintenance assistance is provided to Vietnamese refugees in the form of housing, security, domestic needs, education, medical care, counselling, social services and food allowances for the needy. As the refugees enjoy the right to work, they are generally self-sufficient in meeting their daily needs and contribute to the management and utility costs of Pillar Point and make a token contribution to education.

94. Care and maintenance assistance in the form of individual/family support is provided to non-Indo-Chinese asylum-seekers. Children's and women's special needs have been considered in the form of regular pre-natal examination inside and outside the camps, through a well-baby service to monitor children's growth and health, as well as through the provision of supplementary food to undernourished children.

(g) Oversight reports

95. An external audit of UNHCR's programme in Hong Kong was undertaken during 1995 and an internal audit in 1996. The former focused primarily on questions of long-term hiring of consultants and other staff under agency contracts. The latter dealt mainly with accounting questions concerning implementing partners and repayments to UNHCR of amounts not spent.

5. India

(a) Beneficiaries

96. As at 1 January 1996, 20,800 refugees of various nationalities lived in New Delhi. Of this caseload, approximately 52 per cent were female and 24 per cent were children under the age of 18. This population was composed of 19,900 Afghan, 300 Myanmar, 300 Somali, 200 Iranian and 100 Sudanese refugees.

97. In addition, the Government of India provides direct assistance to some 56,000 Sri Lankan refugees in 117 camps in Tamil Nadu State. A further estimated 36,000 are reportedly living outside the camps. UNHCR does not provide assistance to either of these groups. However, UNHCR in Madras receives regular representations from individual refugees and concerned NGOs and is thereby involved in providing protection to individual cases through consultations, mainly with State authorities. Under a Memorandum of Understanding signed with the Government, UNHCR also has continued to verify the voluntary character of the return of Sri Lankan refugees through individual interviews with those scheduled to repatriate. However, due to the deterioration of the security situation in the north and east of Sri Lanka following the breakdown of the peace talks between the Government of Sri Lanka and Tamil separatists in April 1995, and subsequent to the resumption of armed hostilities in this part of Sri Lanka, the voluntary repatriation of Sri Lankan Tamils from India has been suspended.

98. The Indian Government also hosts some 108,000 persons from neighbouring countries and provides assistance to some 53,400 Chakma refugees from the Chittagong Hill tracts in Bangladesh who are accommodated in camps in the north-eastern State of Tripura. UNHCR maintains a dialogue with the Indian authorities on issues relating to Chakma refugees brought to its attention by refugee groups and concerned NGOs.

(b) Recent developments and objectives

99. The overall programme objectives are to solicit greater participation of the Indian Government and organizations and institutions dealing with refugee affairs in order to create greater public awareness of refugee situations and issues in India and promote a legal framework for the protection of refugees. Following the establishment of a UNHCR Chair in Refugee Law in the National Law School of India University (NLSIU) in Bangalore, a plan of activities is being drawn up by the University. In collaboration with the Indian Centre for Humanitarian Laws and Research (ICHLR), an NGO, UNHCR is undertaking a comprehensive programme for the promotion and dissemination of refugee law among Indian academic institutions. A series of symposia and training courses and seminars on refugee law are planned with the participation of the respective faculties of international law in some 100 colleges/universities. Support for a ICHLR bulletin on International Humanitarian and Refugee Law to network among concerned academic institutions is also underway. With the assistance of AWARE, a prominent NGO, UNHCR is planning a series of seminars in 1996 and 1997 to create greater awareness of refugee issues among NGOs. These activities are further complemented by informal Consultations on Refugee Issues and Migratory Movements in South Asia.

100. UNHCR's efforts to rationalize assistance to individual cases on the basis of actual needs has resulted in a significant reduction in financial requirements. The handing-over of programme implementation to NGO implementing partners will also provide for greater reliance on the skills and expertise of local NGOs to encourage refugees to undertake productive activities and reduce dependency on cash assistance. In this regard, new implementing arrangements have been entered into with the Voluntary Health Association of Delhi (VHAD) and the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA). These new implementing partners have taken over assistance activities under the health/nutrition and education sectors respectively. Due to their limited experience in refugee assistance, the implementing partners will require a period of familiarization with UNHCR's programme management system so as to maintain the same level and quality of project implementation as before the hand-over.

101. During the first four months of 1996, 32 mandate refugees voluntarily repatriated and 130 were resettled in third countries.

(c) Implementing partners/arrangements

102. VHAD, the YMCA and ICHLR implement respectively the health/nutrition, education and legal assistance sectors of UNHCR's care and maintenance project in India. An implementing arrangement is also being entered into with the Public Interest Legal Support & Research Centre (PILSARC), an NGO, which will serve as an implementing partner for the provision of legal advice to individual refugees.

103. UNDP employs on a reimbursable basis 31 support staff for the implementation of the programmes for care and maintenance and repatriation. It is envisaged that this support will be phased out during 1996 and 1997 through the handing over of programme implementation to specialized NGOs. This will also result in a decrease in financial requirements for UNHCR in the coming years and pave the way for the eventual scaling-down of UNHCR staff as well in the Office of the Chief of Mission in India.

(d) Budget

104. As a result of an intensive exercise undertaken towards the rationalization of the care and maintenance programme for individual refugees which was based on determining actual needs, the revised 1996 requirements have been considerably reduced in comparison to expenditures in 1995 and the initial 1996 budget. Further reductions in total requirements are planned, as a result of which the initial 1997 requirements are proposed at a level lower than in previous years.

(e) Post situation

105. No major changes in UNHCR staffing levels are anticipated in 1996 and early 1997. However, a reduction in staffing levels is envisaged in the coming years as described above under the paragraph for Implementing Partners/Arrangements. At this stage, the 24 posts in India as of 1 January 1995 are expected to be maintained through to 1 January 1997.

