

III Description and Requirements of Affected Populations

A. Guatemalans - General

Housing Customs: In rural areas, housing is typically made of cane and mud plaster or adobe, with thatched roofs. In urban areas, houses are made of concrete slab or corrugated asbestos cement-sheet roofing. Low income housing is likely to be of adobe.

Food Preferences: Corn (as tortillas) is the dietary staple of much of the population. Wheat bread is eaten in urban areas. Black beans and broad beans are also eaten daily. Tomatoes are widely consumed; fruits only in small amounts. Meat is used in soups or served with staple foods. Generally, consumption of milk and eggs is low.

Health Status: Key health indices are far worse than those for most other Central and South American nations. Enteritis and other diarrheal diseases, acute respiratory infections, anaemia, parasitic infections, and malaria are the common causes of ill health, and even death.

B. Guatemalan Refugees in Mexico

Refugee Population: In 1989, there were 41,500 Guatemalan refugees in Mexico receiving UNHCR assistance. The estimates of the number of Guatemalans not in camps vary considerably according to the source, from 7,000 to 100,000.

Ethnic Origin: Indian origin, primarily Kanjobal, Mam, Quixche, Chuj, although numerous other Indian groups are represented.

Language: Indigenous Indian languages.

Religion: Majority Roman Catholic.

Social Structure: Females and males are present in nearly equal proportions. Approximately 7% of the families are female headed. Women and children make up a large part of the population (75% in one settlement).

Previous Occupational Activities: Most of the refugees are of rural origin with a high rate of illiteracy.

C. Salvadorians - General

Housing Customs: Rural housing is typically a one-room adobe structure with dirt floor and tile roof. Bajareque (mud supported by a framework of small tree branches, split bamboo, adobe, straw or grasses), with roofs thatched with sugar-cane leaves or grass is another frequent alternative. Rural kitchens are generally separated from the rest of the house. Urban building materials are debris or scrap, plastic, bajareque or adobe, wooden structure and walls, cement floor, asphalted cardboard or aluminium roof, cement and bricks with asbestos, cement roofs.

Food Preferences: Basic staples for the Salvadorian (both rural and urban) population include corn, sorghum, rice, and black or red beans. These account for approximately 60% of caloric intake, which is supplemented by bread, fruit, fish, and vegetables. Meals tend to be vegetarian and high in starch content, with meat, poultry, and dairy products only a minor part of the diet.

Health Status: El Salvador is ranked among the countries in the western hemisphere most seriously affected by malnutrition. Intestinal and respiratory infections are the most common and serious threats to health.

D. Salvadorian Refugees in Mexico

Refugee Population: In 1989, the number of Salvadorians in Mexico was estimated at 120,000. In December 1989, 3,620 Salvadorians were receiving direct assistance from the international community.

Language: Spanish

Religion: Roman Catholic

Previous Occupational Activities: Most of the Salvadorian refugees in Mexico City are of urban or semi-urban origin.

IV. Institutional Resources/Programmes

A. Relief Machinery of the Government of Mexico

Policy Toward
Refugees: Mexico has not ratified the United Nations Convention of 28 July 1951, nor the Additional Protocol of 1967, on the Status of Refugees. A recognized tradition of asylum for those persecuted for political or intellectual reasons has come under considerable pressure with the massive influx of Central Americans in recent years.

Government
Organization: The Mexican Commission for Refugee Aid (Comisión Mexicana de Ayuda de Refugiados - COMAR) was created 4 July 1980. COMAR is the refugee interface of three Ministries: the Department of the Interior, Foreign Affairs, and Labour and Social Security. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the national organ responsible for drawing up international technical cooperation policies and programmes, through its International Technical Cooperation Department.

Relationship
with UNHCR: The main UNHCR operational partner in Mexico is the "Comision Mexicana de Ayuda a Refugiados" (COMAR) for assistance to Guatemalan refugees in rural areas. The "Servicios de Representacion Profesional y Tecnica" (SERTEC) provides assistance to urban refugees. In matters relating to legal refugee status, it is the Office of Migration Affairs which co-ordinates with UNHCR.

B. UNHCR Presence (as of March 1989)

UNHCR Regional Office in Mexico City

Mail Address: UNHCR
c/o UNDP
Apartado Postal 6-719
06600 Mexico, D.F.

