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Operation Lifeline Sudan - A review

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SUMMARY

The scope and depth of the Operation Lifeline Sudan Review has meant that any summary can only be partial. While attempting to draw out some of the key points, what follows cannot be interpreted as a substitute for the main text.

Introduction

This is the first comprehensive review of Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS) in its seven year history. The Review is an entirely independent undertaking, funded by donor governments and supported administratively by the UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA). The main impetus for the Review came from OLS's growing difficulties, especially associated with access, during 1995.

The Review does not attempt an exhaustive evaluation of the impact of OLS, its individual agencies, or its various programmes. Its main focus, rather, is on the relationship between OLS's creation of humanitarian space, and the flow of assistance to war-affected populations. The Review therefore sets out to assess and analyse the effectiveness of the OLS modus operandi in meeting the needs of war-affected civilians.

International Significance

OLS has regional, national, and global significance. Created in 1989, it was the first humanitarian programme that sought to assist internally displaced and war-affected civilians during an ongoing conflict within a sovereign country, as opposed to refugees beyond its borders. The experience of OLS has been important in the evolution of humanitarian policy and conflict management; it established a precedent for many humanitarian interventions that followed, for example in Angola, Iraq, Somalia, and Bosnia. As such, the Review has significance beyond Sudan, and complements other debates on humanitarian aid - for example, those stimulated by the Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda. In contrast to the Rwanda evaluation, however, the OLS Review examines a prolonged international response to a chronic political emergency.

While having organisational similarities, OLS is nevertheless distinct from many other integrated interventions. For example, OLS does not rely on the military protection of humanitarian aid and

displaced civilians. Rather, access has largely been dependent upon the application of international pressure on the warring parties. Moreover, the ultimate sovereignty of the Government of Sudan (GOS) has not been challenged. Instead, there has been an equivocal and temporary ceding of sovereignty to the UN of parts of South Sudan that are outside government control. These characteristics mean that OLS can be regarded as an informal or negotiated safe area programme.

The Regulatory Duality of OLS

OLS came into existence as a result of the impotence of the international community in the face of the 1988 war-induced famine in Bahr el-Ghazal. In negotiating a conditional transfer of part of GOS sovereignty to the UN for humanitarian purposes, an operational division of Sudan into government and non-government controlled areas was created. In the first legitimate cross-border operation for the delivery of humanitarian assistance, non-government held areas were serviced from Nairobi.

While OLS agreements recognise ultimate GOS sovereignty, in practice, the Southern Sector has developed a tenuous autonomy in relation to the warring parties. In the Northern Sector, however, following conventional international practice, agencies are more directly controlled by the GOS. As a result, two markedly different contractual and operational regimes have emerged in OLS's Northern and Southern Sectors. This difference has a direct bearing on the quality of access to war-affected populations in both areas.

Within government areas, the GOS have established a restrictive regulatory environment. In the South, the UN has created a more liberal contractual system. The difference between the two regulatory regimes is marked, and has given OLS the appearance of being a structure within a structure. In terms of humanitarian policy, the North has stagnated. Many of the issues facing aid agencies remain unchanged from the 1980s. In the South, while largely ad hoc, fundamental advances have been made in humanitarian policy and conflict management.

The Political Weakness of OLS

The de facto division of OLS into Northern and Southern Sectors has produced a critical flaw in the political coherence of the operation. Access to war-affected people, regardless of where they are located,

is a key OLS principle. However, this tenet has been unevenly applied. In the North, it has never been robustly pursued by the UN. For the operation more generally, an implicit understanding has emerged that OLS, as a neutral UN-coordinated operation, is confined to those non-government areas that the GOS is willing to concede are temporarily beyond its control. Following DHA involvement in 1992, OLS adjusted to this de facto situation. In effect, the equivocal autonomy of the Southern Sector has been purchased at the expense of war-affected populations in the North. In this regard, UN humanitarian policy has failed.

This failure is also related to the retention of a UNDP- appointed Resident Representative in Khartoum who, as UNCERO, is also formally in charge of OLS. The Review Team felt strongly that this an unsuitable arrangement for a complex political emergency, because it creates a fundamental conflict of interests. One cannot work with the government as a development partner and, at the same time, relate to it as a warring party for humanitarian purposes. This is especially the case when, as the Review Team suspected, the actually existing development process in Sudan is linked to the war aims of the GOS.

Aware of this problem, but unable to tackle it directly, the UN has informally downgraded reporting relations between Nairobi and Khartoum. While this has given UNICEF's lead agency role some protection, the relationship between UN agencies in the two Sectors is ill-defined. This, in turn, has exacerbated the overall lack of political cohesion and clarity of purpose in OLS. In delivering humanitarian aid in the midst of internal conflict, clarity of purpose and political cohesion is essential, if humanitarian principles are to be upheld.

In terms of OLS as a potential model for negotiated safe area programmes, in its present state the Review Team regarded OLS as flawed and non-replicable. While advances have taken place in the South, this has occurred, in effect, at the expense of war-displaced populations in the North. The unevenness of support for war-affected populations calls into question OLS as a model for internalising the effects of protracted political emergencies. While regional stability may be promoted by reducing refugee flows to neighboring countries, OLS has not successfully implemented a programme to deal with the effects of conflict internally. The flawed nature of OLS in this regard led the Review Team not only to question its replicability, but also to wonder whether it can survive at all without internationally supported reform.

Southern Sector Operational Issues

From the end of 1992, there has been a significant expansion in the scope of OLS in the Southern Sector. The number and diversity of programmes has increased beyond the original concerns of food and health. Due to GOS restrictions and interfactional insecurity, since 1995 access has been steadily reduced.

As lead agency, the key functions of UNICEF are the provision of shared services and coordination. Participating agencies primarily in the form international non-government organizations (INGOs) sign Letters of Understanding (LOUs) with UNICEF that establish basic programme requirements, and secure agreement on OLS humanitarian principles. Funded through the OLS Appeal, UNICEF for its part undertakes to provide free transport, essential programme support, and overall coordination. Logistics are largely handled from the UNICEF-managed camp at Lokichokkio.

Developing a security and evacuation system has also been an important task of UNICEF. Based upon free access to radios, and the cooperation of the Southern opposition movements through the Ground Rules, this system is a sophisticated and innovative response to working in conditions of ongoing and unpredictable warfare, and has demonstrated its ability to move staff according the changing dynamics of the conflict.

The expansion of OLS has tested the lead agency role of UNICEF, and exposed a contradiction between the need to provide coordination for all OLS agencies and, at the same time, support its own country programme. To a lesser extent, the same issue relates to all the UN specialist agencies involved in OLS. In a real sense, it reflects the great difficulties that the current UN system is experiencing in adjusting to integrated operations. Regarding OLS, while a range of UNICEF regional and sectoral coordination meetings exist, the absence of effective INGO and WFP representation has been a important weakness in OLS management.

For INGOs, this lack of representation is at odds with a growing financial importance. While probably an underestimate of INGO funding, until 1994 the UN and INGOs secured roughly comparable amounts in response to Sudan appeals. Available figures now suggest, however, that UN agencies currently receive less than two-thirds of the combined INGO budget. Indications of this shift can be seen in the formation of an INGO Forum in 1995.

The creation of the INGO Forum can also be linked to growing problems of cargo prioritisation. This is an issue that has come to the fore as a result of the increasing programme complexity of OLS Southern Sector and the simultaneous contraction in cargo capacity. The direct purchase of cargo space has been one way in which INGOs have begun to more forcefully assert their interests.

On many fronts, there is evidence of programmatic evolution in the Southern Sector. The development of the Ground Rule concept in relation to the Southern movements is an area of particular importance. The Ground Rules were introduced to provide a framework for the regulation of relations between OLS agencies and the opposition movements. Based upon a similar principle to LOUs, the Ground Rules agreement establishes a series of roles and responsibilities. One of these, for example, is the provision of administrative and programme support - so-called "capacity building" - to the humanitarian wings of the opposition movements and participating Sudanese Indigenous NGOS (SINGOs).

The weak capacity of Southern Sudanese counterparts has been widely seen as a hindrance to the delivery of humanitarian services. While there is broad agreement on the need for capacity building for Sudanese counterparts, there is no consensus on how this should be done. Moreover, expectations of capacity building in a war situation, especially where the human resource base is extremely weak, are unrealistically high. This is compounded by the fact that the opposition movements, while having sufficient resources to sustain the conflict, make no provision for the basic running costs of their humanitarian wings. Rather, a large chunk of international support for capacity building is directed toward this end. The Review team was sceptical of the sustainability of this kind of approach.

Related to this issue is the fact that OLS has yet to develop adequate criteria to assess the eligibility of Southern Sudanese agencies for OLS support. In practice, it has proven difficult to move beyond those agencies which either existed before, or emerged during, the early years of OLS.

Besides capacity building, the Ground Rules have also been extended to include human rights. Since 1994, apart from OLS's humanitarian principles, signatories to the Ground Rules undertake to observe the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Geneva Conventions. More recently, this has enabled UNICEF/OLS to enter into direct dialogue with the movements when it has been felt that the Ground

Rules have been violated. Unusual for a relief operation, this has meant that human rights and humanitarian aid issues have been brought together. By exploiting the need of Southern opposition movements for international recognition, the Ground Rules in effect represent a move toward making humanitarian aid conditional. In this regard, the Review Team felt the Ground Rules represents a fundamental innovation in the field of conflict management, and one that deserves greater study.

The Ground Rules have provided a forum for dialogue between international aid agencies and the Southern Movements. Whereas in the North there has been a humanitarian impasse, in the South, especially within the past year or so, the quality of the dialogue between OLS and the Southern movements has improved. The attempt to deepen civil institutions, especially within the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A), appears to have been influenced by the operation of the Ground Rules.

Despite the growth of the Southern Sector, however, the distribution of humanitarian assistance to affected populations has been uneven. There is a concentration, especially of INGOs, in the more secure areas such as Equatoria. Here, greater emphasis is placed on rehabilitation projects. In less secure and more vulnerable areas, such as Northern Bahr el-Ghazal and Upper Nile, the UN has remained the main lifeline, so to speak.

Northern Sector Operational Issues

In the Northern Sector, OLS as a humanitarian operation is distinguished by its perceived absence. The UN's approach of quiet diplomacy has achieved little beyond providing an impetus for the GOS to expand its mechanisms of control and regulation. In contractual terms, since 1993, INGOs function as little more than a mute extension of the Sudanese state. Indeed, the voluntary sector has no de jure or de facto existence in government areas.

In the Northern Sector, the scope and coverage of OLS is determined on the basis of GOS approval, rather than actual need. The Nuba Mountains, for example, have long been excluded from OLS. Moreover, through the 1992 Relief Act, the government is able to establish legal control over OLS resources down to the level of beneficiaries. While WFP has sought to formalise contractual arrangements for relief distributions, GOS institutions largely determine the quality of international access. UN operationality is also constrained by

government control over the choice of implementing partners. Within this regulatory regime, scope for the application of OLS principles is extremely limited.

Significantly, there has been a convergence of GOS and UN policy concerning the linking of relief and development in the North. There is a shared view that relief assistance should now play a developmental role. This view, however, underplays the issue of neutrality in a context where development partners are allied to warring parties. Moreover, it fails to acknowledge that the war originates in a long-term process of economic decline and crisis. The actually existing development process appears to be closely associated with the war aims of the GOS.

The UN has undertaken no research on the nature of the development process in Sudan. At the same time, the Review Team was unable to discover any assessment, or other evidence, which substantiated the view that emergency conditions have now passed. Hence, urging a developmental approach to relief has been driven by changing fashion in the aid world, rather than by any real knowledge of conditions in Sudan.

In this regard, the Review Team was concerned that the UN Humanitarian Coordination Unit (UNHCU) has been downgraded. Declining capacity within UNHCU results in a severe lack of management support for staff working within the Unit, and for the effective monitoring, assessment, and evaluation of OLS operations in the North.

The lack of UNHCU capacity also contributes to the absence of coherence in UN agency mandates and activities. This can be seen, for example, in the poor coordination and duplication of UN agency responsibilities for food security and health interventions. There are also uneven standards regarding the implementation and coverage of OLS programmes. While UN agencies are severely constrained in their choice of implementing partners, little effort has been made to develop mechanisms to ensure compliance with accepted professional standards. Apart from an abrogation of responsibility, failure in this area has serious implications for the war-affected populations that OLS can reach in government areas.

National structures in Sudan responsible for relief policy have undergone significant changes in recent years. Federalisation, for example, has increased the significance of state structures and Local Relief Committees in the control of assessments and allocation of relief. The expansion of these structures has not been matched by

an increase in GOS services to the displaced, however. There is also a notable absence of representation by the displaced on those bodies which determine need and allocate resources.

Government policy is aimed at reducing the scope of INGOs in favour of Sudanese NGOs. The central dilemma for UN agencies has been whether to work with this policy, and build the capacity of those agencies selected by the GOS. Where these agencies are government-aligned, the issue of neutrality in the context of an ongoing war becomes problematic. The absence of a system of Ground Rules, as exists in the Southern Sector, is noticeable in this respect.

Food Aid and Food Security

Perceptions of the emergency in Sudan have changed over time. Initially, the emergency was viewed as an acute crisis of nutrition and mortality, and issues of food aid and food delivery predominated. Over time, agency views have gradually changed to encompass wider issues of food security, involving support for local food production. While there is ambivalence within the Southern Movements about the shift away from food aid, both Sectors have seen reductions in emergency food aid. This has been achieved by decreasing rations, limiting food aid to certain times of the year, and/or more specific targeting. In the North in particular, the government and UN agencies have encouraged this reduction as a measure of growing self-reliance and the move toward development.

These strategies, however, cannot be justified on the basis of information gathered, especially in the Northern Sector. No evaluations of the effectiveness of food aid programmes or their impact have been conducted, nor has there been any systematic monitoring of inputs. Estimated needs are rarely reconciled with deliveries. Consequently, little is known about what exactly people receive. Monitoring is further hindered by unclear objectives: whether food aid is used to reduce hunger, prevent starvation, to support coping strategies, or promote self-reliance.

Of special concern to the Review Team was the apparent lowering of acceptable standards of nutrition in an effort to accommodate development thinking. Levels of malnutrition shown by nutritional indicators that would have prompted emergency intervention at the start of OLS, are now seen as somehow normal.

Sudan is suffering from a chronic emergency. In this situation, options for the war-affected to improve their own food security are extremely limited. Crises have become recurrent. In the Northern Sector, the reduction of food aid appears aimed at overcoming so-called "relief dependency" by forcing vulnerable groups into non-sustainable labour relations. This is exacerbated by inadequate coordination mechanisms between WFP and UNICEF, and the absence of a coherent strategy for food security. Moreover, the reduction in food aid has not been matched by increases in production support.

People in Southern Sudan have survived within a contracting rural economy during the past thirteen years of renewed warfare. In part, this has been through labour migration, mainly to the North. Resource depletion, especially livestock, has also played a part. Networks of kinship exchange and assistance still operate, but at a much reduced level. OLS does not differentiate, however, between the different types and stages of coping strategies. Nor does it interpret what the adoption of certain strategies mean in relation to their possible detrimental effects.

Impartial assistance based on an objective assessment of need forms the basis of OLS neutrality. However, the identification of need is largely determined by the quality of access. Changes in assessment methodology over the course of OLS are a reflection of the differing quality of access in both Sectors. In the Southern Sector, the more liberal environment has allowed progressively more detailed assessments, based on the introduction of the Food Economy Approach. An important information base has also been built up. In the Northern Sector, the quality of access has remained poor, and assessment methodology has changed little. Consequently, while the Southern Sector provides programme leadership, a coherent and unified strategy for OLS needs assessment is absent.