(f) Implementation of policy priorities (women, children, environment)

106. Careful consideration has been given to meet the needs of vulnerable refugees in the planning and implementation of the assistance programme. Special efforts will be made to cater to women-headed families, the seriously/chronically ill and the handicapped with a view to reducing prolonged dependency and encouraging them to undertake productive activities. A survey of women-headed families and the medically-at-risk is under way to provide for more effective individually-oriented solutions. The medical and counselling activities have in particular been organized to deal with problems encountered by refugee women.

(g) Oversight reports

107. An inspection mission was carried out in February 1996. Issues covered included: support for the UNHCR Delhi's initiatives on refugee law promotion and strengthening of relations with national institutions; harmonization of protection and assistance standards between countries within a geographical area; greater information flow between countries with similar caseloads, particularly when coming under different Regional Bureaux; the promotion of a durable solution for urban refugees in India; the curtailment of open-ended assistance; and the centralization and computerization of individual case files. All the above and other issues are covered in a Plan of Action, the implementation of which is being monitored by UNHCR's Inspection and Evaluation Service.

6. Nepal

(a) Beneficiaries

108. As at 1 January 1996, some 90,000 Bhutanese refugees (49 per cent women and 56 per cent under the age of 20) were assisted by UNHCR in the camps in Jhapa and Morang districts; another 15,000 Bhutanese are reportedly residing in Nepal without UNHCR assistance. Approximately 21,100 persons of other nationalities also live in various parts of Nepal and are provided with limited legal and/or financial assistance by UNHCR. Between 1 January and 30 April 1996, 423 asylum-seekers or persons of concern (26 per cent female and 47 per cent under the age of 18) arrived in Nepal and departed on their own to various countries.

(b) Recent developments and objectives

109. The seventh round of the Bhutan-Nepal bilateral talks (April 1996), held for the first time at the foreign minister level, failed to make significant progress. However, both parties agreed to continue bilateral discussions with a view to finding durable solutions.

110. Pending a settlement of refugee issues between Bhutan and Nepal, UNHCR will continue to ensure the material welfare of the refugees in the camps in south-eastern Nepal, with greater emphasis on increasing refugee participation and refugee management in all sectors of the care and maintenance project.

111. Over the coming years, a number of issues must be addressed. With the absence of durable solutions, disappointment and depression increases in the camps, causing various social

problems. Although the refugee shelters in the Bhutanese refugee camps have been well maintained, the bamboo and clay base structures of the shelters have deteriorated after over four years of use. During the monsoon season this year, hundreds of shelters were destroyed by strong winds and storms which hit the area. The constantly increasing camp population (annual rate of 2.5 per cent) also needs to be taken into account with respect to the provision of camp facilities.

112. Reports of deportation in the northern border areas remained a matter of concern to UNHCR and the international community. The situation in this regard was subsequently addressed through the temporary appointment of a UNHCR roving Protection Officer. No serious incidents of deportation have since been encountered.

(c) Implementing partners/arrangements

113. Two government agencies and eight NGOs implement various sectors of the UNHCR-funded programme. The Tibetan Refugee Welfare Office (TRWO) provides limited relief assistance in the urban areas to those who are in need of assistance. The care and maintenance projects for the Bhutanese refugees in the camps in Jhapa and Morang districts are implemented by the Home Ministry and NGOs, namely Lutheran World Services (LWS), OXFAM-Nepal, Save the Children Fund- UK, CARITAS-Nepal, the Nepal Red Cross Society, the Centre for the Victims of Torture (CVICT), and the Association of Medical Doctors of Asia (AMDA). The Home Ministry and the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation implement the Refugee Affected Areas Rehabilitation Project Phase II (RARP II) in Jhapa and Morang districts funded by the Government of Germany. CVICT and OXFAM are expected to complete their assistance activities in the Bhutanese refugee camps and withdraw by the end of 1996 and 1997, respectively.

(d) Budget

114. There is a decrease under the revised 1996 requirements for care and maintenance with regard to the Bhutanese refugees in south-eastern Nepal, which was achieved by the handing over of responsibility for various camp operational and management of services to the refugees. There is no major change with respect to the initial 1997 budgetary requirements as compared to the revised 1996 level.

(e) Post situation

115. In order to strengthen the Branch Office's capacity in the field of protection on a longer-term basis, a Junior Professional Officer will be appointed during the latter half of 1996 as a Field Protection Officer to replace current temporary arrangements made for a roving Protection Officer to cover the northern border. In support of this post, a Protection Assistant post was also created. In addition, one National Officer post for a Health Coordinator was created in 1996.

116. The post of Regional Food Aid Coordinator currently based in Bangladesh is planned for redeployment to Kathmandu as of the beginning of 1997. This may however need to be reviewed again during the latter half of 1996 based on actual needs.

117. With the above additional posts, no other significant change in staffing is envisaged in Nepal, which will have a total of 46 posts under the revised 1996 and initial 1997 requirements.

(f) Implementation of policy priorities (women, children, environment)

118. The Branch Office in Kathmandu and the Sub-Office in Jhapa will continue their efforts to promote representation and active participation of women in the camp committees and in all the aspects of the assistance programme in the camps in line with the general policy of handing over

of such roles to the refugees. In particular, the supplementary income generation/relief substitution projects, initially implemented by an NGO implementing partner, will be taken over by the Refugee Women's Forum (RWF) in mid-1996.

119. A large number of Bhutanese refugee children of primary school age (approximately one third of total camp population) continue to receive general primary education.