Street Address: Anatolo France 152
Colonia Polanco
11560 Mexico, D.F.

Cable Address: HICOMREF
Mexico

Telex: 1763059 HCRME

Telephone: 254.51.55
203.89.53 (direct to Representative)

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|---|---------------------------------|
| Representative: | Jorge Santistevan Noriega |
| Deputy Representative: | Jean-François Durieux |
| Senior Programme Officer: | Gloria Sagarra |
| Associate Administrator /Finance Officer: | Emilio Larrea-Silva |
| Assistant Programme Officer: | Agostino Mulas |
| Associate Protection Officer: | Urs Schmidt |
| Working Hours: | Monday to Friday 0830 - 1600 |

UNHCR Sub-Office in Southern Mexico - Campeche

Note: Correspondence and cables must be sent to Branch Office in Mexico for onward transmission.

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| Telephone: | 6-73-79 |
| Head of Sub-Office | Leila Lima |
| Associate Protection Officer (Chiapas) | |
| Associate Field Officer | Claudie Caccia |
| Head of Sub-Office (Chiapas) | Chil Mirtenbaum |
| Field Officer | Guillermo Illescas |
| Project Officer (Quintana Roo) | |
| Project Officer | Denis Van Dam |
| Associate Protection Officer (Quintana Roo) | Amerigo Incalcatera |
| Assistant Protection Officer: | Carlos A. Garcia Carranza |
| Agronomist (Campeche) | Roberto Gonzalez |

C. UN Agencies

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| Food and Agriculture Organization: | The activities of the FAO include research into new teaching methods for agro-industrial development, technical assistance to producers operating small and medium sized agro-industries, assistance in the training of workers in Africanized-honey-bee control, and the resettlement of low-income urban families in rural areas. In cooperation with the World Bank, the FAO also is involved in a programme intended to further the development of dairy products, forests and natural rubber, and expand the irrigation system in Mexico through both small- and large-scale projects. |
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Finally, the FAO implements small agricultural and livestock projects through a revolving fund managed by rural women (VOFUND).

International Labour
Organization:

The ILO provides support for the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources and the Ministry of Agrarian Reform, for the improvement of the living and working conditions of day labourers. In addition, in conjunction with UNICEF, a study on migrant child agricultural labourers will be undertaken.

Pan-American
and World Health
Organizations:

As part of the Mexican public health policy, PAHO/WHO provides support in the organization of health services based on primary health care. Among these are the development of blood transfusion services, production of vaccines and drugs, and training of personnel, including support to the School of Public Health of Mexico. Special attention is paid toward the control of drinking water quality. Immunization, diarrheal and cardiovascular diseases, respiratory infections, communicable diseases such as leprosy and sexually transmitted diseases, addictions, and veterinary public health are all included in the 1989/90 programme of assistance.

United Nations
Development
Programme:

UNDP projects include support for the development of the Mexican statistical system, for the strengthening of the national communications network, for the development of the Mexican Institute for Research in Metal Machine Manufacture, for the creation of production modules for milk and meat, for the development of aquaculture and sea farming, for the promotion of full-scale development of fisheries resources, and for the development of the national network of public health laboratories.

United Nations
Children's Fund:

UNICEF activities include the introduction of primary health care modules aimed at the reduction of infant mortality. Along these same lines is an effort to integrate indigenous traditional and herbal medicine practices and practitioners into the formal primary health care system. Additional activities include supplementary feeding and nutrition, assistance for peasant women, and parent education in early stimulation, water supply and drainage and appropriate technology. Urban projects have involved delivery of basic health and sanitation

services, nutrition, education and programmes for abandoned and street children. Programmes for immunization, oral rehydration therapy, and breastfeeding continue to receive UNICEF support.

United Nations
Fund for Population
Activities:

UNFPA provides technical and financial assistance to maternal and child health and family planning programmes in different states of Mexico, especially in communities with fewer than 2,500 inhabitants.

World Food
Programme:

The WFP project in the area of rural employment and promotion of productive activities is intended to assist in economic development activities by setting up small enterprises financed by community funds or common funds. Planned activities under these five WFP projects are designed to increase the production of staple foods by small enterprises. In the first half of 1988, WFP provided over 2,200 MT of food assistance.