The Consolidated Process

The assessment process forms the basis of the annual UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Sudan. As the main UN funding mechanism for OLS, the Appeal is far from transparent. For example, the appeal incorporates all UN agency funding requirements, and is therefore not specific to OLS. Within individual UN agencies, the separation between OLS and UN country programme requirements is also unclear. This is especially the case in the Northern Sector. Further, there is no Consolidated Inter-Agency Report on Sudan to set against the Appeal.

The relationship between the Appeal and the annual need assessment exercise is unclear. In the North, the quality of information gathered is poor, and there appears to be no link between the assessment and the Appeal. Moreover, the Appeal does not form the basis of a coherent programme strategy for OLS agencies. In both Northern and Southern sectors, the annual assessments provide no evaluation of past interventions, nor do they assess the appropriateness of implementation strategies.

INGOs are rarely involved in the planning of the Appeal process, or in its follow up. This is the case despite their central implementing role in OLS, and the fact that INGO resources form a major part of food aid and food security inputs, particularly in the Southern Sector. The lack of INGO involvement in the appeal process thus prevents the development of a coordinated strategy, and inhibits the ability of OLS to direct resources according to need. In the case of WFP, its ability to target resources is further limited by the absence of agreements with agencies providing non-WFP food.

Social Impact in the Southern Sector

OLS programming in both Sectors has borne little relation to the complex and fluctuating socio-economic reality on the ground. Attempts by the Review Team to locate a broader rationality and overall strategy in programming simply highlighted its incoherence. Indeed, the only programme sector that appeared to be genuinely appropriate to the situation is UNICEF's Humanitarian Principles Unit.

Under pressure to identify and target vulnerable individuals, agencies usually resort to models of social breakdown adopted from Western social policy. While the emphasis on improving household security is general, there is no shared definition of what a "household" is in the context of South Sudan. Moreover, such definitions have changed over time. Equal shallowness surrounds terms like "female-headed household" or "widow". While such images have substance in relation to Western notions of the nuclear family and vulnerability, they have little meaning in the actual social context of South Sudan.

Despite problems of coordination and perception, however, OLS programmes have had an impact in South. The move from famine alleviation to using food aid as a means of rehabilitation, while

based upon limited information, appears capable of stabilising the rural economy. This process, especially in relation to the more vulnerable areas of Bahr el-Ghazal and Upper Nile, have to be set against pressures to transform the rural population of South Sudan into a marginalised agricultural labour force. Indirectly, OLS has contributed to maintaining the integrity of Southern socio-economic structures.

This is illustrated by reference to northern Bahr el-Ghazal, an isolated and insecure area. For the Dinka here, the main effect of relief has been to enable them to return to their homes and reinvest in the subsistence economy. Northern Bahr el-Ghazal, however, has never been properly accessed by OLS, nor has it received food aid at the level of assessed need. Some commentators have questioned why, in areas like Northern Bahr el-Ghazal, there has been no return to famine conditions despite this short-fall.

Northern Bahr el-Ghazal illustrates the complexity of a rural economy under war-related stress. Famine has failed to emerge largely because past assessments did not take into account the variety of stress foods available, resource depletion, and labour migration. Regarding the latter, Northern Bahr el-Ghazal is an area in which the war has encouraged labour flight to the detriment of the rural economy. The initial exodus began in the late 1980s. The truce between SPLM/A and the Missiriya since this period has allowed for a freer circulation of Dinka between Northern Bahr el-Ghazal and the North.

Agricultural wage rates in the North are currently at subsistence levels. While labour flight may have prevented famine, it has been at the expense of subsistence agriculture in Northern Bahr el-Ghazal. As OLS access to this area began to expand during 1993, the situation began to change. Migrants started to return from the North in order to cultivate. In 1994, through the proliferation of bush-airstrips, OLS distributions were decentralised. By mid 1995, it was clear that the availability of food aid, albeit in small quantities, had encouraged labour retention and cultivation had increased. There was also a growing tendency for labour migrants to concentrate on short-term work that fitted the agricultural cycle. Less time was spent in gathering stress foods, and kinship networks were reinforced. This was occurring, however, at the expense of labour-intensive mechanised agricultural schemes in the North.

Since 1994, the activities of forces allied to the GOS - for example, Kerabino Kwanyin Bol, the Popular Defense Forces (PDF), and Nuer raiders - have undermined this modest recovery. At the time of

writing, continuing restrictions on OLS activities in Northern Bahr el-Ghazal threaten to once again squeeze the region and promote labour flight. The increasing insecurity in the area has promoted aid agencies to develop a mobile team approach. This is especially the case in the health field. Radiating from a central point, groups of INGOs attempt to cover a wider area, but on the basis of a temporary presence on the ground.

The effects of the war in South Sudan are uneven. In Western Upper Nile, the agricultural economy has also shrunk, in this case due to isolation rather than insecurity. In the last several years, however, a partial recovery appears to be underway, as a result of expanding trade links with the North, Western Equatoria, and Uganda. This development has yet to be fully incorporated into OLS planning, however, for example in relation to income generation projects in the area. One reason for the expansion of trade is the improvement of links between SSIM/A and the GOS. Compared to Western Upper Nile, trade networks are more pressured in Northern Bahr el-Ghazal.

Social Impact in the Northern Sector

In North Sudan, OLS has its origins in a response to growing internal displacement. The creation of a large, displaced population cannot be seen, however, as simply an unfortunate consequence of the war. Moreover, evidence suggests that war-induced displacement is continuing. The Review Team felt that a major failure of international and UN policy in the North has occurred in relation to internal displacement. Given the trend within humanitarian policy to internalise the human effects of conflict, this is a major flaw in the OLS model.

Since the late 1980s, the policy of successive Sudanese governments towards the internally displaced has involved combining the provision of relief, rural integration and resettlement, and the upgrading of urban settlements. In Ed Da'ein, the displaced have been settled in "paired villages". In Wau they have been relocated to "peace villages". In Khartoum, GOS policy has involved the demolition of spontaneous displaced settlements and the relocation of their populations to "peace villages" on the outskirts of Khartoum, or to agricultural production schemes in other States. In both rural and urban contexts, relief assistance is highly controlled through local government relief committees and national Sudanese and regional NGOs.

Successive governments in Sudan have promoted the modernisation of agriculture as central to national development. Under the rubric of promoting economic self-reliance, the displaced in Ed' Da'ain and Wau, for example, are encouraged to engage in agricultural activities - both as producers and contract labourers. Wage labour, once a seasonal activity in the subsistence rural economy, has now become a survival strategy of people forcibly displaced from the South and areas in the 'transitional zone'. The Review believes that the UN has worked uncritically within the policy framework established by the GOS towards the displaced. GOS definitions of the populations in need determine OLS coverage. In Khartoum and Wau the war-displaced located in peace camps are included in OLS operations. Those outside remain outside the purview of OLS.

In Ed Da'ain, the Review found that capacity of the UN and NGOs to sustain even minimum services has been eroded, both by a declining resource base for humanitarian operations, and by policies that have sought to reduce relief and promote self-sufficiency through agricultural production. In Wau, despite initial concern in 1992 that the formation of peace villages was clearly linked to military strategies, OLS policy has subsequently sought to support agricultural production.

Greater Khartoum has the largest concentration of war-displaced people in North Sudan. The prolonged crisis among this population, represents perhaps the greatest failure of OLS in the North. The incorporation of the Khartoum displaced under OLS has had little observable benefit. The UN strategy of combining emergency assistance, technical support to the government for urban planning, with advocacy and protection has failed to relieve the situation. In part, this is because the different components of the strategy are contradictory. In the absence of a coherent strategy, the UN has reached an impasse. In consequence, there has been a steady withdrawal and downgrading of UN involvement with the Khartoum displaced. The Review is concerned with this trend, especially given persistently high levels of malnutrition among the Khartoum displaced.

Cost Effectiveness

As an informal or negotiated safe area programme that does not rely on military protection, OLS must be seen to be cost-effective. The issue of cost effectiveness has risen especially in relation to the

Southern Sector's reliance on relatively expensive air transport. The GOS, in particular, has pressed the case for greater use of cheaper surface transport routes from the North, especially, the rail and river corridors.

In order to estimate the possible savings involved, the Review team developed a substitution model using 1995 distribution figures. Assuming free access, all cargo ex-Lokichokio that could reasonably have been moved using Northern routes was substituted, and the whole operation re-costed. On this basis, it was estimated that a possible savings of approximately 25% could be made on total costs. It should be emphasised however, that this is a hypothetical figure. For one thing, it assumes free access in a Sector where this is not the norm; indeed, restriction on access is the largest single factor increasing unit delivery costs. At the same time, the model makes no allowance for secondary distribution beyond rail and riverside drop-off points. The absence of internal transport, and the wish to discourage population movement, was the reason that the Southern Sector developed a system of decentralised air delivery in the first place.

In the final analysis, the Review is of the opinion that under existing conditions, the transfer of Southern Sector coordination activities to government areas would be tantamount to the cessation of humanitarian assistance to South Sudan. In effect, it would represent a step backward to the situation of the 1980s.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Outline Definition

Operation Lifeline Sudan is a political and organisational arrangement which allows humanitarian assistance to reach war-affected populations in an ongoing conflict. The political aspect of OLS is that the warring parties have conceded that this should happen, and that the UN should provide an umbrella under which relief activities can take place. Periodic assessments of need shape the organisational aspects of the operation. Under a process of negotiated access, the resulting requirements and delivery routes are agreed with the warring parties. Assessed need also constitutes the foundation of an annual appeal. This, plus the support raised independently by NGOs working within OLS, provides the funding for relief activities.

While formally under UN coordination in Khartoum, OLS is not a unified structure. Activities mostly take place within two distinct operational and contractual environments. The Northern Sector is representative of some government areas. Here, OLS activities are organised from Khartoum and fall within a managerial regime defined by the Government of Sudan (GOS). The Southern Sector pertains to most non-government areas in the South. Managed from Nairobi, it is a cross-border operation with a main logistical base at Lokichokio in northern Kenya. Here, UNICEF is the lead agency and has been tasked with coordinating UN and NGO activities. It is in the Southern Sector that the identity of OLS as a body assisting war-affected populations is more in evidence. In government areas, the extent and quality of international access is relatively restricted.

OLS was established in April 1989. It was the first example of an increasingly common approach to internal war. Not only do aid agencies now work in ongoing conflict, the intention is to support displaced and war-affected populations in-country, as opposed to refugees beyond its borders. It is also now the longest running of such programmes. This Review is timely both in relation to the renewed difficulties currently facing OLS, and the wider significance of this general approach in framing international humanitarian policy.

1.2 Competing Demands and the Review

In September 1992, Jan Eliasson, the Under Secretary General for the newly formed Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA), visited Sudan. The reason for this visit was that OLS was in serious crisis. Already in existence for some three years, mounting restrictions on aid deliveries imposed by the warring parties had practically brought humanitarian activities in South Sudan to a standstill. A note prepared for the Eliasson mission summed up the polarised situation:

The visit to Sudan is surrounded by conflicting expectations. The Government is looking for an endorsement of its humanitarian policies and activities with an emphasis on the need to shift from relief to recovery and development. The donor community is looking for a confrontation with Government policies which they see as being indifferent to the welfare of the people of Sudan and in violation of basic human rights, and is not prepared to fund recovery and development activities at this time. The international NGO community is looking for greater support while the Government will seek to promote the role of national NGOs. Needless to say, the SPLM hopes that the visit will emphasise the inadequacies of the Government and promote its political agenda (UN, 1992, Sept 3: 1).

At first glance, few things have changed in the four years since this mission. OLS is again in crisis and the situation is deeply divided. This is occurring, moreover, during a period when there is a lack of cohesion within the UN system and among donor governments concerning policy toward Sudan.

The war in Sudan is being fought, publicly at least, without territorial maps or accurate population figures. For the outsider, it is a war of allegation, assertion, and rumour. The Review Team was told by one senior government official, for example, that the rebel area of South Sudan was now confined to a strip along the Ugandan border; he also noted that while in the mid-1980s South Sudan had a population of five million, the SPLM/A zone now included only 300,000 people (Lino Roll, 1996, March 27). Although such views are greeted with incredulity by those familiar with the South, they nevertheless form the stuff of government. The Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A), for its part, has its own demographic lexicon. According to the Movement, not only does the South constitute 30% of the population of Sudan, of the total country population, 69% are of African rather than Arab origin (Garang, 1995, Nov 27).

Competing claims of territorial control and political allegiance are sensitive issues; they directly inform the political process. Unfortunately, but unavoidably, the OLS Review has become part of this process. Given the GOS's demographic views, it now wishes to see the closure of Southern Sector OLS operations. According to the GOS, OLS activities are no longer necessary; indeed, they are now artificially supporting a renegade rebel group. The SPLM/A, on the other hand, wants OLS Northern and Southern Sectors to be administratively separated, and the Southern Sector protected from alleged political interference from the North.

Despite the continuance of the war, both of the warring parties regard the emergency as over. Together with some UN agencies and international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), they want to see OLS shift its resources from relief into rehabilitation and development. Since OLS represents one of the few sources of external assistance available to Sudan, such pressure on its humanitarian mandate is understandable. As in 1992, however, most donors believe that the necessary stability for development funding still does not exist. This informal embargo has increased the pressure on OLS funding. For their part, donors are particularly concerned with the cost of OLS, not only from the point of view of its long-running nature, but because of its reliance on expensive air transport.

Such conflicting demands arise from the fact that OLS is confronting an essentially political emergency. In this regard, OLS can be described as an "informal safe area programme". It is informal since the ultimate sovereignty of the GOS has not been challenged. Moreover, while military protection tends to characterise most safe area operations, in the case of OLS, access has been maintained largely as a result of the vulnerability of the warring parties to international pressure and opinion. OLS started the trend in 1989 of working in ongoing conflict and internalising its effects. Today, it faces an equally pressing challenge - that of the longevity of such operations given the protracted nature of internal conflict.

1.3 OLS and the War

Faced with conflicting demands, the Review has attempted to maintain its objectivity by letting the evidence speak for itself as far as possible. Given the humanitarian role of OLS, this has meant discussing the effects of the war. The Review Team realises, however, that for many readers this will be sufficient to render the Review biased and slanted. There are some who regard the proper role of

humanitarian aid as a purely technical function, and provide assistance blindly without concern for cause or intent. This view sits ill at ease with current international expectations of OLS, however, especially since the main casualties of internal war are civilians.

The present expectation is that OLS alleviates the disaster producing activities of its major counterparts - the GOS and the Southern Movements. In the war zones affected by direct fighting, the Sudanese Army, the Popular Defence Force, the SPLA factions, and all of their allied militias, have repeatedly targeted civilian populations. During the early phases of the war (1984-1988) such activities were intended to deny the opposing side supplies or civilian support. Hence, the rural subsistence economy and its assets were the primary target for attack. Since 1991, interfactional fighting within the SPLA (SPLA, SPLA United, SSIA) has intensified the asset stripping character of such attacks. In addition, relief inputs have also become targets. Since 1994 especially, food drops, primary health care facilities and OLS agency compounds have invited attack.

All of these activities have produced widespread displacement, as specific populations have been denied the opportunity or means to feed themselves, and as groups of people have fled areas of conflict seeking refuge elsewhere. Both parties to the conflict have also organised forceable relocations of populations at different times during the war. In the North, outside of the conflict zone, the demolition of displaced settlements and the relocation of the populations involved continues to be a major source of disruption.

In attempting to complete its work, the Review Team has been guided by the humanitarian principles which form the foundation of OLS. These principles, notably those of free access to war-affected populations and the neutrality of humanitarian assistance, form the only yardstick with which to measure the competing demands that have been unleashed.

1.4 The Main Stages of OLS

OLS arose out of the failure of the international community to prevent the 1988 war-related famine in Bahr el-Ghazal. As an organisational structure and system of management, the evolution of OLS can be divided into two stages. The initial phase spanned the period from 1989 to 1992, while the second and current stage began to take shape

toward the end of 1992. This division reflects the two main periods of OLS relief activity.