120. RARP II will continue with the trust funds contributed by the German Government.

(g) Oversight reports

121. An inspection and evaluation mission undertaken in late 1995 addressed a number of issues. Its report recommends that UNHCR, while encouraging and closely following the outcome of the bilateral talks between Bhutan and Nepal, should advocate new approaches towards attaining durable solutions. Other recommendations include promoting the accession of Nepal to the 1951 Convention, closely monitoring the arrival of asylum-seekers, including along the northern border, and shifting camp management responsibilities to the refugees. A more active cooperation and coordination between the Branch Office in Kathmandu and the Field Office in Jhapa and in turn with Headquarters, including addressing the difficult working and living conditions at the field level, also form part of the important recommendations made by the mission. The report and recommendations have been received by the Branch Office in Kathmandu for implementation.

7. Philippines

(a) Beneficiaries

122. At 1 January 1996, there were 3,066 Vietnamese remaining in the Philippines comprising 2,586 non-refugees, 77 refugees and 403 others who were brought to the Philippines under the Orderly Departure Programme (ODP). The non-refugees and ODP cases are accommodated in the Philippines First Asylum Camp (PFAC) on Palawan Island, while the refugees and resettlement processing cases from Hong Kong are accommodated in the Transit Centre in Metro Manila. The Vietnamese caseload comprised 60 per cent males.

123. A further 303 non-Indo-Chinese refugees and asylum-seekers of various nationalities, including Afghans, Ethiopians, Iranians, Iraqis, Myanmar and Somalis, reside in Metro Manila, Baguio, Quezon and Mindanao. They are mostly male; only some 10 per cent are female. Children comprise 25 per cent of this population.

(b) Recent developments and objectives

124. In the first six months of 1996, 672 Vietnamese non-refugees repatriated to their country of origin under UNHCR supported voluntary repatriation and orderly return programmes, and 4 Vietnamese refugees were resettled in Australia and the United States.

125. With the formal completion of the CPA on 30 June 1996 and the phasing down of UNHCR care and maintenance as of that date (see Section II, paragraph 1), UNHCR will terminate its support for the care and maintenance of Vietnamese non-refugees as of 1 July 1996. UNHCR will contribute on a one-time basis to future repatriation and local solutions for the residual caseload of some 1,900 individuals. Efforts to identify further resettlement opportunities or other solutions for the small number of remaining Indo-Chinese refugees will continue.

(c) Implementing partners/arrangements

126. The Western Command Armed Forces of the Philippines (WESCOM) continued to be the main implementing partner responsible for the administration of the Vietnamese first asylum camp in Palawan. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) was responsible for medical clearance and travel arrangements for UNHCR-sponsored voluntary repatriation movements to Viet Nam up to the end of the CPA, and continues to be responsible for the provision of such services covering the resettlement of refugees to third countries. The Philippines Refugee Transit Centre Administration manages the Transit Centre in Manila. The Community and Family Services International provided UNHCR sponsored counselling and mental health services to Vietnamese non-refugees up to the end of the CPA and will continue to provide such services for refugees. The Refugee Services Philippines, INC (RSPI) provides counselling and assistance to non-Indo-Chinese refugees in urban areas.

(d) Budget

127. Under General Programmes, the care and maintenance assistance to non-Indo-Chinese refugees has been slightly reduced due to a streamlining of the counselling and monitoring activities. A small allocation is required to maintain the operation of the Transit Centre in Manila and for resettlement processing. The revised programme delivery and administrative support costs are slightly higher than the originally approved allocation owing to an increase in project personnel costs which relate to general support for both refugees and non-refugees and which, with the completion of the CPA, can no longer be supported under Special Programmes. The budgetary requirements for the care and maintenance of individual cases will be lower in 1997 than in 1996.

128. Under Special Programmes, care and maintenance assistance for the Vietnamese non-refugee population will terminate as of 30 June 1996 in accordance with the end of the CPA. As significant numbers of non-refugees were not expected to repatriate at the end of the CPA, a one-time lump sum contribution towards future repatriation and local solutions is envisaged, utilizing the budgetary provision which would otherwise have been required to support repatriation.

(e) Post situation

129. With the completion of the CPA, the size of the UNHCR Branch Office will be reduced in the second half of 1996 as scheduled. Within the overall objective of contributing to the achievement of solutions for refugees, the principal aim of UNHCR's post-CPA presence will be to maintain an awareness of refugee issues and to further develop a broad-based constituency sympathetic to humanitarian concerns and an institutional capacity to address future refugee situations. UNHCR will maintain a minimal presence to administer the provision of care and maintenance, counselling and legal assistance for individual refugees and asylum-seekers.

(f) Implementation of policy priorities (women, children, environment)

130. Counselling has been provided to the refugees (women, children and vulnerable cases) in accordance with their needs.

(g) Oversight reports

131. No reports were initiated during the reporting period.

8. Sri Lanka

(a) Beneficiaries

132. At 1 January 1996, 14 persons (6 Afghans, 3 Somalis, 1 Sudanese, 1 Ugandan, 1 Rwandan, 1 Pakistani and 1 Iraqi) had been recognized as mandate refugees and depend entirely on UNHCR assistance and protection, funded under General Programmes. In addition, the cases of six Iraqi, one Bosnian and one Chinese asylum-seekers were under examination. Information on UNHCR's provision of assistance to some 200,000 internally displaced persons is provided above under Section II, paragraph 3.

(b) Recent developments and objectives

133. Since Sri Lanka is not a signatory to the 1951 Convention or its 1967 Protocols and has no national asylum legislation or policy, the Branch Office will continue to assist refugees and asylum-seekers stranded in Sri Lanka.