World Bank:

The project Integrated Agro-industries, executed in conjunction with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources, focuses on establishing, rehabilitating and expanding a total of 530 agro-industries with a view to increasing productivity and raising the level of exports by adopting new technologies and by human resources training. In addition, the UNDP project "Management and Reuse of Solid and Liquid Waste", co-financed by the Government of Italy, is administered by the World Bank.

International
Organization for
Migration:

The IOM in Mexico operates through the Comisión Episcopal de Pastoral Social, an ecclesiastical committee which implements the voluntary repatriation and resettlement projects as well as other humanitarian projects.

D. Other Organizations

European Economic
Community:

The EEC is presently the main contributor to integration projects in the region. There has been an "in-kind" contribution of some basic diet items in Chiapas.

E. Voluntary Organizations

Voluntary organizations active in Mexico, and whose projects benefit refugees directly or indirectly, include Oxfam America, Oxfam UK,

World Vision International, World Relief Corporation (USA), World Relief Canada, Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, Save the Children Federation, Pan American Development Foundation, Operation California, Mennonite Central Committee, Food for the Hungry, Corps Mondial de Secours, Concern/America, CARE International, Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund, Adventist Development and Relief Agency (Canada), Vluchteling, and the Development and Peace Service (SEDEPAC).

These organizations are active in a wide range of activities including food distribution, medical assistance, primary health care, agricultural development, literacy, community development, water supply, and reafforestation.

Annex I

A. UNHCR Programme

Refugee population and developments

In the course of the preparation for CIREFCA (Conferencia internacional sobre los refugiados centroamericanos) Government sources estimated the number of displaced Central Americans in Mexico at 310,000. Of this total, 41,740 Guatemalans, 3,620 Salvadorians and 1,370 refugees of other origins have received direct assistance from the international community in 1988..

The Guatemalan refugees, who are of peasant origin, have been settled either in the Yucatan Peninsula (States of Campeche and Quintana Roo) or in the State of Chiapas. While the former will benefit from a durable solution in the next few years, the latter live in less favourable conditions than the local population. However, the Government decided to make Chiapas a priority in 1989, to facilitate integration or voluntary repatriation. Urban refugees, whose number has remained stable, are concentrated in the Federal District and are in a sensitive position because their status has not been regularized.

Aims and achievements of past assistance programmes

The programme for the rural settlement of Guatemalans in the Yucatan Peninsula has been geared towards self-reliance and it has thus been possible to reduce direct assistance. Ongoing efforts are also being made to set up the project for the permanent settlement of these refugees. The multipurpose assistance project for Guatemalan refugees in the province of Chiapas has been given particular attention, particularly in the food, health, nutrition, basic infrastructure and education sectors, in order to prevent these refugees' living conditions from deteriorating further.

Outline of current programmes and proposals for 1989

Assistance to Guatemalan refugees in the Yucatan Peninsula is designed primarily to settle these refugees locally: final planning of the multi-year project; strengthening of productive activities (agriculture, animal husbandry); establishment of a pilot credit project; and promotion of refugee participation (training in marketing methods; direct participation in planning). Responsibilities will continue to be transferred from certain sectors (health and education) to State agencies. The settlement of the refugees at the new sites will begin in 1989 and should take three to four years.

Efforts continue to be made to improve the living conditions of refugees in the province of Chiapas. Studies will also be carried out during the year, in cooperation with the Mexican Government and other international organizations, to identify viable and useful alternatives in the region that may help to create jobs for the local and refugee populations.

General Programmes

Local Integration:

Because of the legal status and problems related to integration facing urban refugees, assistance in 1989 is provided under a new care and maintenance programme.

Planning for rural integration reaches its final phase in 1989. In this first year of a 3-4 year plan, refugees should be able to gradually integrate locally on a permanent basis.

Multipurpose Assistance:

Assistance to Guatemalan refugees in Chiapas is intended to improve the refugees' living conditions, primarily in the area of food, nutrition, education, training in income-generating activities, and housing repairs.

Other forms of assistance:

Other forms of assistance included legal assistance, counselling services, programmes for handicapped refugees, lower secondary education support, supplementary assistance, and university scholarships.