1.4.1 The Initial Phase (1989 - 1992)

While the initial phase established the basic division between a Northern and Southern Sector, agreements between the warring parties were ad hoc and informal. Indeed, the first signed OLS agreement was not reached until 1994. During the first two years of its existence, OLS was largely conceived in terms of the discrete and time limited operations of OLS I and II. While never fully applied, especially in the North, the impression in the formal documentation for these operations is that OLS was a UN-coordinated operation having access to all war-affected populations whatever their location.

Apart from the initial flurry of activity in 1989, in practice the initial phase of OLS was one of renewed fighting and a deepening crisis of consent. OLS Southern Sector activities began to decline and take on an ad hoc appearance, a process not helped by the failure of the first proximity talks in October 1991. Prior to September 1992, there were no further serious discussions on OLS, and relief requirements for South Sudan were folded into the consolidated SEPCHA appeal. Although this ensured that OLS continued to receive some resources, it left the issue of access untouched (UN, 1992, Sept 3).

The growing crisis for OLS was the result of several factors. A military coup in June 1989 ushered in the present government. While at first supporting OLS, following the resumption of fighting toward the end of the year GOS attitudes became increasingly critical. OLS was seen as an arrangement benefiting the SPLM/A. For its part, the SPLM/A claimed that OLS was biased in favour of the GOS. At the same time, in May 1991, following the fall of the Mengistu regime, the SPLM/A was expelled from its bases in Ethiopia. These dramatic events precipitated a split in the SPLM/A (August 1991), and the formation of what became known as the SPLM/A Mainstream and the SPLM/A United. This division was followed in 1992 by growing GOS military assertiveness, and the recapture of many urban centres earlier taken by the SPLM/A. Both the split and the intensified fighting caused significant population displacement.

By 1992, OLS activities were more or less in abeyance. It is claimed that less than 10% of the potentially reachable population was being accessed (UNICEF, 1992, August: 5). This slack was not being taken up by an expansion of operations from the North. Through GOS and

SPLM/A restrictions, the whole of Bhar el-Ghazal and Jonglei were effectively closed to aid agencies.

1.4.2 The Present Phase (1992 - 1996)

Although established in 1989, OLS's present form largely took shape in response to the malaise that had developed by 1992. In the North, relations between the GOS and the international community were at a low ebb. At the same time, OLS had not been able to keep pace with the changing military landscape in the South. If OLS was to be revitalised, not only did its humanitarian role need to be restated, a more flexible and continuous mode of access needed to be established (UN, 1992, Sept 3).

An important characteristic of the present phase is that of a growing formality. Rather than being ad hoc, OLS became a continuous operation with administrative arrangements to suit. At a time of growing international pressure on the GOS, the involvement of DHA in September 1992 in the role of overall OLS coordinator helped shape this process. The following year, a Special Envoy for Humanitarian Affairs was created to liaise between the warring parties on access issues. The high point of this development was in 1994, when a tripartite agreement was signed, giving the UN access to war-affected regions. This emerged in association with the IGADD peace process.

Compared to the initial phase, the nature of OLS agreements have changed. Since 1992, there has been an increasing tendency to see UN coordination as confined to South Sudan only. In the North, the government has been defined as the main regulatory body for humanitarian matters. From being based on a principle of access to war-affected populations whatever their location, in practice OLS has increasingly become an area programme. Not only has this confirmed the earlier separation between Northern and Southern Sectors, it has encouraged the administration of relief in each area to take on a different institutional dynamic. In GOS areas, after a history of competing ministerial responsibility for relief matters, a process of organisational consolidation and deepening was inaugurated from 1992. Likewise, in the Southern Sector, UNICEF's development of Ground Rules in relation to the opposition movements has stimulated the attempt to broaden civil structures and relations.

Compared to the initial phase, in the Southern Sector especially, there has been a marked programme expansion. Since the end of 1992,

the international community has spent more than half a billion dollars through OLS and its participating agencies. From six or seven NGOs being involved during 1992, this number has increased to nearly 40 NGOs. A growing programme complexity has also resulted. From a programme aimed primarily at nutritional support, OLS has evolved to include a wider range of rehabilitation and institutional support work. Assessments have also become more sophisticated.

None of these developments, however, would have been possible without a significant innovation in relation to working in unresolved conflict. Initially, through "corridors of tranquillity" OLS attempted to gear its activities to fixed routes obtained through limited ceasefire agreements. This has been abandoned, however, in favour of developing a security and evacuation apparatus which is flexible enough to support agencies in an ongoing and volatile conflict.

After reaching a peak in 1994, OLS activity rates have begun to decline. In part, this is due to a changing pattern of need. It is also the case, however, that since 1995 government concerns about the continuation a Nairobi based cross-border operation have steadily reasserted themselves. This has taken the form of restrictions on aircraft type, denial of flight locations, periodic flight bans, and a re-emergence of a growing demand that all OLS activities are managed from Khartoum. At the same time, factionalism among the Southern opposition movements has also increased, and this has contributed to increasing insecurity, especially in Bhar el-Ghazal and Upper Nile.

Together, these events have contributed to what can be seen as the second major crisis of OLS. At present, it is claimed that the Southern Sector operation is only meeting about 20% of the estimated need. In many respects, OLS has returned to the malaise of 1992.

1.5 Methodology

This Review is the first comprehensive examination of OLS in its seven year history. Apart from numerous and discrete agency programme evaluations, the only other attempt to see OLS as a whole was been in 1991 (Minear et al., 1991). Although useful, this work is largely based on oral testimony and includes little documentary or quantitative analysis. While the need for a review has been recognised for some time, it was the deepening crisis of OLS during the early part of 1995 which eventually started the process.

In consultation with donor governments, the Terms of Reference for Review work were finalised in June 1995 (see Appendix 1). In interpreting the Terms of Reference, the Review Team has been guided by the understanding that the work was a review, and not an evaluation (DHA, 1995, June 23). That is, rather than a detailed sector by sector analysis, the Review should examine OLS's modus operandi, and its effectiveness in establishing and maintaining humanitarian space. Moreover, while donors have provided the funding and DHA the necessary administrative support, the Review is an independent undertaking, unconnected with any of the parties or agencies associated with OLS. While guided by the Terms of Reference, this understanding has allowed the Team a necessary degree of latitude in approaching such a vast undertaking.

Despite the finalisation of the Terms of Reference in June, actually starting the Review was beset by a number of difficulties, including reservations over team composition by the GOS. This delayed the initial September 1995 start date. By the time the problem had been resolved, the original plan of having the final report by December could no longer be met. Because some team members were unable to reschedule the work for the beginning of 1996, the review process was split and spread over a longer period. The Team Leader and Technical Coordinator completed a short mission to Khartoum, Nairobi, and New Cush, South Sudan in November - December of 1995. This was to prepare for the main review, which began at the end of March 1996.

A preparatory visit of this type had not been initially planned. By default, however, it proved to be a useful exercise. It allowed a start to be made on the collection of basic documentation, especially in relation to OLS assessments and quantitative information. Members of the Review Team began a preliminary analysis of this material between January and March. In addition, it helped a more informed Work Plan to be produced, especially regarding the selection of case studies. Prior to departure for Sudan, the Team assembled at Birmingham University for a two day briefing and orientation session. The basic issues were explored, and team members began to define their responsibilities and areas of enquiry.

The Review Team travelled to Khartoum on March 23, 1996, and departed five weeks later from Nairobi on April 27, 1996. Apart from the diplomatic and supporting role of the Team Leader, the approach was to have a division of labour between the seven other team members. That is, a three person Joint Team looking at comparative issues such

as access agreements, assessments, food security, relief economics, and logistics, while the remaining four team members divided into a North and a South Team. Their role was fieldwork in case study locations in government and non-government areas, respectively. After a number of days in Khartoum, the Team began to separate according to these functions. Roughly speaking, while the Joint Team divided its time between North and South Sudan, via Kenya, the field teams worked independently in these areas and so maximised their time.

The basic methodology pursued was that of open-ended and semi-structured interviewing, and documentary collection and analysis. The types of questions to be pursued in interviews were largely formed through a process of group discussion and documentary analysis. Within the framework of examining the modus operandi of OLS, while not exhaustive, the case studies were chosen to illustrate the range of OLS activities and operating conditions. The North Team, for example, mainly looked at issues connected with the war-displaced, especially around Khartoum and in Ed Da'ein, South Darfur. In addition, the team visited the garrison town of Wau in Bahr el-Ghazal. The South Team also examined internal displacement in one location, Labone in Eastern Equatoria, as well as visiting the relatively stable environment of Ler in Upper Nile, and the relatively unstable environment of Akon in northern Bahr el-Ghazal.

After four weeks, the Joint and South Teams departed Nairobi and returned to Khartoum. Here, the Review Team reformed, and for three days debriefed and produced a thematic outline to guide the documentary analysis and writing-up phase. On April 24, a short presentation was made to invited government, donor, and agency personnel concerning the current state of the Review. Apart from describing what had been done, this mainly involved sharing some tentative results of an initial cost-savings analysis, this being the only detailed information that the Review Team felt confident in sharing at such an early stage of analysis. The following day, the Team travelled to Nairobi. Here, a similar presentation was made before departing the region on April 27.

Against expectations, the fieldwork for the Review went relatively smoothly. Apart from small delays and the need to re-arrange part of the planned schedule, the Team achieved its aims. In the course of the five weeks, around three hundred people were interviewed, and nearly a thousand documents either collected or noted. Indeed, the amount of information gathered was far more than expected, and was a contributory factor to the slippage of the completion date for the

final report. At the end of May, a two day editorial meeting took place in Birmingham involving the whole Review Team, including an editor who had been taken on board at that time. Two other subsequent meetings of the UK-based team members occurred in the course of completing the report. After extensive editing, the final draft was handed to the printers at the end of July.

1.6 Structure of the Report

For those seeking the quickest way to gain an impression of the scope of the Review, the Introduction, Executive Summary, and Recommendations are a minimal reading requirement. The full evidence for the recommendations, however, is contained within the body of the report.

OLS is a large, integrated, and many-faceted operation that has been running for seven years. Given this, structuring the report has not been an easy task. In the course of writing-up, several methodological difficulties have presented themselves. For example, cleanly separating the case study material from wider programme issues has not been easy. This is particularly so in relation to assessments. Most OLS activities are based in some way on an assessment of need. Striking a balance between the comparative aspects of assessment and its local expressions has been problematic. At the same time, distinguishing programming and coordination issues from those of social impact have posed a similar difficulty. The manner in which programmes are organised has an important bearing on their effect.

Regarding the case studies, another problem which faced the Review Team was whether to treat them on a stand-alone basis, or more generically. In the interests of length, the latter was chosen. Moreover, despite the original intention to compare case studies between Northern and Southern Sectors, this has proven more difficult than expected, because the different contractual and regulatory systems in each Sector have produced distinct programmes and approaches.

The sequencing of the chapters has also needed careful consideration. The general approach has been to provide an initial framework in which to locate more specific case study material. Hence, the Review begins with an analysis of the the overall political and contractual structure of OLS (chapter 2), and goes on to consider in more detail the operational environments pertaining in the Southern Sector

(chapter 3) and the Northern Sector (chapter 4). Chapter 5 then considers food aid and food security within OLS as a whole, followed by a more detailed analysis of programming and social impact in the Southern Sector (chapter 6) and the Northern Sector (chapter 7). More quantitative material on technical and administrative matters such as information management, funding, logistics, and cost effectiveness are presented at the end of the Review (chapter 8).

2. THE POLITICAL STRUCTURE OF OLS

This Chapter analyses the institutional structure of OLS, describes its key features, and considers its managerial and political weaknesses.

2.1 OLS - An Informal Safe Area Programme

In terms of humanitarian assistance, one of the main innovations following the end of the Cold War has been a new-found political and organisational ability to support war-affected populations in situations of ongoing conflict. OLS has the distinction of being the first operation of this kind. Since 1989, when OLS was established, supporting displaced and conflict-affected populations within war zones, as opposed to refugee populations outside of war zones, has become a notable trend in humanitarian policy (UNHCR, 1995: 19-56). As a result, the international attitude toward large-scale refugee movements has hardened.

The aim of the new approach is to internalise war-induced displacement. Of necessity, the new approach is usually implemented in situations where governance is contested, and where conflict is unresolved; this, in turn, has led to the questioning of sovereignty in relation to humanitarian issues. Since the end of the Cold War, humanitarian interventions, such as those in Iraq, Somalia, Bosnia, and Rwanda, have contributed to an uneven process of change within international law. Concerning human rights, this process has:

...potentially contributed to the challenge and gradual erosion of traditional connotations linked up with "state sovereignty" as a more or less absolute concept (Verwey, 1996: 4).

Most recent examples of internalising displacement have taken place with the help of military protection. Military protection - often called military humanitarianism - has been associated with the development of "safe areas" for displaced or conflict-affected populations within war zones. The challenge to absolute sovereignty that such interventions represent has been obscured, however, by a number of factors, including the collapse of central authority, and the general turmoil that tends to precede this type of international involvement.

From the end of 1992, following the involvement of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA), OLS has developed into a form of safe area

programme in South Sudan. In place of military protection, however, access has depended on the vulnerability of the warring parties to international pressure. In the case of the GOS, this has largely been the wish to avoid punitive diplomatic action. For the opposition movements, the courting of international recognition has been central.

Hence, international pressure has been crucial for the continued operation of OLS, and is a distinguishing feature of the operation in terms of the replicability of the OLS model. Another distinguishing feature of OLS is that, in contrast to many other contexts, the operation has developed in a situation where central authority has not collapsed. Rather, the present government gives every appearance of shaping a process of institutional change and consolidation.

The differences between OLS and other humanitarian operations suggests that OLS should be described, more accurately, as an "informal" safe area intervention. Although the idea of absolute sovereignty may have been weakened, in practice it has not been replaced as the corner-stone of international relations. In this regard, the "informality" of OLS operations derives from the fact that the sovereignty of the GOS is nowhere challenged in OLS agreements. Rather, access to war-affected populations has been maintained largely through an ad hoc and reactive process of mobilising international pressure. Moreover, because such pressure cannot take a direct political form, it is couched in the non-political language of disaster prevention and alleviation. As far as Sudan is concerned, international relations is largely conducted in these terms.

Since GOS sovereignty has not been formally challenged by OLS, the government regards any ceding of its authority over South Sudan as temporary. This has provided a point of continuous tension with sections of the international community. The present government came to power a few months after OLS was established in April 1989. Since then it has regularly challenged the role and validity of OLS. While playing an important protection and humanitarian role in the South, OLS has never been able to overcome this crisis of legitimacy.

2.2 Phases of OLS: Agreements and Humanitarian Principles

Securing and maintaining international access in an unresolved political crisis is a continuous activity. Over the past seven years, there have been at least 15 major missions and some half dozen agreements of increasing formality concerning access. Together with numerous instances of UN and donor lobbying, this almost continuous

political pressure has proven necessary to keep OLS running. At the same time, the humanitarian principles that govern negotiated access have undergone significant change. During the initial phase of OLS, emphasis was placed on a series of ad hoc arrangements that promised access to war-affected populations wherever they may be. From 1992, while agreements remained ambiguous, there has been a growing formality, and, significantly, a tendency to interpret access as relating to specific war-affected areas only. In other words, there has been a definitional shift in OLS from principle to geography. This has major implications for OLS's modus operandi.