134. UNHCR promotes awareness of the *non-refoulement* principle, and the need to develop an asylum policy and relevant legislation. Various human rights groups and experts are supported in their efforts to encourage the Sri Lankan Government to incorporate refugee protection principles and appropriate procedures into national legislation. During 1996 and 1997, awareness and promotional activities will be accelerated in cooperation with a group of institutions and eminent persons that is expected to have been enlarged in the context of the informal Consultations on Refugee Issues and Migratory Movements in South Asia.

135. The agreement between the Sri Lankan and Swiss Governments on the return of the rejected Sri Lankan asylum-seekers was extended on 2 April 1996 for two years. UNHCR will therefore continue to perform its liaison role between the returnees and the two parties and to assist in resolving particular problems encountered by the returning persons. The UNHCR Branch Office in Colombo will continue to passively monitor the safe entry and return of these persons, mainly to Colombo.

(c) Implementing partners/arrangements

136. The UNHCR Branch Office in Colombo directly implements the programmes for care and maintenance benefiting the urban refugee caseload and the promotion and dissemination of refugee law.

(d) Budget

137. The total requirements under General Programmes for the revised 1996 and initial 1997 budgets remain at almost the same level as in 1995. The UNHCR Special Programme in Sri Lanka is reported on separately under for Regional Special Programmes.

(e) Post situation

138. All the posts in Sri Lanka, with the exception of one Junior Professional Officer in Colombo, are funded under the appeal for UNHCR's Special Programme in Sri Lanka. The post situation is reported on separately under Regional Special Programmes.

(f) Implementation of policy priorities (women, children, environment)

139. Particular needs of families, children and women receive special attention, which at the moment applies to one family with three children and two single refugee women. They rely entirely on UNHCR assistance for their care and maintenance and welfare since they do not have access to employment, cannot enrol in educational institutions and do not benefit from social

services available to Sri Lankan citizens.

(g) Oversight reports

140. A United Nations audit mission took place in June 1996. An inspection and evaluation mission planned for early 1996 had to be postponed due to the prevailing security situation in the north and east of the country which severely limited access to field locations.

9. Thailand

(a) Beneficiaries

141. At 1 January 1996, there were 11,300 Indo-Chinese in Thailand comprising 6,290 Lao, 5,007 Vietnamese and 3 Cambodians. The majority of the Lao caseload (6,130 persons) were refugees, with 160 determined not to be refugees. Over half of the Lao caseload were children, 21 per cent were women and 23 per cent were men. Among the Vietnamese caseload, the vast majority (4,977) had been determined not to be refugees; 30 had been granted refugee status. The Vietnamese caseload was composed of 45 per cent men, 25 per cent women and 30 per cent children. During 1995, 516 Vietnamese refugees were resettled and 639 non-refugees returned voluntarily to their country of origin. For the Lao caseload, 2,537 were resettled and 2,466 returned voluntarily to the Lao People's Democratic Republic during 1995.

142. During the first six months of 1996, 9 Vietnamese refugees were resettled, 1,198 non-refugees repatriated to Viet Nam under UNHCR supported voluntary repatriation and orderly return programmes, and 7 Lao were resettled. At 30 June 1996, there were 6,181 Lao in Ban Napho camp (5,137 hill tribe and 1,044 lowland Lao) and 3,753 Vietnamese non-refugees in Sikhiu camp.

143. In addition to the Indo-Chinese caseload, there were, at 1 January 1996, 92,500 Myanmar refugees on the Thai-Myanmar border who were being assisted by the Burmese Border Consortium (BBC). This caseload is composed of ethnic minorities, mainly Karen, Karenni and Mon. Approximately 40 per cent are children, 30 per cent women and 30 per cent men. There were also 2,890 non-Indo-Chinese urban refugees assisted by UNHCR, of whom the vast majority were of ethnic Burmese origin (2,492 persons). As at 30 June 1996, the Burmese population in the Maneeloy Safe Area had risen from 405 in mid-1995 to 762 in mid-1996. This group is composed of approximately 64 per cent predominantly single young men, 19 per cent women and 17 per cent children.

(b) Recent developments and objectives

144. As regards the residual Vietnamese non-refugee caseload of 3,761 persons, UNHCR will continue, on a good offices basis and subject to the availability of funds, to support repatriation and care and maintenance costs pending return up to 30 September 1996.

145. UNHCR has enhanced its monitoring activities on the Thai-Myanmar border through more frequent protection missions. Several thousand Mon from Payaw camp in Thailand returned to Myanmar during the reporting period. The Burmese Border Consortium continues to assist these populations, in cooperation with the Government.

146. With regard to the urban ethnic Burmese caseload, the Government's policy that all such persons should move to the Maneeloy Safe Area is being implemented, thereby permitting UNHCR to phase down assistance to this caseload whilst at the same time assisting the Government in improving facilities in the Safe Area.

147. With regard to the residual population of 6,130 Lao refugees, an agreement was reached in early 1996 between the Governments of Thailand and the United States to facilitate a final time-limited resettlement opportunity for this caseload. By early July, some 2,000 individuals had applied for resettlement under this initiative. It is envisaged that those accepted will be resettled by October 1996. Tripartite technical meetings between the Governments of Thailand and the Lao People's Democratic Republic, and UNHCR have taken place periodically to facilitate consultations on durable solutions for any population remaining after the completion of the United States' resettlement initiative. In view of these developments, it is likely that the Lao camp in Ban Napho will require continued UNHCR support during the first half of 1997.

148. Concerning the Thai-Cambodian border, UNHCR continues to monitor border situations through the UNBRO roving Protection Officer.

