

The UN Inter-Agency Humanitarian Programme for Iraq was established in response to the enormous needs in the wake of the Gulf War and the ensuing internal strife. A number of consolidated appeals was launched since May 1991 for urgent humanitarian assistance for almost two million refugees and displaced persons. A primary objective of the Programme was to introduce measures which would facilitate the safe return of both externally and internally displaced persons and provide them - and all vulnerable groups throughout Iraq - with much needed emergency assistance. An essential aspect of the Programme in this context has been the role played by the United Nations Guards Contingent which has provided protection as well as stability and reassurance. The legal framework for the implementation of the United Nations Inter-Agency Humanitarian Programme in Iraq to date is provided by Memoranda of Understanding, signed between the Government of Iraq and the United Nations. The Inter-Agency Humanitarian Programme, duly co-ordinated by (33) DHA staff, in Baghdad and in the most seriously affected governorates, is provided with operational support by the Special Unit for Iraq, DHA Geneva. The Programme has raised, and delivered, more than US \$700 million worth of emergency assistance to date.



UNHCR/P. Moutziz Photo

Returnees and displaced persons in Erbil Governorate (Iraq); distribution of shelter and roofing materials within the framework of the winterization programme.

By 30 June 1992, most of the objectives of the United Nations with regard to the inter-agency Humanitarian Programme were actually reached. Approximately 95 per cent of the people who fled the country in 1991 were back in Iraq. Only relatively few returnees remained in temporary shelters. Assistance to returnees and vulnerable groups (provided by UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF, WHO, FAO, UNDP/UNV, IOM and NGO partners), during the winter months of 1991-92, prevented starvation and outbreaks of epidemics. It also provided affected populations with the means to resume normal lives. Such activities included the provision of emergency food aid, transportation, life saving medicines, basic health care, water and sanitation, support for subsistence agriculture and basic shelter. The provisional results of programme activities during the winter months of 1992-93 are currently being evaluated; all indications point to an effective delivery of sizeable inputs, which have involved, *inter alia*, the co-ordination, processing and escorting of over 5,000 trucks from Turkey into Northern Iraq.

While a large percentage of the Iraqi population benefitted from the various programmes of the United Nations and non-governmental organisations active in the field, certain groups were not adequately reached and suffered from the increasing shortage of basic commodities, further aggravated in the North by internal

which US \$166 million was mobilized and effectively delivered).

In early January 1993, a mid-term review of the UN Humanitarian Programme was undertaken in consultation with the specialized agencies concerned and non-governmental organisations.



Water supply for the displaced returnees to Erbil Governorate in Iraq

supply restrictions. In September 1992, the United Nations undertook an assessment of urgent winter survival needs in the northern Governorates and proposed additional relief activities (to supply food, kerosene, medicines and other relief items and services). In consultation with the Government of Iraq, in October 1992, the winter survival project was merged with activities covering the entire country into a new, third, Plan of Action to cover the period extending to the end of March 1993. The total budget amounted to US \$256 million (which was later revised to US \$206 million and of

The review indicated that the number of people falling within the vulnerable groups category had steadily increased and was likely to rise further. It was thus agreed that humanitarian assistance needs should continue to be addressed beyond March 1993 and that an in-country Needs Assessment Mission should take place in early March 1993. The Mission in question was successfully conducted, throughout the country, and a one-year Humanitarian Co-operation Programme has been prepared on the basis thereof.