2.2.1 The Ad Hoc Initial Phase

In March 1989, the UN and the GOS organised a high level donor and agency meeting in Khartoum. Here, the OLS I Plan of Action was finalised. Travelling between Addis Ababa, Nairobi, and South Sudan, James Grant - the Personal Representative of the UN Secretary General - secured the agreement of the SPLM/A to the cease-fire related "corridors of tranquillity" that the Khartoum plan demanded. In effect, OLS I was a set of informal, bilateral agreements between the warring parties and the UN; since the agreements were personally brokered by James Grant, they did not result in a signed understanding. Although the absence of signed agreements was felt to be a problem at the time (Carlton, 1990: 17-18), it was not until March 1994 that the first signed agreement was reached. The informal approach, with less success, was replicated in OLS II after James Grant ceased to be directly involved.

In practice, "agreement" comprised the parties involved simply allowing the operation to proceed. That is:

...the distribution to the destined populations is effected as an agreement between the Government of the Sudan and donor governments (UN, 1989, March 14: 7).

This initial time-limited approach was based on the belief that all emergencies are short-term. It established the basis of international access as being dependent on a continuous process of renegotiation.

Although originally conceived as a one month operation, OLS I ran between April and August 1989. Its Plan of Action sets out the general principles upon which the operation was to be based. Over time, the humanitarian principles of OLS have been distilled to a set of statements covering independent access, neutrality, and transparency.

However, in the original agreement, the principles also included a range of actions to be undertaken by the GOS and the international community within a specific Plan of Action. Such considerations form the majority of the points raised in the original agreement.

Regarding access, the Plan of Action (UN, 1989, March 14: 2-4) sets out the following points:

- the "neutrality of humanitarian relief" should be recognised,
- free access should be guaranteed to UN, donor, and NGO personnel participating in relief activities, enabling them "to reach all civilian non-combatant populations in need of emergency relief throughout the Sudan",
- aid convoys will only carry humanitarian assistance.

The idea of "transparency" finds no mention at this stage. Most of the other principles cover the various organisational roles and responsibilities of the GOS and the international community in completing the Plan of Action. GOS, for example, was expected to: prepare sites for relocating the displaced, facilitate the work of international NGOs, establish RRC-led consultative relief committees and improve its monitoring and reporting, provide a favourable exchange rate to aid agencies, establish a civilian radio network through the RRC, create a high level ministerial committee, and so on. For its part, the international community was to strengthen the role of the RRC and help it meet delivery targets.

With the notable exception of its relocation programme for the displaced and the establishment of local relief committees, the GOS acted on few of the points in the Plan of Action. Building on earlier tensions, relations with international NGOs (INGOs), for example, have remained problematic throughout the whole period of OLS. Moreover, the systematic regulation of INGOs in the North properly dates from the beginning of 1993 only. For its part, the international community also failed to live up to its allotted responsibilities. Indeed, during the early 1990s, all major donors cut development assistance to Sudan as the government lost international favour; hence, strengthening GOS structures became a non-option. Presently, UNDP is one of the few major agencies attempting to support such activities.

The same general point can be made about the institutional undertakings set out in the OLS II Plan of Action (UN, 1990, March 28). Generally speaking, few undertakings were acted upon. This has now become a point

of contention for the GOS (GOS, 1996, April), which claims that the UN and donor governments have not honoured the supportive measures set out in these documents.

As consent was first withdrawn toward the end of 1989, the humanitarian principles of OLS were defined more clearly. Access became something to defend in its own right (File Note, 1989, November 17). By 1990, OLS's humanitarian principles had gained a more defined and separate existence within the OLS II Plan of Action (UN, 1990, March 28: 3-4). For example, the principle of access to war-affected populations regardless of their location is clearly set out.

OLS II ran between March and December 1990. The following are abbreviated points from OLS Principles as existing in the OLS II Plan of Action (UNICEF/OLS, 1990).

The Neutrality of Humanitarian Relief:

- relief and rehabilitation to civilians in need "wherever they are is deemed to be neutral".

The Transparency of Relief Operations:

- all activities are conducted openly and "closely monitored by the United Nations to ensure complete transparency and accountability".

The Necessity of Partnership Among All Concerned Parties in OLS:

- to ensure the survival of all civilians in need, the warring parties "agree that the basic welfare of civilians, wherever they are located, must be respected".

Corridors of Tranquillity:

- UN flagged transport will be allowed to pass safely.

The Special Mandate of the United Nations:

- that the UN continues to mediate with the SPLM to facilitate relief operations and to continue "obtaining their endorsements and support to OLS principles and agreements, including 'corridors of tranquillity', the targeting of food to all civilians in need, and monitoring arrangements".

Another important position established at this time was that of NGOs working in the Southern Sector. Under the OLS II agreement, the following was established in this regard:

...the UN, jointly with the Government, will provide an operational framework for all OLS II relief personnel, institutions and NGOs, in all areas, including registered NGOs working in areas under the control of the SPLM. To this effect, letters of association will be signed between all NGOs and the UN, listing the principles of OLS, operational modalities and a declaration that all parties agree to work within these principles and modalities (UN, 1990, March 28: 7).

This ambiguous statement has been interpreted by the UN as meaning that letters of association (now termed Letters of Understanding) between INGOs and UNICEF are sufficient as a means to register INGOs in non-government areas. The ability of the UN to act in this manner is held to be the embodiment of its impartiality and neutrality. Moreover, it is only on this basis that the operation has been accepted by the opposition movements. Following the end of OLS II in December 1990, however, the GOS has persistently claimed that this arrangement is insufficient, and that unless all INGOs register in Khartoum, they are operating illegally (O'Reilly, 1991, March 29)).

As the first crisis deepened, several attempts were made to revive the operation. In February 1991, for example, a mission by Under-Secretary General James Jonah resulted in the GOS reaffirming its commitment to OLS principles. Despite this, however, there was no subsequent agreement for an OLS III, and relief activity continued on an ad hoc basis (UN, 1992, September 3).

2.2.2 DHA Involvement and the Current Phase

During its initial phase, OLS documentation gives the impression of a UN-coordinated operation that has access to all war-affected populations, whether in government or non-government areas. Although this was a fiction, especially in government areas, it nevertheless meant that the warring parties were at least agreeing to the principle of free access. Following the revitalisation of OLS from the end of 1992, however, a change is noticeable. Although access to war-affected populations wherever their location continues to be mentioned, it is qualified by other statements which suggest that UN coordination is confined to those non-government areas that the GOS is willing to agree are both "war-affected", and beyond its control.

In agreements from the end of 1992 forward, the position concerning access is ambiguous, and has led to competing interpretations. This ambiguity is clear from DHA's first involvement. In September 1992, following a meeting between President el-Beshir and Jan Eliasson - the new UN Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs - a joint statement was issued accepting OLS principles and indicating that:

...the Government of Sudan and the UN reaffirmed the critical importance of access to all people in need of humanitarian assistance **wherever they may be**, respect for the neutrality of relief operations and the fundamental necessity for transparency (UN, 1992, September 16: 1. Emphasis added).

At the same time, however:

The Government requested the United Nations to coordinate all relief assistance to populations **in conflict affected areas** (UN, 1992, September 16: 1. Emphasis added).

While the text of the agreement may be contradictory, the GOS understanding of the position was clear. Addressing the UN General Assembly the following November, the RRC Commissioner Dr. Ibrahim Abu Oaf described OLS as a new form of governmental and UN cooperation:

...to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance to those trapped in war zones (GOS, 1992, November 16).

At this stage, one may interpret the GOS understanding of OLS as implying UN access to conflict-affected populations in war zones only. In other words, areas such as the Nuba Mountains or North Sudan deemed to be under government control were, by implication, not considered to be war zones. While the UN's lobbying position has been that the GOS has agreed to access to war-affected populations irrespective of who controls the territory, in practice there has been a tendency by the UN to adopt the GOS interpretation of access at an operational level. This means that an operational duality between North and South was implicitly accepted.

In this regard, following the Eliasson mission, an implicit UN understanding developed that, in effect, OLS is confined to the Southern Sector. When Charles Lamuniere of DHA visited Khartoum in December 1992 to discuss the implementation of the Eliasson agreement, for example, it is noticeable that apart from a passing reference to its "Khartoum branch", OLS is not mentioned once in relation to the

North (Lamuniere, 1992, December: 9). The problem of restricted access to the displaced and Transition Zone was presented as essentially a problem between INGOs and the GOS.

The subsequent August and December 1993 missions of the newly appointed Special Envoy for Humanitarian Affairs, Ambassador Traxler, exemplify the need to address a growing operational duality in the context of an ambiguous access agreement. The missions operated at two levels. The formal mission reports indicate the operational divide; in the North, they document attempts to improve relations between INGOs and the GOS largely in terms of improving INGO access to areas controlled by the government. At the same time, the Special Envoy attempted to increase UN-coordinated access in the South (Traxler, 1993, August 5-11; December 7-14). It is important to note, however, that the issue of UN access to the Nuba Mountains was also pursued (Traxler, 1996, May 13); this was rejected by the GOS, on the grounds that the GOS controlled the entire area.

The most significant OLS agreement was reached as part of the IGADD mediation process. However, the contradiction between free access and access determined by geographical zones has persisted. During proximity talks in Nairobi in January 1994, the UN, GOS, SPLA/M, and SPLA/M United reaffirmed their commitment to ensuring:

...relief assistance to all people, irrespective of who controls the locations in which they live (GOK, 1994, January 21).

In March 1994, these points were directly incorporated into the first signed OLS agreement, linking GOS, SPLA/M, and SPLA/M United, and witnessed by IGADD member states (GOK, 1994, March 23). They were subsequently ratified in May in a tripartite implementation agreement between the GOS, the opposition movements, and the UN (GOK, 1994, May 17). DHA's Special Envoy for Humanitarian Affairs signed on behalf of the UN.

Not only are these the only signed agreements between concerned parties in OLS, the documents still operate as OLS's formal reference point. Following renewed calls by the GOS to close the Southern Sector operation, and its abrogation of a tripartite approach, attempts to renegotiate existing access agreements have proved unsuccessful. Given the status of these agreements, it is worth quoting what is said, and noting again their ambiguity. The March agreement (GOK, 1994, March 23) makes three main points:

The delivery of relief assistance to all needy populations

regardless of their locations.

Humanitarian assistance shall benefit only civilians, and shall not be used by warring parties.

All humanitarian actions and activities shall be transparent and carried out with the full knowledge of all parties.

The objectives of these principles was to prevent unnecessary hunger, lower high levels of morbidity and mortality, assist civilians to re-establish traditional coping mechanisms, and restore basic social services. Moreover, regarding implementation, the agreement permitted:

...the United Nations/Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS) the free movement of food and non-food relief by air, land, river and rail as agreed by the UN/OLS and the concerned parties (GOK, 1994, March 23).

While the text of the March and May 1994 agreements appears to endorse the principle of international access to war-affected populations whatever their location, the titles of both agreements indicate that they relate only to "War Affected Areas."

The GOS has consistently used the ambiguity within what can be called the DHA agreements to push for a geographical delimitation of OLS activities. Following the May 1994 agreement, for example, it was pointed out with reference to the North that:

The Traxler Agreement should not be utilized by the United Nations for the purpose of speaking on behalf of the voluntary organisations, to whom we have always opened our door to, and have provided with all necessary assistance (Abdelrahman Abu Doum, 1994, June 23).

In November 1995, following a period of renewed GOS concerns about OLS, the government unilaterally abrogated the tripartite basis of the 1994 agreement. Henceforth, a bilateral series of understandings, reminiscent of the initial phase of OLS, would be sought. Since a new agreement has yet to be reached, these developments have threatened to return OLS to the ad hoc basis of programming that characterised the early 1990s.

At the same time, the area-based definition inherent in the GOS

approach has been reconfirmed in relation to relief flights to South Sudan. On the grounds of security, the GOS unilaterally banned all aid flights into South Sudan in November 1995. While the ban was lifted two weeks later, it illustrates the vulnerability of OLS to the exercise of GOS sovereignty. Not only is the government able to unilaterally ban flights to locations over which it often exercises no effective control, once announced, bans become automatic due to UN security procedures. That is, since the safety of aircraft can no longer be guaranteed - which raises insurance considerations - the New York-based UN Security Coordinator immediately enforces the ban. Following concerted efforts within the UN system, the flight ban of November 1995 was eventually lifted. The price to be paid for GOS cooperation, however, was a significant expansion of its area-based definition of the question of access. Although the 1992 Eliasson agreement had allowed OLS to operationally concentrate on the South, in lifting the ban, the UN conceded to the GOS new power to differentiate between "war zones" and areas "affected by war" within the South. The agreement reached in Khartoum with the UN Resident Representative:

...accepted that OLS will not fly over or to war zones and stated that the UN has no staff in these zones, nor has any activities there (GOS, 1995, December 2).

Henceforth, the UN and its related agencies would only have access to areas "affected by war" (GOS, 1995, December 2) in the South. In effect, this established the ability of the GOS to designate some areas of South Sudan as "war zones", and thereby exclude an OLS presence. Given that international access has been more limited in the North than the South, it would appear that the government is attempting to impose the same kind of restrictions in the South that have applied to the Transition Zone and the Nuba Mountains for some years.

The implications of the Khartoum agreement of December 1995, which somewhat surprisingly won the approval of the UN, were put into immediate effect. While the total flight ban was lifted, it was followed by the imposition of a "no-fly" zone covering the Yei-Juba-Kapoeta-Nimule area of Equatoria, and a continuing denial of all ex-Uganda flights. The no-fly zone was in operation until March 1996. While flight bans have been common throughout the history of OLS, this was the first instance of a sustained no-fly zone. Reflecting the powers won under the December 1995 agreement, the South saw its first case of an area denial (Saunders and Harvey, 1996, April 11). Together with the abrogation of the 1994 tripartite agreement, this new development may herald a period of increasing area restriction of OLS

within South Sudan.

2.2.3 A Comparison of OLS Agreements

Apart from allowing a growing operational duality, it should be noted that the DHA agreements (1992 - 1994) differ from the OLS I and OLS II agreements (1989 - 1990). OLS I and OLS II documents are essentially plans of action associated with time-limited relief operations. UN and donor support for GOS institutions detailed within them is related to securing the conditions to fulfil these plans. The DHA agreements, on the other hand, were reached in a different situation. Relatively fixed "corridors of tranquillity" were in the process of being abandoned in favour of flexible access in the context of an ongoing war. Moreover, the plan of action approach was developing into a more continuous operation, based on regular assessments.

Rather than concentrating on operational detail, the DHA agreements are shorter documents concentrating on modalities and access corridors. Undertakings to support GOS institutions, or the move to rehabilitation and development work, are fewer and are discussed in relation to more general UN resolutions, rather than being discussed as specific undertakings in the context of the agreement itself. In fact, the signed agreements of March and May 1994 make no mention of institutional support or development work.

In allowing for a growing operational duality in OLS, the DHA agreements have had a profound impact on the organisational structure of the OLS operation, considered in the next section. In terms of containing a set of humanitarian principles open to international regulation, they have proved inadequate in the Northern Sector especially. More generally, while the DHA agreements reflect the highly politicised nature of the operation, the ambiguity within them has exacerbated conflicting interpretations of OLS, without providing a mechanism for arbitration that such conflicting interpretations require. Indeed, a mechanism to monitor compliance with the DHA agreements, and to adjudicate disputes, is noticeable by its absence. In this regard, the Review Team noted that any new agreement for OLS must be based on a much more carefully crafted set of documents than presently exists.

2.3 Lack of Managerial Cohesion Within OLS

2.3.1 The Organisational Division of OLS

Documentation for the initial phase of OLS does not indicate the actual division of Sudan that had occurred as a result of the war. The OLS I Plan of Action, for example, makes no mention of either the Southern Sector or the SPLM/A (UN, 1989, March 23), and the OLS II Plan of Action (UN, 1990, March 28) is only marginally better in this respect. Rather, in the initial phase, OLS is misleadingly presented as an operation that was agreed and facilitated by the GOS, and mounted by the UN, over a unified national territory.