(c) Implementing partners/arrangements

149. The Operations Centre for Displaced Persons of the Ministry of Interior (MOI) is UNHCR's principal implementing partner. With regard to UNHCR funded projects, the following voluntary agencies are financed by UNHCR through the MOI: the Catholic Office for Emergency Relief and Refugees (health, supplementary feeding, water, shelter, infrastructure, sanitation), the International Rescue Committee (water, sanitation, shelter, and infrastructure), Médecins sans Frontières (health, supplementary feeding), Save the Children Federation-USA (education), the Thai Red Cross (health, mailing and exchange of foreign remittances), and ZOA Refugee Care Netherlands (health and supplementary feeding). IOM is responsible for medical clearances and in-country transportation for resettlement and voluntary repatriation of Vietnamese.

(d) Budget

150. Assistance for the non-Indo-Chinese caseload is funded under General Programmes. The Lao and Vietnamese caseloads are funded mainly under Special Programmes, i.e. the CPA. Overall budgets are expected to decrease in 1996 as compared to 1995 and will reduce further in 1997, as planned.

(e) Post situation

151. In view of the complete phasing out of the CPA by 30 September 1996, it is envisaged that the 1 January 1996 level of 53 posts will be reduced by some 20 to 25 per cent by 1 January 1997.

(f) Implementation of policy priorities (women, children, environment)

152. Emphasis continues to be placed on the specific needs of women and children. A People-Oriented Planning (POP) workshop was held during the first half of 1996 for the benefit of UNHCR and NGO staff members.

(g) Oversight reports

153. An internal audit of UNHCR programme activities implemented by the Operations Centre for Displaced Persons of the Ministry of Interior was carried out in March 1995 and January 1996. The recovery of unspent balances is ongoing.

10. Viet Nam

(a) Beneficiaries

154. At 1 January 1996, there were still 36,400 Vietnamese non-refugees in camps in ASEAN first asylum camps and in Hong Kong and Japan who were expected to repatriate to their country of origin under the CPA. By June 1996, this residual population had reduced to 24,266. With the formal end of the CPA as of that date, the CPA had facilitated the safe return and provided reintegration assistance for over 88,000 Vietnamese non-refugees. UNHCR remains concerned with the situation of some 35,000 ethnic Vietnamese who arrived from Cambodia in 1993 and spontaneously settled in three southern border provinces. While UNHCR provided one-time emergency assistance to this population upon arrival and WFP provided food support in succeeding years, monitoring missions by UNHCR have determined that this population is unlikely to achieve self-reliance without further support. UNHCR is endeavouring to identify multilateral development support for those provinces and communities in which this population is seeking permanent settlement. UNHCR will continue to assist Cambodians who are accepted for resettlement in third countries, or who wish to repatriate to their country of origin.

(b) Recent developments and objectives

155. Some 12,400 Vietnamese repatriated under the CPA to their country of origin from ASEAN countries of first asylum and Hong Kong during the period 1 January to 30 June 1996. UNHCR continues to monitor the well-being and reintegration of returnees and is satisfied that the Government of Viet Nam has fully complied with its obligations under the CPA with regard to the treatment of returnees, and that the vast majority of returnees have successfully reintegrated into their former communities.

156. UNHCR will support, on a good offices basis and subject to the availability of funds, the repatriation of up to 7,100 Vietnamese non-refugees from Indonesia and Thailand up to 30 September 1996, at which time UNHCR's post-CPA repatriation and care and maintenance assistance pending return in these countries will terminate. Similar support for the repatriation of up to 15,000 Vietnamese non-refugees from Hong Kong will continue and it is envisaged that the majority of this population will repatriate by mid-1997. UNHCR will continue to monitor returnees and provide reintegration assistance through returnee community-based micro-projects during 1997 and 1998.

(c) Implementing partners/arrangements

157. The Ministry of Labour, War Invalids and Social Affairs is UNHCR's principal implementing partner for individual returnee reintegration assistance and is also responsible for the implementation of micro-projects benefiting returnees. The Ministry of Interior is responsible for the operation of reception centres for returnees in Hanoi and in Ho Chi Minh City as well as for the transportation of returnees from reception centres to the provinces of origin. The Women's Unions of Hai Phong and Quang Ninh implement vocational training programmes for women and the Vietnamese Red Cross monitors and assists vulnerable returnees.

(d) Budget

158. No assistance under General Programmes is foreseen in Viet Nam during 1996 and 1997. UNHCR supports returnee repatriation, reception, and reintegration assistance under the CPA Special Programme. As the current Special Programme appeal for the CPA covers the needs of returnees in Viet Nam for 1996 only, an appeal for 1997/1998 is envisaged.

(e) Post situation

159. UNHCR staffing in Viet Nam will remain close to the present level of 42 posts through 1997 and will be progressively reduced thereafter consistent with the phasing out of monitoring and assistance activities in line with the completion of repatriation.

(f) Implementation of policy priorities (women, children, environment)

160. UNHCR will continue to assist returnees in Viet Nam bearing in mind the special needs of women and children. Vocational training programmes for women and assistance for vulnerable returnees will be extended into 1997/1998 within micro-projects which focus on sanitation, irrigation, water supply and infrastructural support at the provincial town level.

(g) Oversight reports

161. No reports were initiated during the reporting period.

11. Other countries in Asia and Oceania

162. This chapter covers UNHCR programmes in Cambodia, Indonesia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea and Singapore.

Cambodia

(a) Beneficiaries

163. At 1 January 1996, there were 6,500 returnees assisted by UNHCR. They included persons who had returned recently to Cambodia as well as others who had returned earlier but who were still considered vulnerable, in particular women heads of household. UNHCR continued to monitor the situation of some 49,700 internally displaced persons in the north-western provinces that included a significant proportion of former returnees. In addition, UNHCR assisted asylum-seekers with refugee status determination and humanitarian assistance as required.

(b) Recent developments and objectives

164. Within the framework of reducing UNHCR's post-CPA presence in the region, and in recognition of UNHCR's limited mandate for returnees in both the scope and duration of assistance, the UNHCR Branch Office in Phnom Penh was downgraded to a Liaison Office as of 1 April 1996.

165. UNHCR's principal operational objective in 1996 is to facilitate the return of some 400 Cambodians who remained in camps in South East-Asia as of 1 January 1996. Considerable progress has been achieved; 100 returned during the first six months of 1996 and arrangements were well under way for the return of 277 Cambodians from Indonesia and 28 from Malaysia during July 1996 in conjunction with the completion of the CPA in first asylum countries in South-East Asia. During 1997, UNHCR expects to facilitate the repatriation to Cambodia of a further 400 Cambodians from within and beyond the region.

166. UNHCR does not plan to maintain a presence in Cambodia after 1997 in recognition of the fact that returnee reintegration is a longer term process beyond the scope of UNHCR's initial catalytic intervention. UNHCR will meanwhile remain closely associated with other United Nations development agencies, in particular the UNDP/OPS Cambodian Resettlement and Reintegration (CARERE) project and the WFP, as well as with multilateral financial institutions such as the Asian Development Bank (ADB), in advocating the importance of de-mining, the provision of additional land for vulnerable rural populations and the inclusion of returnee components in national development projects. UNHCR will continue to focus on the promotion of refugee and humanitarian law, the provision of protection and assistance to individual asylum-seekers and the identification of durable solutions for recognized cases. Training is being provided in 1996 to government officials in refugee status determination and the promotion of refugee law. UNHCR will continue to promote ethnic harmony and tolerance together with the United Nations Centre for

Human Rights and has had constructive consultations with the ADB on the inclusion of such themes in nation-wide education curricula being developed with ADB support. UNHCR is also collaborating with the ADB regarding the inclusion of vulnerable returnees under the Bank's Promotion of Women project, and the need to strengthen relevant government institutions in order to enhance social services for the vulnerable.

(c) Implementing partners/arrangements

167. During 1996, UNHCR's implementing partners in Cambodia were the Cambodian Red Cross in providing transportation and reintegration assistance to returnees, and the Jesuit Refugee Services in providing assistance for asylum-seekers and recognized refugees, and support in the refugee status determination process. The Cambodian Family Development Services is responsible for providing a relief and social assistance safety net for the most vulnerable returnees.

(d) Budget

168. Since the beginning of 1996, all activities in Cambodia have been financed under General Programmes. The reduction of UNHCR's presence and the streamlining of UNHCR-sponsored activities in Cambodia consistent with the limited nature and scope of UNHCR's mandate for returnees will generate slight decreases in both the 1996 and 1997 budgets.

(e) Post situation

169. In view of the phasing down of UNHCR activities, the staffing levels in Cambodia have been reduced from 27 posts as at 1 January 1995 to 21 posts on 1 January 1996. It is envisaged that a minimal presence of less than nine posts will be maintained during 1997.

(f) Implementation of policy priorities (women, children, environment)

170. UNHCR will continue to advocate the needs of returnee women, in particular women heads of household, with a view to ensuring that they may eventually achieve a satisfactory level of self-sufficiency.

(g) Oversight reports

171. An evaluation team visited Cambodia in 1996 in order to review the phasing down of UNHCR's role and presence. The results of this mission are still pending.

Indonesia

(a) Beneficiaries

172. At 1 January 1996, 4,491 Vietnamese remained in Indonesia, comprising 4,472 non-refugees who were expected to repatriate to their country of origin under the CPA, and 19 refugees. There were also 363 Cambodians of mostly Chinese or Vietnamese ethnicity who were determined not to be refugees and who were expected to repatriate to Cambodia. In addition, there were some 30 non-Indo-Chinese refugees and asylum-seekers of various nationalities, including Somalis, Algerians and Iranians, who resided mainly in Jakarta.

(b) Recent developments and objectives

173. In the first six months of 1996, 991 Vietnamese non-refugees repatriated to their country of origin under UNHCR supported voluntary repatriation and orderly return programmes, leaving

a residual population of 3,481 individuals as at the end of June 1996. Notwithstanding the formal completion of the CPA as of that date, and given the positive momentum towards the repatriation of the remaining caseload, UNHCR will continue, on a good offices basis and subject to the availability of funds, to support repatriation and care and maintenance costs pending return up to 30 September 1996.

(c) Implementing partners/arrangements

174. UNHCR's principal implementing partner is the Government of Indonesia, represented by the Inter-departmental Refugee Task Force which is chaired by the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces. The Indonesian Red Cross (PMI) implements the programme for health and mental care.

(d) Budget

175. UNHCR's assistance for Vietnamese non-refugees under the CPA will be phased out completely by 30 September 1996. Care and maintenance for the urban refugee caseload residing mainly in Jakarta and for Vietnamese refugees pending resettlement will continue under General Programmes. The proposed care and maintenance budget in 1997 is slightly lower than in 1996.

(e) Post situation

176. It is envisaged that the UNHCR Sub-Office in Tanjung Pinang will be closed by 30 September 1996 with the complete phase-out of the CPA as of that date. UNHCR will maintain a reduced presence in Jakarta with the principal aim of maintaining a focus on refugee issues and to promote the further development of a broad-based constituency in relation to humanitarian concerns with appropriate resident institutions, including the ASEAN Secretariat, the Institute of Strategic International Studies, and various religious and cultural entities.

(f) Oversight reports

177. The Audit and Management Consulting Division of the Office of Internal Oversight Services undertook a special review in connection with the embezzlement of cash grants for repatriants which was discovered in August 1993. Appropriate corrective measures have been implemented.