From the perspective of the UN, the reticence to recognize the war-induced division of the country is perhaps understandable. In 1989, working through recognised governments had yet to be tempered by the ending of the Cold War. OLS was radical, and fears of bestowing political legitimacy on the SPLM/A were high. Moreover, it was widely believed that peace was only a matter of time. Both OLS I and II were conceived as discrete, time-limited operations in relation to a perceived short-term need. OLS I especially was thought to be contributing to the peace process by bringing the warring parties together on what was assumed to be a set of shared humanitarian aims.

Despite the lack of candor in the documentation, OLS I nevertheless established a basic and enduring aspect of OLS; that is, the division of humanitarian operations between a Northern and Southern Sector. With regard to the latter, UNICEF's earlier association with the pre-OLS cross-border operation was important in informing the choice to place UNICEF as the lead agency in non-government areas:

In view of UNICEF's special mandate, which authorises it to operate as a United Nations entity in rebel held areas without implying tacit United Nations recognition, it was agreed that UNICEF would act as the United Nations lead agency, opening offices to facilitate the implementation of the programme particularly in the health sector, to monitor distribution and to provide an umbrella for NGO activities. WFP, which would bear a major responsibility for the transport of food aid and other commodities, would also operate in the south (UNICEF, 1989: 8).

A mandated, UN umbrella for humanitarian operations in South Sudan was a major innovation. In North Sudan, on the other hand, a more conventional arrangement was adopted which reflected the status quo. That is, the UNDP Emergency Unit in Khartoum, under an existing Special Coordinator, would continue to organise relief activities in government areas in collaboration with the GOS. Here, WFP played the main co-ordinating role.

What makes OLS I distinct, however, is that for the six months it lasted, its two sections - North and South - were held together by a novel organisational link. That is, UNICEF's Executive Director, James Grant, was appointed the UN Secretary General's Personal Representative:

...with a mandate to contact governments and international organisations at the highest level, to mobilise support and to serve as a point of contact with the Government of Sudan and the SPLA (UNICEF, 1989: 8).

As Personal Representative of the Secretary General, Grant was also responsible for providing direction to the two principle UN agencies, UNICEF and WFP. His position as an external, New York-based go-between proved a useful tool in overcoming logistical and political problems between the GOS and the SPLM/A. A weakness in this approach, however, was that it was only geared to a single, time-limited operation; hence, all arrangements made were informal and ad hoc.

2.3.2 UNDP and the Conflict of Interests

While the planning for OLS II began in November 1989, a GOS flight ban between then and April 1990 seriously curtailed relief activities. It was not until the following month that OLS II operations properly restarted.

OLS II, however, had some important organisational differences with its predecessor. In September 1989, Michael Priestly replaced the exiting UNDP representative to become the Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs's Special Coordinator based in Khartoum, and James Grant ceased his go-between role as Personal Representative of the Secretary General. As a UNDP appointment, with special responsibility for the relief activities of OLS, the arrival of Priestley represented a normalisation of the situation in UN terms. Since UNDP is mandated to work through recognised governments, however, this was viewed by some as returning more control to the GOS (Aboum, 1990, October: 13).

The Special Coordinator was still regarded as the Secretary General's point of contact between the warring parties (UN, 1990, March 14).

In relation to the SPLM/A, however, this role was in practice given to UNICEF's OLS Coordinator based in Nairobi (UNCERO, 1990). In effect, at the same time that OLS II returned more control to the GOS, there was a downgrading of the level of UN linkage to the SPLM/A. The change was not lost on the opposition movement, and created an atmosphere of mistrust (OLS, 1990, May 19).

With regard to access, however, the situation was reversed. While more formal control of the operation was returned to the GOS in the Northern Sector, international agencies made the most headway on the ground in the Southern Sector. Although receiving scant mention in the OLS I and II documentation, UNICEF had taken effective responsibility for establishing an OLS Nairobi coordination office. A sectoral programme in the South quickly developed, and established a reputation as being able to "set a faster pace" than operations in the North (Aboum, 1990, October: 16).

Although it still lacked definition, by the time of OLS II, the basis of the organisational division of labour within the UN had begun to take shape. Within the Southern Sector, UNICEF was establishing an innovative programme of aid coordination in an ongoing conflict. In the Northern Sector, formal control had been returned to UNDP. During the early 1990s, relations between INGOs and the GOS deteriorated, as the attitude of the GOS to international humanitarian activity became more restrictive. At the same time, the UN was perceived to be offering INGOs little support (INGO, 1992, September 5).

The tension thus created within the UN system - that is, one UN agency respecting a sovereignty government, while another UN agency is attempting to deliver humanitarian assistance in the midst of a war to which the sovereign government is a party - has been a persistent weakness of the OLS structure. In reviewing the situation in December 1989, a UNICEF workshop reached a consensus that:

...it was not wise, if not unfair, in a situation of open conflict, to have the executive head of the Operation responsible for dealing with both the Government and the SPLM, located in Khartoum. His permanent presence there, and the variety of responsibilities he had, including that of UNDP Resident Representative in Sudan, placed him a position where some deference to the government was deemed appropriate and required (Carlton, 1990: 18).

The situation of having the UNDP Resident Representative also responsible for OLS activities has persisted. In September 1992, in

a UN briefing for a visit by the Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs, it was noted:

...that this puts the Coordinator in an extremely difficult position, having to be the go-between and the bearer of bad tidings between the Government and the SPLM (not to mention the donor community) while at the same time carrying out his normal UNDP responsibilities (UN, 1992, September 3: 5-6).

DHA involvement has not fundamentally affected this contradiction in roles. The response from UNDP has typically been that there is a need to retain a single UN focal point within a country; moreover, with its development brief, UNDP is well situated to provide an overview and to keep all activities within one system (Cairn, 1995, November 7).

The current Special Coordinator in Khartoum, Christoph Jaeger, is still a UNDP appointment who now answers to DHA New York on OLS matters (Jaeger, 1996, March 30). Not only has the contradiction been left untouched, an extra layer of reporting has also been added. In echos of the above quote, the Review Team heard continued donor and INGO scepticism concerning the dual role of UNDP, given what was seen as an inbuilt conflict of interest. At the same time, DHA was regarded as too distant to provide effective leadership.

The contradictions, tensions, and ambiguities within OLS have necessitated the intervention of an external interlocutor. DHA's appointment of a Special Envoy for Humanitarian Affairs can be seen as an attempt to address these problems. In August 1993, Ambassador Traxler made the first of nine missions to date to Sudan and Kenya. Following the de facto operational division of Sudan, however, his role has been played out in a structure within a structure. In other words, his missions include attempts to improve INGO and GOS relations in the North, as well as to improve access from the government side, at the same time as maintaining UN Southern Sector operations.

The Special Envoy has replaced the ad hoc missions that took place during the initial phase of OLS. This means, importantly, that a single, high-ranking UN official has been formally charged with maintaining OLS, and resolving the periodic crises which have emerged. In this regard, the creation of the post is indicative of the greater sense of continuity that has developed within OLS since 1992. This continuity and formality exists, however, in the midst of a diffuse and compartmentalised UN management structure.

2.3.3 Implications of An Informal "Safe Area" Approach

The effective confinement of OLS to South Sudan following DHA involvement has already been noted. Compared to the initial phase of OLS, as the Southern Sector develops, it is the Northern Sector which tends to slip from sight. The implicit division of Sudan, or, more specifically, the limitation of OLS to certain non-government areas in the South, represents a de facto adaptation of the OLS operation which has benefited both the UN and the GOS. In effect, this adaptation was a political, rather than managerial arrangement.

Given the level of government opposition to OLS, the political separation of the programme into distinct Sectors has been the secret of its survival. Parts of the UN have been able to trade the continuation of Southern Sector operations for the lack of serious challenge to GOS restrictive practices in the North. For example, despite their ambiguity, the government has never been publically pressed by the UN on its failure to implement OLS access principles. For its part, the GOS has been able to treat the Southern Sector operation as a temporary phenomenon, and, in the meantime, refine its own regulatory and contractual apparatus for aid work in the whole of the country, according to this model.

From the end of 1992, the non-government areas of South Sudan emerged as a form of "safe area". While lacking military protection - for example, through UN Peacekeeping troops - a sophisticated security apparatus has nevertheless emerged which monitors the level of insecurity for humanitarian operations in the conflict zones. This monitoring has allowed for the development of a system of flexible access for humanitarian aid in the context of ongoing warfare. In place of military protection, access has been maintained through the vulnerability of the warring parties to international pressure. In the case of the GOS, this has largely been the fear of punitive diplomatic action. For the opposition movements, the courting of international recognition is involved.

Such pressure was variously maintained throughout 1993 and, with the involvement of regional governments in the IGADD process, during 1994. Since the beginning of 1995, however, it has begun to dissolve. This, in turn, has enabled the GOS to restate its established objections to OLS, and to assert the temporary nature of OLS's existence.

An informal "safe area" approach to South Sudan has allowed

humanitarian assistance to reach many people who might otherwise not have been helped. Indeed, during 1993 and 1994, the Southern Sector underwent a major period of expansion. The number of NGOs involved, for example, roughly trebled. The structure of OLS is such, however, that this access has been purchased largely on the basis of an unspoken political understanding that war-affected populations in the North remain outside of OLS.

The case of the Nuba Mountains is instructive in this respect. It has already been mentioned that access by OLS was first posed in August 1993, by the Special Envoy (Traxler, 1996, May 13). These talks floundered, however, following GOS insistence that the Nuba Mountains were under government control, despite OLS evidence to the contrary. The Nuba question was again raised during the course of the IGADD process in 1994. On this occasion, owing to the involvement of opposition movements, it was difficult for the GOS to argue full control. The GOS still denied, but this time on the grounds that the Nuba Mountains were not specifically mentioned in the original OLS agreements (Traxler, 1996, May 13). Access was again on the agenda during the recent visits of the Special Envoy in November 1995, and April 1996. In a reversion to its earlier position, UN access has again been denied by the GOS on the grounds that the government is in control of the area, and that conditions are normal.

While the Southern Sector has expanded, it can be argued that DHA's quiet diplomacy in the North has failed to increase international access in the face of government opposition. This has important implications for OLS as a form of safe area programme, since it suggests that, apart from areas agreed with the sovereign power - which is also one of the warring parties - the international community is not able to offer protection to the internally displaced.

2.3.4 A Diffuse Management Structure

The trade off between OLS operations in parts of the non-government areas, and GOS control of the balance of areas, has had several consequences. Although regarded as representing a conflict of interest by many commentators, UNDP has continued to fill the post of Special Coordinator in Khartoum. The only modification on this has been that on OLS matters, the Special Coordinator now reports to DHA in New York. As detailed in the Northern case studies (chapters 4 and 7), UN agencies in Khartoum, and especially UNDP and UNICEF, have taken a back seat in relation to upholding OLS principles. This has created a situation where the role of OLS is ill-defined. Indeed,

echoing the GOS position, some senior UN officials in Khartoum claim that there is no OLS agreement for the North (Jaeger, 1996, March 30).

The de facto division of Sudan, and UN recognition of GOS sovereignty in the North, has led to an informal and defensive managerial division within OLS. In principle, the Special Coordinator in Khartoum has responsibility for OLS activities in the Southern Sector - something clearly spelt out in the early OLS agreements. In practice, however, this has evolved into an advisory and supportive role only. In theory, the OLS Coordinator/UNICEF Chief of Operations reports to the Special Coordinator in Khartoum for the Southern Sector. In practice, however, this line of reporting has been broken by the mediation of DHA New York, which usually responds in favour of the OLS Coordinator/UNICEF Chief of Operations, rather than the Special Coordinator in Khartoum (Jaeger, 1996, March 30).

More generally, the links between UN agencies in Khartoum and Nairobi have also become less well defined. With regard to UNICEF, until recently Nairobi had a reporting relationship to Khartoum on UNICEF matters. This was more "collegiate" than formal, however (O'Brien, 1995, December 2). The current OLS Coordinator/UNICEF Chief of Operations in Nairobi reports to UNICEF's Middle East Desk in Amman, Jordan, rather than UNICEF Khartoum. With regard to WFP, although WFP Khartoum is technically in charge of all OLS matters, the Southern Sector operation is handled from WFP's regional Nairobi office. Further, since WFP operates a single Sudan grant, administered by headquarters in Rome, headquarters-field office relations also intervene.

The result of this informal separation between the two Sectors has been a managerial structure which minimises the potential for UN interference from the North. In a situation characterised by ambiguous agreements which do not challenge the sovereignty of the GOS, informal separation is, in effect, the only protection for UNICEF's lead agency status in the Southern Sector. It has also given OLS a lack of coherence and political definition, however. Apart from regular procedures for flight clearance, for example, UN agencies in the Northern and Southern Sectors have developed a good deal of autonomy from each other. With the limited exception of periodic visits from the Special Envoy for Humanitarian Affairs, there is no single UN clearing house for deciding wider policy issues on a continuous basis. Rather, important decisions potentially affecting all aspects of OLS are often taken on a local and ad hoc basis in both Sectors. In a highly politicised crisis, where attempts to manipulate aid by the warring parties is a possibility, the lack of

political coherence is both a weakness and a liability.

Although some remedial steps have been taken, they have mainly been at the level of the UN personnel exchanges. For example, since the beginning of 1966 WFP has embarked on a programme of exchange visits of food monitors. Although the Review Team regards such measures as useful, they do not address the lack of senior level managerial and political coherence within OLS. A new OLS agreement should take steps to strengthen the overall coordinating role of DHA, provide greater political cohesion for OLS, and establish clear lines of authority and competence between OLS agencies.

2.4 Criticisms and Concerns of the Warring Parties

It is perhaps not surprising that OLS agreements are ambiguous, or that an ill-defined management structure has emerged. The war in Sudan has rendered humanitarian aid highly politicised; in such a context, pragmatic adjustments and decision making are inevitable.

In this regard, the views of the warring parties are also important, since they shape the political environment in which OLS works. By 1992, the basic criticisms from warring parties concerning OLS were already well established. Rather than being subject to significant change, these views - often mirror images of each other - have been re-emphasised and embellished in recent years.

2.4.1 Government Concerns

Within months of the military coup of June 1989, OLS was being denounced in the Khartoum press as a violation of Sudanese sovereignty (UNICEF/OLS, 1990, May 19). Accusations of "irregularity" in South Sudan were also made. These included alleged evidence that OLS was supplying arms and ammunition to the rebels (Al Sudan Al Hadith, 1989, September 12). OLS was held, moreover, to have a lack of impartiality in relief matters. For example, when GOS forces took control over an area, humanitarian aid did not arrive; meanwhile, the rebels received different treatment. Such views fed into early demands for GOS certification of all flight schedules (File Note, 1989, November 17), and for assessments by a "neutral UN team" to verify population status (O'Reilly, 1991, March 20). The GOS demand that all INGOs operating in South Sudan should register in Khartoum has already been mentioned.

As the first crisis deepened, such critical views underpinned restrictive actions by the GOS during 1991 and 1992. They were also reinforced by two new developments. The first was a temporary return of famine conditions to North Sudan during 1991, which highlighted the government's continued vulnerability in the field of social welfare, and its reliance on donor governments. The aim of promoting rehabilitation and development in place of relief has been part of the global rhetoric of humanitarian assistance since the 1980s. By 1992, in a determined effort to boost domestic food production, the GOS made the move from relief to development an organizing principle of its welfare policy (RRC, 1992). Since that time, no INGO has been allowed to register for anything other than rehabilitation and development (GOS, 1994, April 12). Coming at a time when donor governments were cutting development funding, it underlined GOS insistence that OLS should also abandon its focus on relief and cease the earmarking of funds.