Japan and the Republic of Korea

178. Japan remains a principal donor to UNHCR. Special efforts are being made to provide Japanese NGOs and the private sector with information on UNHCR's global aims and activities with a view to further strengthening this important fund raising and operational support relationship. Training activities have included legal and programme management orientation for both the Government and NGOs.

(a) Beneficiaries

179. On 1 January 1996, there were 137 Vietnamese asylum-seekers and three Vietnamese refugees. There were some 160 other asylum seeker cases whose status determination by the Government was pending. A few individual asylum-seekers from various countries had arrived in the Republic of Korea.

(b) Recent developments and objectives

180. During the period 1 January to 30 June 1996, 15 Vietnamese asylum-seekers were

recognized as mandate refugees by UNHCR and were released from immigration detention. UNHCR is actively seeking durable solutions for these persons. The remaining 122 Vietnamese are expected to return to their country of origin.

181. UNHCR has strengthened its contacts with the Government of the Republic of Korea during the reporting period through more frequent missions from Branch Office Tokyo, which is actively involved in the promotion of refugee law, including training programmes in Japan and the Republic of Korea. The High Commissioner visited the Republic of Korea in April 1996. The Government of the Republic of Korea has also announced its intention to sponsor a Junior Professional Officer in UNHCR.

(c) Budget

182. In Japan, the scope of assistance under the 1996 and 1997 care and maintenance programmes will remain consistent with planning levels.

(d) Post situation

183. No post changes were effected during the reporting period, and none are envisaged for 1997.

(e) Oversight reports

184. No reports were initiated during the reporting period.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic

(a) Beneficiaries

185. At 1 January 1996, a total of 27,047 Lao had returned voluntarily to the Lao People's Democratic Republic (LPDR) since the inception of the voluntary repatriation programme in 1980 (23,865 from Thailand, 3,076 from China and 106 from elsewhere). Approximately half of the returnees were lowland Lao and the other half were mainly ethnic Hmong. The average family size of the returnee caseload is five persons.

(b) Recent developments and objectives

186. UNHCR's presence in the Lao People's Democratic Republic (LPDR) continues to be based on the ongoing programme for the repatriation and reintegration of Lao returnees.

187. During 1995, the number of returns dropped to 2,526 representing less than 50 per cent of the previous year's total. Returns plummeted further to the negligible level of 13 in the first six months of 1996. This dramatic decline was prompted by the announcement in May 1995 that Lao refugees might benefit from a last resettlement offer. The Governments of Thailand and the United States reached an agreement in March 1996 on the modalities for this initiative. All 6,130 Lao refugees remaining in Thailand were eligible to apply for resettlement consideration and, as of the end of June 1996, some 2,000 applications had been lodged. Resettlement processing and movement out of Ban Napho camp in Thailand are expected to be completed by October 1996.

188. Efforts to promote the earliest voluntary repatriation of the residual caseload will be further intensified in conjunction with the completion of this initiative. There may also be some repatriation movements from China and Argentina in 1996 involving a few hundred returnees. During the first half of 1997, all repatriation movements back to the LPDR will have to be

completed. However, UNHCR will continue to assist in the monitoring and reintegration of returnees for some months in order to ensure that they reach an acceptable level of self reliance.

189. UNHCR will continue to offer returnees three reintegration options: (i) return on an individual basis; (ii) reintegration to a group settlement site where basic infrastructure is made available; and (iii) return in small groups to existing villages where UNHCR provides community upgrading assistance benefiting both returnees and local villagers. So far, UNHCR has developed 29 group settlement sites and has identified 71 villages willing to receive small groups of returnees. The capacity in group settlement sites and in existing villages is sufficient to receive the remaining returnee caseload in 1996 and 1997. The group settlement site of Ban Nasaat in Khamouane province which opened in 1995 can still receive over 2,000 returnees. UNHCR is actively seeking multilateral support from development agencies, financial institutions, and international NGOs to ensure that reintegration measures for returnees are sustainable beyond the two-year period of UNHCR's catalytic intervention.

(c) Implementing partners/arrangements

190. The principal implementing partner is the LPDR Government, in particular the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare. The European Union has supported the creation of two settlement sites for up to 1,200 returnees in Bokeo province. Three NGOs are cooperating with UNHCR in 1996 in group settlement sites: Concern of Ireland, Consortium of the United States and ZOA of the Netherlands. In 1997, the number of NGOs will be reduced to two.

(d) Budget

191. No assistance under General Programmes is envisaged in the LPDR during 1996 and 1997. All programmes in the LPDR are financed under the CPA Special Programme. In recognition of the lower than expected rate of return in 1996, 1996 budgets have been reduced downwards. In 1997, however, as the majority of the residual caseload of some 4,000 persons remaining in Thailand after the United States resettlement initiative are expected to return to their county of origin, budgets will be increased accordingly. As the budget of \$ 5.1 million within the current Special Programme appeal for the CPA covers the needs of returnees in the LPDR for 1996 only, an appeal for 1997/1998 is envisaged.

(e) Post situation

192. The level of staffing supporting the formulation and implementation of reintegration assistance activities will be slightly reduced in 1996 and further reduced in 1997 since settlement opportunities already identified or under development are sufficient for future returnees. No reduction of monitoring staff is envisaged.

(f) Implementation of policy priorities (women, children, environment)

193. Women and children receive assistance from UNHCR with the collaboration of the Lao Women's Union, the Departments of Health, Agriculture and Education, and NGO implementing partners. Training and workshops on livestock breeding, home plot gardening, pre-school teacher training and other income generating activities are provided.

(g) Oversight reports

194. An internal evaluation of the impact of UNHCR sponsored returnee reintegration assistance is envisaged in the second half of 1996.