The second critical reinforcement of GOS criticisms of OLS relate to the military gains made by GOS during 1992. While no detailed political maps of South Sudan exist (or at least have been made public), the government's argument is that, while Southern opposition movements previously controlled most of South Sudan, the situation has been reversed since 1992. This has led to repeated questioning of the veracity of Southern Sector needs assessments and, by implication, population assessments. At the same time, the necessity for a Nairobi-based, cross-border programme into non-government areas was questioned. By September 1992, it was widely held among aid agencies in Khartoum that the GOS wanted to control the whole of the OLS operation (UNDP, 1992, September 4).

A succinct account of GOS criticisms of OLS that had been developing over the previous three years, is contained in a 1992 RRC report (RRC, 1992, September 17). This report indicates the belief that the OLS Southern Sector is violating Sudan's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and that the INGOs working within it are in breach of Sudan's visa laws, and are not registered in Khartoum. It also suggests that insufficient and misleading information was being supplied to the government. Finally, given recent military gains the government, the UN needs to revise its relief plans. Hence:

...the Sudan believes that the Nairobi office of the OLS should be demoted, moving the OLS Headquarters to Khartoum to cope with the strategy of the gradual shifting of operations to Khartoum, Malakal and El Obied (RRC, 1992, September 17: 1).

This move would also facilitate donor demands for cost savings by maximising the use of surface transport. Since the opposition movements were alleged to be the main culprits in restricting relief supplies, such a move would also help guarantee access.

This set of views, plus the demand that OLS move from relief to development, have subsequently been embellished and reinforced. Regular allegations of OLS violations of sovereignty and neutrality in South Sudan have been made. In October 1993, there was a request by the GOS to station a government representative at the UN logistical camp at Lokichokio in Kenya (Awad Khalifa Musa, 1993, October 12). In the event, the Kenyan government has not been supportive of this request.

During the course of the IGADD peace process in 1994, which produced the first written OLS agreement, GOS concerns continued to be voiced (Traxler, 1994, January 27). More specifically, the GOS claimed that SPLA areas were receiving more aid than was warranted, and that consequently there was a need to reduce the Kenya operation. Incidentally, the IGADD process was unable to secure any agreement on cross-line modalities for road convoys, since this would have involved transferability to maps, and would have contradicted GOS territorial claims (O'Brien, 1994, August 1).

Throughout 1995, GOS criticisms of OLS continued. Although none of the allegations have been proven (Jaeger, 1996, March 30), they form the background to a growing pattern of aircraft and flight restrictions, and increasing attempts to manage the Southern Sector from Khartoum. These moves have helped to precipitated the second crisis of OLS. In July 1995, the earlier demand that the Southern Sector be closed and its activities transferred to government areas - in this case, Malakal - was restated (GOS, 1994, July 27). Further, to counter the relative autonomy that had grown within the Southern Sector, all OLS activities should be placed directly under UNCERO in Khartoum.

The GOS position on OLS, and the alleged irregularities within it, were made clear to the Review Team in November 1995. Two new developments, however, have taken place. First, arising out the visit of the Special Envoy on Humanitarian Affairs in November 1995, it was indicated that GOS was now unwilling to regard OLS as a tripartite agreement. In effect, this means that the signed agreement of 1994 was being unilaterally abrogated. The government would no longer tolerate being put on an equal footing with rebels; rather, the GOS

now wished to revert to the type of bilateral arrangement which had characterised earlier agreements (Ministry of Social Planning, 1996, March 31).

The second new development was presented to the Review Team in The Document of the Government of Sudan on the OLS Review (GOS, 1996, April). The main contention in this document is that UN and donor failure to support national institutions, involve the government in decision making, move from relief to development, use cheaper transport, and so forth, is in violation of OLS agreements. However, the GOS's rejection of a tripartite arrangement - the only signed OLS agreement of 1994 - is not mentioned in this document. Attention is rather focused on the more informal 1989 to 1993 arrangements, and especially the OLS I and II Plans of Action.

It should be noted that the main concern of the signed 1994 agreement, which makes no mention of support to the GOS, was that of access to war-affected populations, a central theme of all OLS agreements. The government document presented to the Review Team is silent on this fundamental issue, however; where access is mentioned, it is in relation to the specific geographical target areas of the OLS II Plan of Action (GOS, 1996, April: 25). Apart from the South, these included the whole of the Transition Zone, and the areas settled by the displaced around Khartoum - areas where restrictions are, in any case, being enforced.

Aside from the unilateral rejection of the 1994 agreement, there has been a striking continuity in the frequent expressions of GOS criticism since 1989. This begs a number of questions; namely, why the GOS agreed to OLS in the first place and, more importantly, why this agreement was renewed on the several occasions when OLS has been renegotiated. These questions are considered further below.

2.4.2 Opposition Movement Concerns

In the initial phase of OLS, the bulk of all OLS assistance went to the Northern Sector. During 1991, relief activity was further slanted to the North with the temporary reappearance of famine conditions. From the start of OLS II, the SPLA had formed the opinion that the operation was "unfair" in terms of allocation of resources and, importantly, was politically biased in favour of the GOS (UNICEF/OLS, 1990, May 19). Such claims were regularly voiced during the first phase of OLS, and constituted the main reasons for the growing

non-cooperation of the opposition movements during the early 1990s (Janvid, 1991, November 15).

The view of SPLA that OLS is biased towards GOS, and that the GOS is able to use its position to manipulate OLS for military advantage, has continued into the present phase. This idea was a recurring theme, for example, in the 1994 IGADD meditations. While continuing, such views have been supplemented more recently by elements that relate to the institutional strengthening that has been underway within the SPLM/A.

Current criticisms of OLS within the SPLM/A have three interconnected components. They include: a continuing claim of OLS's political bias; that GOS activities are a violation of OLS principles; that OLS assistance is ineffective and even harmful. This particular set of views became clearly defined during 1995, as the second crisis of OLS deepened. Arising from the privileged position accorded sovereignty within the UN and the international system, the Secretary General of the SRRA noted that within OLS:

...GOS has retained and exercises a veto on the ability of the Southern Sector Operation to deliver humanitarian assistance to any given location. The GOS is therefore able to manipulate the provision of relief/humanitarian assistance according to its military and political aims, and not according to the needs of the civil population (Mour Muor, 1995, November 27: 1).

The opposition movements have also added a new element to this criticism. That is, that since the signed agreement of 1994, the GOS veto has been exercised in violation of the OLS principles to which GOS is signatory (DHA, 1995, May 4: 2). This view has been strengthened by the success of UNICEF/OLS in incorporating humanitarian principles within its Ground Rules in the Southern Sector. These Ground Rules have been endorsed by the SPLM/A and SPLM/A United. By extension, GOS flight and access restrictions are seen as a violation of the same Ground Rules (SPLM/A, 1995, September 21: 7). Moreover, in not opposing such restrictions, the UN is seen as complicit in this abrogation:

This manipulation of humanitarian assistance by the GOS, and the silent acquiescence of the UN/OLS, are violations of humanitarian principles, the OLS tripartite agreement, and subsequent IGADD agreements (Mour Muor, 1995, November 17: 2). According to the SPLM/A, access restrictions, and the inability of the UN to oppose them, has eroded the effectiveness of OLS. Failure

to again access to movement-held areas of the Nuba Mountains is presented as a prime example.

Concerns from opposition movements have also been extended to operational matters, such as the extent of the cooperation of OLS with Sudanese institutions, the high cost of the operation, and the quality of programming. These criticisms are extensive; some salient points are noted here. Reflecting GOS claims that OLS has not supported government institutions, the SPLM/A claim that the level of coordination and joint planning with the SRRA and civil bodies is unsatisfactory (SPLM/A, 1995, September 21 and November 27). Rather than civil authorities identifying needs and priorities, it is UNICEF/OLS that does this. While the Ground Rules make for a capacity building undertaking, this has not been adequately honoured. OLS agencies, moreover, show a distinct preference to employ Ethiopian and, especially, Kenyan staff rather than Southern Sudanese. A valuable training opportunity is therefore being lost.

In relation to cost effectiveness, the opposition movements, like GOS, have long supported the use of cheaper forms of surface transport. Rather than corridors from the North however, the preference is for new cross-border road routes from Ethiopia, Zaire, and the Central African Republic. The SPLM/A has also commented on what it claims are the unacceptably high administrative costs of OLS. It is widely held, for example, that only 5% of all the money spent actually reaches beneficiaries (Mour Muor, 1995, November 27: 3). This view is partly based on perceptions of the Lokichokkio Camp; that is, high paid aid workers enjoying a relatively high standard of food and accommodation provided free at the point of consumption. This has also fed into other Lokichokkio concerns; for example, the claimed racial discrimination regarding the allocation of accommodation between camps A and B (Mour Muor, 1995, November 27: 3). It is alleged that camp A is reserved for whites and Kenyan and Ethiopian employees of the aid agencies, while camp B, which has inferior services, is for Southern Sudanese.

There is also dissatisfaction with the quality of the programmes provided under OLS. Opposition movements have suggested that the UN and NGOs employ too many young and inexperienced staff on short-term contracts. Further, the timeliness and quality of the programming and inputs leaves much to be desired; reflecting GOS views, opposition movements also note there is a need to move from relief to more rehabilitation and development work.

By September 1995, dissatisfaction with OLS had led to a situation

where there was widespread support within the SPLM/A for asking OLS to withdraw from South Sudan (UNICEF/OLS, 1995, September). Apart from the above, and contrary to GOS claims that OLS is biased toward the rebels, it was felt that OLS's neutrality was preventing NGOs from developing a real solidarity with the movement. Some also believed, perhaps mistakenly, that the removal of OLS would be replaced by a donor/NGO consortium offering more support on SPLM/A terms.

The issue was discussed in an SPLM/A conference on OLS in November 1995. With regard to the political weakness of OLS, the movement was apprehensive that the location of:

...the UN special representative office for emergencies in Khartoum renders it susceptible to subtle political pressure which are in turn transmitted down to the southern sector resulting in usurpation or diminution of its authority (SPLM/A, 1995, November 27: 2).

The main recommendation to address this was that:

OLS be organisationally restructured its northern and southern sectors (to) become separate and distinct from one another; reporting independently and directly to a supervisory and co-ordinating head office located outside Sudan (SPLM/A, 1995, November 27: 2).

The response to this, as well as to the operational concerns expressed, was a resolution to review the situation in twelve months time (i.e. November 1996) before making a final decision on OLS.

2.4.3 GOS and Movement Concerns Compared

The similarities and differences between GOS and SPLM/A concerns regarding OLS are illuminating. Both, for example, are adamant the OLS is biased toward the other. In the case of the GOS, it is claimed that OLS lacks neutrality and is directly and indirectly supporting the rebels. For SPLM/A, however, it is precisely OLS's neutrality which is said to be preventing a solidarity movement from developing. At the same time, the oppositoin movement feels that OLS is incapable of preventing GOS exercising its sovereignty, based on its veto capacity with regard to access.

This contrast in views between the warring parties is, in part,

related to the differential interpretation of OLS agreements. The government claims that commitments toward funding and institutional support within the OLS agreements have not been honoured. Meanwhile, the SPLM/A argues that the GOS - and the UN - are violating OLS agreements by not allowing, or adequately pursuing, free access. In this respect, the GOS has concentrated its attention on the early unsigned agreements, especially OLS I and II (GOS, 1996, April), while the 1994 signed agreement which incorporates free access is ignored. Since this has direct bearing on GOS sovereignty, this is not surprising. On the other hand, upholding the 1994 agreement, arguably a factor which has prompted the current process of institutional reform within the SPLM/A, has become a main concern of the movement.

Both the government and the opposition movement want radical changes to the present structure of OLS. The GOS would like to close the Southern Sector operation, and move all OLS activities within government areas. The movement wishes to separate Northern and Southern Sectors, taking the latter out of the political control of Khartoum. The approach to improving the cost effectiveness of OLS is similarly polarised. Both the GOS and the SPLM/A have embraced the donor call to improve cost effectiveness by promoting surface transport. For GOS however, this has been aimed at promoting land and river corridors from the North, together with means of transport such as rail and barge, over which it can exercise control. For the SPLM/A, it has been expressed as a need to open new cross-border routes from Ethiopia, Zaire, and Central African Republic.

There are also a range of issues on which the government and the opposition movement agree. Both are dissatisfied with the level of support OLS is giving to indigenous institutions and organisations. A shared concern on cost effectiveness is that too much money is spent on overheads, the assumption being that if this was reduced, more would go to project expenditure. At the same time, both the government and the opposition want to see a move from relief to rehabilitation and development work, meaning that OLS resources should be used to support longer term and wider ranging activities. In other words, while both warring parties have serious reservations about OLS, they are nevertheless seeking to secure and capture more OLS resources.

2.5 The External Environment

Given the critical views of the warring parties concerning OLS, it is worth considering why they have - if only reluctantly - agreed

to its operation. This has largely hinged around questions of donor pressure and perceived gain, including that of the political recognition that a negotiated access programme confers. Such factors are central to maintaining access in the absence of military protection. They also indicate the type of conditions that would need to be met if the OLS approach is to be replicated.

2.5.1 The Government and Donor Pressure

Since 1989, the GOS had been increasingly critical of OLS and, following the military gains of 1992, was forcefully calling for the closure of the Southern Sector. GOS agreement to re-launch OLS in September 1992, which led to a period of rapid expansion of Southern Sector activities, appears curious in this context. This is especially the case when, as has been noted, GOS concerns and criticisms have continued unabated. It is thus worth considering the background to this agreement in more detail.

Compared to 1989, the international context of 1992 had changed considerably. The Gulf War, in which Sudan had sided with Iraq, substantially changed international perceptions, and gave rise to the opinion that the UN was entering a new era. More specifically, it was widely believed that the UN had regained the ability to secure international peace and promote justice and human rights (Boutros Ghali, 1992, June). The aftermath of the Gulf War saw the formation of the UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA). Among other things, the DHA was tasked to better coordinate and fund complex emergencies.

At the same time, the Gulf War marked the beginning of the current phase of military humanitarianism linked to "safe area" strategies, and the protection of humanitarian aid. By 1992, this approach was still very much on the upswing. It had been extended, for example, to Bosnia and, by the end of the year, to Somalia. Regarding South Sudan, at least one of the opposition movements - the SPLM/A United - was lobbying for a similar intervention. This change was also not lost on the government. As part of the preparation for the Eliasson mission, the GOS noted that:

The GOS is apprehensive of the UN. In the final analysis, following changes in the former USSR, they see the UN as influenced by and a tool of the Western powers. To a certain extent, they fear a similar fate as Iraq (Silovic, 1992, September 3: 3).

Toward the end of 1992, as American intentions of intervention in Somalia became clear, it was widely believed in Khartoum that an air exclusion zone was to be imposed on South Sudan (O'Brien, 1996, April 19). In December, a critical UN resolution on human rights prompted the appointment of a Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Sudan, Gustav Biro.

Concerns about possible Western intervention persisted throughout most of 1993. They were augmented by continuing donor interest in OLS, and a willingness to maintain pressure on the GOS and the opposition movements. Agreed at the level of the Security Council, the appointment of a Special Envoy for Humanitarian Affairs was part of this pressure. The following year, with the involvement of Sudan's regional neighbours in the IGADD mediation process, political weight continued to be applied.

Since the IGADD process has stalled, however, during the course of 1995 Sudan's relations with its neighbours has deteriorated. At the same time, the new realism that followed the UN experience in Somalia, Bosnia, and Rwanda has muted donor rhetoric concerning a New World Order.

2.5.2 Recognition as an Issue in Relation to the Government

While the question of OLS and political recognition is usually thought of in relation to the opposition movements, a similar political spin-off can be seen in relation to the government. In November 1992, after the DHA mission, the RRC Commissioner made a statement to the UN General Assembly which set the tone of GOS response to international criticism; namely, that the government's agreement to OLS could be used as a means of deflating attacks on its humanitarian record.

On this occasion, the situation in Sudan was described as resembling "increasingly complex emergency situations" in other parts of the world. Sudan, in other words, had a multi-causal crisis, of which the war was only one factor. Moreover, the government noted that:

It is because of these constraints, and above all, because of the priority accorded to assisting those in need, especially in the conflict zones, that the Sudan Government has elaborated with the UN, since 1989, a new approach to respond to emergency situations. This novel approach, called Operation Lifeline

Sudan, is based on a new form of cooperation with the UN and the international community to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance to those trapped in the war zones (GOS, 1992, November 16).

In the face of such a commitment, the government has dismissed all criticisms as unworthy, and as originating in Western bias against the government's embrace of an Islamic political agenda. Since the end of 1992, most government statements at the UN General Assembly have assumed this pattern. Following the government's revival of the agricultural economy, this position has been augmented, among other things, by the periodic offer of surplus sorghum for the relief effort.

This position is well represented in the GOS submission to the Review Team (GOS, 1996, April), which lists the government's record of support for OLS and its activities. The thrust of the argument is that Sudan is unique; a government has voluntarily relinquished part of its sovereignty for humanitarian purposes. This gesture, however, is being abused by OLS in the operation's failure to honour its commitments, and its bias toward the rebels. Moreover, donor governments and aid agencies continually fail to acknowledge what the government has done.

It is worth noting that some donors and aid officials in Khartoum agree with the substance, if not the detail, of these attitudes from the GOS.

2.5.3 Recognition and the Movements

While critical of OLS, opposition movements nevertheless must see the operation as an important potential source of resources in a region not noted for its wealth. Even if one sets aside aid diversion, which of course takes place, the fact that OLS contributes to the stabilisation of the civilian population in non-government areas must be seen as beneficial by the opposition movements.

In this section, the question of political recognition vis a vis opposition movements is dealt with.

One reason why the initial phase of OLS the Southern Sector was given a low profile was the attempt to avoid conferring political recognition on the SPLM/A. It is one of the paradoxes of OLS, however, that as the GOS claims to have regained military ascendancy, the

opposition movements begin to play an increasingly visible role in the process of negotiating access.

As the crisis of OLS's initial phase deepened, the first proximity talks in the history of OLS were convened by Under-Secretary General James Jonah in Nairobi in October 1991 (UN, 1991, October 19). The UN had intended that the talks take place between itself, the GOS, and the SPLM/A. They proved to be a failure, however, largely due to GOS insistence that the newly formed SPLA/M United, which broke away from the SPLM/A in August, be included. While the SPLA/M, after initial opposition, appears to have accepted the inclusion of SPLA/M United, the UN did not. Having been briefed that the GOS had, or was seeking, an alliance with the United group (Page, 1991, October 18), Jonah eventually asked both parties to suspend talks on the grounds that the SPLA/M United was seeking political recognition.

The SPLM/A United reacted strongly to the UN exclusion, claiming that had to be included in any discussion about access since it controlled territory (SPLM/A United, 1991, October 19). In the event, and through mechanisms which have been lost in the documentation (Levine, 1994, November 24), the humanitarian wing of SPLM/A United - RASS - was eventually accorded the same status within OLS as SRRA. Following the expansion of OLS from the end of 1992, RASS developed as an official counterpart within the OLS structure, and joined SRRA in this capacity. That is, through agreeing the Ground Rules, RASS became eligible for institutional support to facilitate the handling of OLS resources.

2.5.4 OLS and Factionalism

This situation was challenged in 1994, following the split in the Riak-controlled SPLM/A United, and the formation of a separate wing in Western Upper Nile under Lam Akol. This wing quickly established the Fashoda Relief and Rehabilitation Association (FRRA) to coordinate relief matters. Within months of the split, OLS was supplying relief materials through FRRA.

At the same time, however, the breakaway SPLM/A United was pressing for FRRA to become a full OLS counterpart member, which included access to institutional support. This pressure highlighted the fact that hitherto, OLS's relationship with SRRA and RASS had largely evolved on the basis of custom and practice basis; hence, there were no established guidelines or criteria for including new factions within OLS. Toward the end of 1994, the SPLM/A United was contesting the unfairness and irrationality of OLS with regard to its continued

organizational exclusion (Lam Akol, 1994, November 11). The fact that OLS had included RASS following the 1991 split in the SPLM/A was pointed out. (Note: In October 1994, the Riak wing of the SPLM/A United changed its name to the Southern Sudan Independence Movement/Army (SSIM/A). RASS continued to operate as its humanitarian wing).

Subsequently, efforts were made within OLS to develop criteria for judging whether a faction or group should be included within the OLS structure or not. These criteria included that the humanitarian organisation can demonstrate effective coordination on the ground, can demonstrate a commitment to UNICEF/OLS's Ground Rules, has coherent policies within key welfare sectors, has qualified personnel, and so on (Levine, 1994, November 24). While the question was debated, no move was made to formally incorporate FRRA.

In April 1995, SPLM/A United forces boarded a WFP barge travelling through Western Upper Nile and temporally abducted 22 people. The movement subsequently claimed that this incident was rooted in the failure of OLS to recognise FRRA (UNICEF/OLS, 1995, May 16-17). An OLS-chaired meeting on the issue only produced a re-confirmation that OLS was willing to deliver relief supplies to the area, however, and little more. Failure to agree on the issue also hinged on question of providing financial support for FRRA, including rent for a Nairobi office. To illustrate the ramifications of this type of support, it was noted that a Nairobi office would have allowed SPLM/A United to apply for formal registration in Kenya, and thereby push for inclusion in the IGADD mediation process then underway (UNICEF/OLS, 1995, May 16-17).

At the same time, however, the basic question remains: why should OLS work formally with some organisations and not others? This question is made more difficult by the fact that there may be few differences between organizations. On this important issue, it would seem that DHA has not been able to supply any help. By the middle of 1995, the situation regarding FRRA had reached deadlock. OLS, although fully aware of the dilemma, was reluctant to include FRRA through fear of promoting further factionalisation and competing claims. In August 1995, the SSIM/A split and a faction under Peter Adwok also raised the question of formal OLS incorporation for the RASS Ad Hoc Committee. This issue appears to have been largely resolved, however, due to the alliance between the breakaway SSIM/A and the SPLM/A, and an eventual inclusion of the SSIM/A area within the sphere of SRRA.

Clearly, the situation with regard to the incorporation of opposition movements and factions is unsatisfactory. Within the Horn of Africa, the history regarding this issue is remarkably similar. The Emergency Relief Desk (ERD), which coordinated the cross-border operation from Sudan into Eritrea and Tigray during the 1980s, is a case in point. While working originally with the Eritrean Relief Association, ERD quickly incorporated the Relief Society of Tigray in the early 1980s, and subsequently the Oromo Relief Association. Like OLS, however, ERD found it difficult to include later groups. While efforts were made to devise criteria, lack of finance, and fear of promoting factionalism, prevented any further developments.

Given the growing involvement of the UN and aid agencies with non-state political authorities in the context of protracted crises, more work is needed in this area.

2.5.5 Importance of the External Environment

The agreement of the warring parties to the continuation of OLS is a complex matter. Political pressure, the wish to avoid punitive action, and the perception of potential gains - both material and political - are involved. The above analysis would suggest that for the GOS in particular, international pressure during the 1992 to 1994 period was important in the government's continued acceptance a situation with which it is basically critical - namely, the OLS and its associated set of relationships. In this regard, the fact that the government's opposition to OLS has grown throughout 1995 is indicative, perhaps, of a more cautious and indifferent international climate.

2.6 Differing Contractual and Operational Environments Within OLS

There is a danger in studying complex emergencies that "causes" and international "responses" will be examined separately, as if they existed independently of each other. Enough has been said in this chapter to argue that OLS is symptomatic of a fundamental change in the external aid regime. The fact that Sudanese institutions should change and adapt in the light of this new regime should not come as a surprise. Moreover, these changes and adaptations are mutually reinforcing. The above discussion on political recognition is an

example of this symbiotic relationship.

The discussion of OLS agreements has established that, in terms of the international aid regime, Sudan de facto been partitioned. This has led to two very different contractual and operational environments. In the North, the GOS has strongly asserted its position as the regulatory body for humanitarian aid. In the South, however, the UN - through UNICEF's lead agency role - has established this position. This section briefly examines the nature and effects of these two distinct contractual regimes.

2.6.1 Regulation in the North

The revitalisation and expansion of OLS, especially in the South, from the end of 1992 is closely associated with a process of institutional deepening and broadening in the North. Since the mid-1980s, and especially following the election of the el-Mahdi government in 1986, there has been a strong governmental pressure to closely regulate the activities of international aid agencies. The Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC) was established in 1985 as an independent body charged with the technical coordination of INGOs. The actual control of INGOs, however, has always been conceived in terms of their registration with a specific ministry.

Prior to the involvement of DHA, the regulation of INGOs had been characterised by ministerial competition and succession. In the mid-1980s, established ministries such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Health vied for INGO registration. In 1988, the Ministry of Social Welfare and Zakat temporarily took the lead role. At this stage, many NGOs had agreements with a number of different ministries and government agencies. In 1989, the formally independent RRC was incorporated within the short-lived Ministry of Relief and Refugee Affairs. Following its disbanding, during the early 1990s, the RRC was placed under the Ministry of Commerce.

Relations between INGOs and the GOS worsened during the early 1990s. Apart from restricted access, delays in issuing permits, importation of goods, and so on formed the background to growing complaints. International pressure grew to streamline government coordination. The need to establish a single ministerial focal point, for example, was part of Eliasson's mission brief in September 1992.

This pressure, however, coincided with a period in which the government was embarking on a major phase of political change and

consolidation. Earlier in the year, the Peace and Development Foundation was established to address the rehabilitation and development needs of the newly retaken areas in the South. At the same time, the RRC signaled the move from relief to development as a cornerstone of government policy (RRC, 1992). The revival and expansion of the agricultural economy, however, was only one aspect of a comprehensive social programme that was taking shape. This programme also involved a strategy of relocation for the displaced, and the promotion of national - especially Islamic - NGOs in place of INGOs (Donor Group, 1992, November 17).

When Lamuniere of DHA visited Khartoum in November 1992, the idea of the joint GOS/UN/NGO conference the following January was agreed, as a means of tackling the problems affecting INGO and government relations. Rather optimistically, given that donors were cutting development assistance at the time, Lamuniere argued that an improvement in these relations would help restore development funding (Lamuniere, 1992, December). In the event, GOS astutely used the January 1993 conference as a platform for its emerging social policy and, following pressure for a single focal point, to rationalise its regulatory apparatus.

Since the move from relief to development was a central policy strategy of the GOS, it is worth considering how this was formulated. In presenting reasons for the shift, the RRC noted that:

As a result of irrational exploitation of nature due to overgrazing and misuse of available resources especially in fragile marginal areas, the traditional sector which is mainly composed of nomads and subsistent farmers, lost efficiency. As a result, a large number of citizens in this sector lost their means of livelihood and hence they started migration from one area to another (RRC, 1993, January: 1).

Moreover:

The war in the Southern Sudan has also added to the problem of displacement of people towards the North. People lost their livestock, traditional and mechanized farming was severely affected and large development projects came to a halt (RRC, 1993, January: 1).

The RRC goes on to note that so far the response of INGOs to this problem has been unsatisfactory. One reason often cited was that annual registration did not give the stability for long term

planning. However, since the emergency phase had passed within Sudan, there was a need to think ahead. Now, the emphasis:

...should be put on Technical Assistance namely in infrastructure (roads, transportation, logistical support)...emergency rehabilitation of the affected agricultural sector is also vital so as to create self-dependency. What is needed are short duration projects that can be executed during one year ((RRC, 1993, January: 2).

The RRC position reflects negatively on so-called traditional agriculture. At the same time, development is associated with the expansion of mechanised agriculture, and establishing the infrastructure for this to happen. In this way, it was hoped that the productive potential of the whole population would be increased. At the same time, however, it was recognised that all low income groups may not necessarily be helped. This demanded a social welfare programme to help such people which, in turn, necessitated giving:

...more power to the state, of late more ministries are created in the states, so now there are 9 ministers for social welfare in the 9 states of the Sudan (Abu Salim, 1993, January).

Thus social welfare, geared to the expansion of mechanised agriculture, is a key element in Sudan's development process. The government also sees a role for international involvement and partnership in this endeavour. Since this involvement must take place within the context of state sovereignty (Abu Salim, 1993, January), however, it has to follow certain principles. The January conference also saw the tabling of a Code of Conduct governing NGO work in Sudan. The main feature of this code is that:

The sovereignty, territorial integrity, laws and norms of the country should be respected and safeguarded. The NGOs should comply with the relevant laws, regulations and agreements. Humanitarian work should not be used as a cover for any political activity or to propagate ideas, ideologies or political positions on local or intentional issues. Humanitarian work should not be used to gather information irrelevant to the delivery of the assistance, or utilize the need for such assistance to reflect in the media as distorted and demeaning to the dignity of the country or its citizens (GOS, 1993, January: 1).

It is clear from the Code of Conduct that the GOS regards humanitarian

work as purely a technical activity; in other words, an activity that is both blind and deaf to context or cause. This is a very restrictive requirement, and sits ill at ease with international expectations in this area. It is difficult to see how INGOs - many of whom raise public money on the basis of campaigning on issues of rights and justice - could accept such a code. The expansion of mechanised agriculture in Sudan, for example, has traditionally involved land disputes and allegations of dispossession. It is perhaps significant that land in the South is one issue that has been specifically barred to INGOs (GOS, 1994, April 12). This is an area that the Review Team felt needs further research.

For INGOs, the Code's stipulation that the laws of Sudan should be followed mainly relates to the Country Agreement which the January conference introduced (GOS, 1993). This new agreement, for purposes of general registration, abolished the existing need for INGOs to annually re-register. Reflecting INGOs concerns about short termism, this reform was linked to the specific incorporation of the move from relief to development within the Country Agreement (GOS, 1994, April 12: Item 4). In terms of marking out a specific policy goal, the new agreement was also different from annual agreements that had preceded it, which often gave the appearance of collecting information about INGOs for information's sake, with little or no programme direction being given.

The striking feature about the Country Agreement, however, is the very tight regulatory framework that it establishes; a framework, moreover, that is geared to increasing the power of the state. Indeed, if all clauses in the agreement were to be enacted to the letter, INGOs would become simply state extensions; in other words, they would take on a parastatal role similar to that adopted by Islamic NGOs. The Country Agreement also seeks to limit the number of INGO expatriate staff to an absolute minimum; as many posts as possible should be filled by Sudanese. All recruitment has to be done through the Ministry of Labour, which issues permission to advertise and receives, sorts, and comments on all applications. Moreover, the aim of INGO presence in Sudan should be to strengthen local and national capacity by working in cooperation with governmental and national non-governmental partners (GOS, 1994, April 12: Item 1). In this regard, the aim is that of "twinning" INGOs with national NGOs in order to provided support and build capacity.

The January conference also set in train the creation of the Commission of Voluntary Agencies (COVA) in March 1993. Initially, COVA was under the Ministry of Interior, but was transferred in July

to the newly formed Ministry of Social Planning. During a notable period of institutional stability, COVA remained there until changes introduced toward the end of 1995. During this period, COVA was the lead agency for the Country Agreement. The RRC, which had been incorporated within COVA, was in charge of issuing technical agreements with INGOs. These are still being issued on an annual basis today.

In November 1995, it was announced that COVA and RRC were to be merged to form a new Commission for Humanitarian Assistance (HAC), under the authority of the Federal Minister of Social Planning. In April 1996, when the Review Team was in Khartoum, this process of amalgamation was still in the process of completion.