Malaysia

(a) Beneficiaries

195. At 1 January 1996, there were 4,421 Vietnamese (4,318 non-refugees and 103 refugees) and 28 Cambodians in Malaysia. In addition, there were some 100 refugees and asylum-seekers of various nationalities in urban areas who received material assistance from UNHCR. The Malaysian Government also provided temporary asylum and material assistance to some 300 Bosnians.

(b) Recent developments and objectives

196. During the first six months of 1996, 60 refugees were resettled and 4,265 Vietnamese non-refugees repatriated to their country of origin under UNHCR-supported voluntary repatriation and orderly return programmes, permitting the closure of the Sungei Besi camp in June 1996 in line with the formal ending of the CPA. At this time, consultations between the Governments of Malaysia and Cambodia were in progress regarding the repatriation of the Cambodian caseload.

(c) Implementing partners/arrangements

197. The Malaysian Red Crescent Society, which has been UNHCR's main implementing partner since the inception of the Vietnamese programme in 1978, will cease its involvement after 30 June 1996. The immigration authorities will be entrusted by the Malaysian Government to take over from the National Task Force the small remaining Indo-Chinese non-refugee caseload after 30 June 1996 pending repatriation. Pertubuhan Kebajikan Islam Malaysia (PERKIM) will continue to implement care and maintenance assistance for some 100 non-Indo-Chinese refugees in Malaysia in 1997.

(d) Budget

198. With the scheduled completion of the CPA, no significant variations to the previously reported requirements for 1996/1997 are expected.

(e) Post situation

199. With the completion of the CPA, the size of the UNHCR Branch Office will be reduced in the second half of 1996 as scheduled. Within the overall objective of contributing to the achievement of solutions for refugees, the principal aim of UNHCR's post-CPA presence will be to maintain an awareness of refugee issues and to further develop a broad-based constituency sympathetic to humanitarian concerns as well as an institutional capacity to address future refugee situations. UNHCR will maintain a minimal presence to administer the provision of care and maintenance, counselling and legal assistance for individual refugees and asylum-seekers.

(f) Oversight reports

200. No reports were initiated during the reporting period.

Papua New Guinea

(a) Beneficiaries

201. At 1 January 1996, Papua New Guinea (PNG) hosted a refugee population of some 9,500 persons from Irian Jaya, of whom some 3,650 were living in East Awin rural settlement near Kiunga town in the Western Province and receiving assistance from UNHCR. The remaining 6,000 were living in five villages in the border areas. There is one refugee from Indian Kashmir in Port Moresby who is being assisted by UNHCR pending a durable solution.

(b) Recent developments and objectives

202. UNHCR increased its efforts to promote local integration further to a joint mission in 1995 from UNHCR Headquarters, the Regional Office Canberra and the PNG Liaison Office which reviewed the local settlement programme in East Awin, Western Province. The PNG Government has adopted a new policy on Irian Jayan refugees which allows them permanent stay and gradual naturalization.

203. As of 1 July 1996, UNHCR, in agreement with the PNG Government, officially closed its office in Port Moresby. The local settlement programme for the Irian Jaya refugees was also concluded as of that date. The Government has taken over the full responsibilities in the assistance and management of the East Awin settlement site. As of 1 July 1996, the UNHCR Regional Office in Canberra assumed the responsibility of covering PNG.

(c) Implementing partners/arrangements

204. The UNHCR assistance programme was implemented by the Montfort Catholic Mission in the East Awin settlement, and by the Young Women's Christian Association in Port Moresby.

(d) Budget

205. The initial allocation for the half-year programme in PNG was maintained.

(e) Post situation

206. The UNHCR Liaison Office in PNG was closed on 30 June 1996.

(f) Implementation of policy priorities (women, children and environment)

207. The local settlement programme concentrated on measures aimed at promoting a reliable self-sufficiency as the majority of the present population had already achieved a certain level of self-sufficiency. Special attention was given to the training of single female heads of families.

(g) Oversight reports

208. An internal audit of the UNHCR's programme in PNG is foreseen.

Singapore

(a) Beneficiaries

209. At 1 January 1996, there were 100 Vietnamese non-refugees and two pre-cut-off-date Vietnamese refugees in Singapore. The majority of this population were young males. Children comprised some 20 per cent of the caseload. In addition, some 100 non-Indo-Chinese asylum-seekers of various nationalities (Afghans, Iranians, Iraqis and Sri Lankans) have approached UNHCR over the past year.

(b) Recent developments and objectives

210. UNHCR continued to support care and maintenance assistance for the Vietnamese caseload in the first half of 1996. In June 1996, the Governments of Singapore and Viet Nam agreed on arrangements for the return of all non-refugees who subsequently voluntarily

repatriated to their country of origin at the end of June 1996.

211. The non-Indo-Chinese refugees continue to receive care and maintenance assistance in the form of a subsistence allowance to cover the costs of accommodation, food, medical care and language training pending resettlement to third countries.

(c) Implementing partners/arrangements

212. The Catholic Welfare Services (CWS) will continue to provide counselling and material assistance to refugees and asylum-seekers after the closure of UNHCR Liaison Office in Singapore, at end-July 1996.

(d) Budget

213. During this reporting period, ten refugees and asylum-seekers received assistance from UNHCR in Singapore. The budget allocation for care and maintenance of non-Indo-Chinese refugees in 1996 has been maintained at the same level as in prior years.

(e) Post situation

214. UNHCR will close its Liaison Office in Singapore at the end of July 1996 as planned. The UNHCR Branch Office in Kuala Lumpur will retain responsibility for Singapore.

(f) Oversight reports

215. No reports were initiated during the reporting period.