2.6.2 A Note on INGOs in the North

To the extent that INGOs have signed up to the Country Agreement, they can be said to have accepted the strict regulatory regime that it establishes. Restricted access to certain areas under government control is only one aspect of this regime. By August 1993, some 50 INGOs were said to have signed (el-Ingaz el-Watani, 1993, August 2). Most of the criticisms voiced at the time by INGOs focused on the fact that, as far as possible, strictures on employment, twinning, and so on should be voluntary. In August 1993, in an attempt to improve INGO/GOS relations, the Special Envoy proposed four trial twinning projects between INGOs and national NGOs. In general, however, this policy has failed, and INGOs have proven reluctant to enter such relationships. (Twinning is discussed further in chapter 4).

The strict regulatory regime for INGOs established by the GOS has meant that, rather than collective action, INGOs have tended to cultivate bilateral relations with government bodies (INGO, 1996, March 27). INGOs also perceive that the UN is not particularly helpful or influential, reflecting the effective absence of OLS in the North. For example, the missions of the Special Envoy, while useful, were seen as not having produced any significant changes for INGOs (Jackson, 1996, April 1). What improvements have been made have come about more often because the changes have suited the government, rather than through UN influence.

Within the past year, some INGOs have managed to gain more access to the Khartoum displaced and parts of the Transition Zone. Reflecting the strictures on employment, however, a common pattern is that this access is mainly through the national staff employed

by the INGO. This is due to the fact that the movement of expatriates in support of such programmes is subject to rules and restrictions. For example, travel permits can still take a couple of week to be issued. At the same time, residence can be restricted to certain towns. This means that some project areas can only be visited during the course of a single day.

2.6.3 Regulation in the South

A very different regulatory regime exists in OLS's Southern Sector. Whereas in the North, the GOS has developed the means to regulate the activities of aid agencies, in the South the position is almost the reverse. Here, it is the UN which is attempting to regulate both the INGOs and the opposition movements.

Discussions of the characteristics of the UN lead agency role usually concentrate on coordinating functions, as if these were simply a technical matter. In the context of South Sudan, however, were there is no effective government control but rather a number of movement jurisdictions, the lead agency can quickly find itself playing a different role. Providing coordination in such circumstances easily transforms into playing a quasi-governmental role.

In effect, UNICEF had little choice but to fill the vacuum left by the absence of effective government (O'Brien, 1995, November 26). This has been done through a systematic development of OLS's humanitarian principles. Since 1990, these principles have formed part of the Letters of Association (now Letters of Understanding) signed by INGOs with UNICEF. In exchange for UN logistical and programme support, these letters commit the INGO to neutrality in the conflict, and to only providing humanitarian assistance to needy civilians. Given that they also contain details of agency programme needs and requirements, Letters of Understanding have also been developed as a coordination tool.

2.6.4 Ground Rules and Working in Conflict

The development of UNICEF/OLS's Ground Rules has been most significant in relation to the opposition movements, however.

The Ground Rules first emerged in response to the need to improve the security of aid workers. In September 1992, four aid workers were killed by SPLA forces near Nimule in Eastern Equatoria. Other than temporarily suspending operations, this tragic incident revealed

that OLS lacked a framework for dialogue with the opposition movements (O'Brien, 1995, November 26). At the same time, it brought to a head a wider change within OLS.

The initial phase of OLS had been premised on "corridors of tranquillity" linked to temporary cease-fire arrangements. This formula quickly proved to be too inflexible in relation to an ongoing war, however (Note for the Record, 1990, December 12). Apart from renewed fighting, the split within the SPLA further complicated matters (UNICEF/OLS, 1991, October). By mid-1991, rather than fixed corridors, OLS was having to define access on an ad hoc basis (UN, 1992, July: 2). In this regard, it was felt that a system of continuous dialogue with the warring parties based on an "open corridors" approach would have to develop if the operation was to keep pace with the changing military landscape (Janvid, 1992, July 2).

Spurred by the deaths of aid workers, this issue was tackled through the development of the Ground Rule concept. A set of requirements were developed aimed at minimum standards of conduct, to be agreed between the UN and the opposition movement; agreement on these standards would render the movement, or at least its humanitarian wing, eligible for OLS assistance. While the Ground Rules would fully incorporate humanitarian principles in 1994, when they first appeared in early 1993 they were mainly concerned with improving the security of aid workers.

The first step in improving security for aid workers was to employ a security advisor to assess the situation. This work formed the basis of a flexible and, in terms of its track record, an effective security system. In March 1993, crisis management teams were established in Nairobi and Lokichokio. The latter comprised the security adviser, senior agency representatives, pilots, and the flight coordinator. In the following month, a series of security workshops were held with NGOs to establish Standard Operating Procedures for South Sudan (Harvey and Saunders, 1995, November 28).

The evolving system was directly connected with the development of the Ground Rules. These were agreed with the SPLM/A in April 1993, and subsequently with the SPLM/A United. Among other things, the Ground Rules establish the inviolability of aid workers and their property, including free access to radios (UNICEF/OLS, 1993, May 1). In addition, opposition movements are charged with the protection of aid workers, and of informing them in a timely manner of any potential or real threat to their safety.

In a sense, the SPLM/A's signing of the Ground Rules were part of its rehabilitation following the killings of the aid workers. That it provided a form of recognition in the aftermath of the killings was not lost on those involved (O'Brien, 1995, November 26). Agreement also meant that the security adviser travelled extensively during most of 1993, meeting Commanders on the ground, gaining their trust, and getting a feel for the security situation. In this manner, a network of local contacts, usually SRRA or RASS personnel, was established. It should be noted that this was possible because access, especially for Lokichokkio-based aircraft, had increased following DHA involvement at the end of 1992. As Southern Sector activities expanded, so too did its security network.

The security and evacuation system has proven central to the expansion of OLS activities in the South. Indeed, without this system, it is difficult to see how the programme could operate. Because of its importance, the security system will be briefly described before returning to the evolution of the Ground Rules.

2.6.5 OLS's Security and Evacuation System

Together with Bosnia, OLS has pioneered methods for working in ongoing conflict. Unlike Bosnia, however, in South Sudan specific techniques have been developed which do not rely on military protection. Information, the ability to predict insecurity, and the ability to quickly evacuate staff by air, are key ingredients.

By approximately September 1993, the main aspects of the current security system had taken shape (Harvey, 1996, April 13). Regular training sessions are held for new NGO and UN personnel to ensure their familiarity, and NGO compliance with the system is part of the Letter of Understanding signed with UNICEF/OLS.

The system is a trip-wire one, allowing for planned responses, and geared to the conditions of South Sudan. It works on the basis of four security levels, including: normal, potential security risk, real security risk, and evacuation. Once level three (real security risk) is reached, the security advisor immediately visits the location to assess the situation. At the same time, NGO personnel are reduced to a maximum of eight people - the number that can be evacuated on a single Buffalo aircraft. To keep the system simple, it works on numbers. All occupied locations in the Southern Sector have daily radio contact at specified times; communications from the field are preceded by the number of aid personnel at that location

and its security grading. Through the medium of routine flight rotations, NGOs also give pilots written reports for the security advisor on local developments. Aside from field personnel, a security level of three or four can be ordered from Nairobi or Lokichokkio.

In the event of an orderly airstrip evacuation not being possible, each location has a number of mapped escape routes. These routes are also numbered and logged with WFP in Lokichokkio. In the event of a sudden emergency, all that need be communicated by radio is that an immediate evacuation is taking place, the number of people involved, and the number of the escape route. All NGO personnel are equipped with "run-packs" containing water and other essential supplies. There have been several cases of rescue aircraft landing in the bush to pick up aid workers after such an event.

The security system that has developed is well adapted to the modalities of conflict in South Sudan. Based on a network of contacts and free access to radios, a sensitive and responsive system has emerged. Owing to the fact that opposition movement and militia forces usually move on foot, in many cases it has been possible to establish a one to three day lead time on specific locations coming under threat (Harvey, 1996, April 13).

The evacuation and relocation of aid workers, on a few occasions with only minutes to spare, is now a routine event for OLS. As a consequence, humanitarian assistance closely follows the dynamics of the conflict. This adaptability has increasingly come into its own, for example, as areas of Bahr el-Ghazal and Upper Nile became more insecure from the end of 1994. Here, the system has supported the development of mobile aid teams, enabling workers to remain on the ground for shorter periods, but covering wider areas.

Apart from the fact that many would like more than one adviser, praise for the security system is one factor that unites the aid agencies working within OLS. Without it, fear of attack or being stranded in a war zone would have kept away many of the NGOs currently working in South Sudan.

2.6.6 Ground Rules and Civil Society

In mid-1994, UNICEF/OLS re-opened discussions with the opposition movements in connection with expanding its Ground Rules. Following the signing of the tripartite OLS agreement in May 1994, OLS's humanitarian principles were fully incorporated within the Ground

Rule framework (UNICEF/OLS, 1994, June). Apart from retaining the clause relating to security, this represented a significant enlargement over the first version.

Apart from the specific rules, signatories also indicated a willingness to support the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Geneva Conventions. The humanitarian principles listed within the Ground Rules are an elaboration of those developed within OLS I and II. That is, humanitarian aid is given on the basis of need alone, free access, impartiality and only to civilian beneficiaries. The cooperating agencies must ensure that aid is properly used, that distributions are fair, and that decision making takes place in a transparent manner. Mutual obligations cover such items as, for example, the fact that all UN/INGO staff must operate in accordance with these principles, provide experienced staff, and so on. At the same time, the counterpart organisation must ensure access and the free flow of goods. The Ground Rules also establish INGO primacy in relation to its own resources, including free access to radio equipment. Moreover, unlike in the North, the INGO also has the right to hire its own staff as direct employees.

The next development of the Ground Rules has to be seen in relation to the SPLM/A's attempts to develop the basis of a civil administration in South Sudan.

In March 1994, the SPLM/A organised the Chukudum Convention. Regarded as a watershed, this convention saw the decision to establish a separate civil administration and social welfare functions from those of the military. At the same time, the "New Sudan" was proclaimed, and the basis for a decentralised government within a new regional structure established (SPLM/A, 1994, March 12 - April). The eventual signing of the new Ground Rules by the SPLM/A in July 1995 has thus to be seen within the context of an overall attempt at institutional deepening. The SSIM/A also signed the new Ground Rules in August 1995.

The mutual obligations established within the Ground Rules have played an important role in shaping the development of social welfare structures in opposition movement areas. In this regard, there is a symbiotic relation between the two processes. This can be seen most readily in relation to the programme of capacity building and institutional support that OLS has developed for the humanitarian wings of the opposition movements.

2.6.7 Ground Rules and Human Rights

As a means of developing OLS work in relation to capacity building and the Ground Rules, a Humanitarian Principles Unit was formed toward the end of 1994. This move was opposed by the GOS on the grounds that it was not involved, and that it could see no reason for such a body (Ibrahim Abu Oaf, 1995, January 4). Among other things, the work of the Unit has involved the organisation of workshops for Sudanese Agencies on the Ground Rules and the principles behind them (UNICEF/OLS, 1995, April 5-6). Research on indigenous notions of humanitarianism has also been conducted. Perhaps the most innovative of the Ground Rules, however, has been in relation to the upholding human rights.

In July 1995, shortly after the SPLM/A signed the new Ground Rules, its forces were implicated in an attack on civilians in the SSIM/A controlled area of Ganyliel (UNICEF/OLS, 1995, August 6-8). This was thought to be a reprisal for an earlier SSIM/A attack on Akot. The attack was particularly brutal, with over 200 people reported as killed. An investigation was mounted and, through the SRRA, a dossier of evidence placed before the SPLM/A. In March 1996, a series of raids on villages in the Yirol, Tonj, and Gogrial areas was carried out by what were believed to be SSIM forces (Young, 1996, April 18). Apart from the looting of a considerable number of cattle, many people were killed or abducted. Again, this incident was investigated by the Humanitarian Principles Unit.

Given that both opposition movements are signatory to the Ground Rules, such actions can be seen as being in breach of this agreement. It is in this spirit that the evidence collected has been brought to the attention of alleged perpetrators. Although UNICEF/OLS is acting in a quasi-governmental role in South Sudan, unlike a conventional state it has few sanctions it can apply. Apart from the suspension of OLS assistance, which may penalise innocent people, the approach through the Ground Rules is an attempt to exploit the opposition movements' need for recognition and legitimacy. Collecting evidence on violations is one way of attempting to maintain pressure for internal reform and the development of an effective civil code.

The use of the Ground Rules in this manner is still under development. The Review Team is therefore not in a position to comment on the extent of its success; there is certainly a need for further research on the issue. At the same time, the Review Team noted that, by the very fact that it is one of the few programmes in South Sudan that is

actually documenting how the war is being fought and attempting to do something about it, the use of Ground Rules deserves special mention. Indeed, the use of Ground Rules has achieved a rare thing in relief work. Whereas usually aid agencies disregard human rights as the price to be paid for access, the Ground Rules have brought human rights and humanitarian aid together.

2.6.8 Contractual Regimes Compared

Compared to the Southern Sector, the contractual regime in the North is highly restrictive. In this respect, the government's Code of Conduct bears direct comparison with OLS's Ground Rules. While the former seeks to extent state control, the latter seeks to establish a set of mutually agreed obligations and responsibilities. In light of this basic difference in contractual regimes, the Review Team felt it would be difficult - if not impossible - to see the types of programmes currently in existence in non-government areas being administered from the North.

This can be illustrated by examining the nature of the security and evacuation system currently in operation in the South. First, the system is dependent on the full cooperation of the opposition movements and their related agencies. Second, it depends on access in the widest sense of the term; that is, the unhindered movement of agency personnel in and out of the war zone, the ability to talk to military commanders, free use of radios, and so on. Finally, under the terms of the Ground Rules, the opposition movements are obliged to provide information bearing on the safety and security of aid workers. In the North, while access for INGOs has improved somewhat over the past year, it is nowhere near this quality. Moreover, no security system exists. When in the field, agency personnel are usually out of direct communication with each other. Arranging meetings between aid agencies and GOS security personnel is also notoriously difficult. Even the ICRC reports problems in this area. This situation has a direct bearing on government demands that the Southern Sector be closed, and that all OLS activities be run from GOS areas. Once moved, it is unlikely that the programmes currently running in the South would be supported from the North.

2.7 The Current Crisis

Following the collapse of the IGADD peace process in 1994, the crisis of OLS has slowly deepened. Since this period, Sudan's bilateral

relations with Uganda, Eritrea, and Ethiopia have deteriorated. This has occurred simultaneously with growing GOS pressure on OLS Southern Sector operations. Since the end of 1995, using the political weight of its sovereignty, GOS pressure has become increasingly direct. Within the South, the conflict has continued; its pattern, however, has also changed. Over the past couple of years, while the SPLM/A has continued a halting process of institutional deepening, other factions have emerged. This is particularly the case in Bahr el-Ghazal and Upper Nile. Insecurity in these areas has increased. As a result, OLS activities have tended to gravitate further South. Difficulties on the ground, plus government restrictions, form the background to OLS's growing problems.

In terms of the crisis of consent within OLS, a distinct pattern has emerged. Using its sovereign position, the GOS has been able to restrict access not only in government areas, but in the Southern Sector as well, through flight restrictions and stricter demands for prior clearance of all movement. The pattern of restriction takes a different form on the part of opposition movements and factions; here, the pattern has been one of looting, intimidation, and aid manipulation.

2.7.1 The View From the North

Since the stalling and subsequent collapse of the IGADD process in September 1994, there have been no further proximity talks between the warring parties. OLS is widely held to have suffered as a consequence (O'Brien, 1995, November 26). Restarting such negotiations was the object of the ultimately unsuccessful mission of the Special Envoy in November/December of 1995.

The undercurrent of GOS criticism during the IGADD mediation process has already been discussed. From this process came the insistence that the Southern Sector must clear all assessments with Khartoum in advance (O'Brien, 1995, November 26). Until this period, the GOS was usually notified at the start of the assessment, or when it had been completed. Since early 1995, however, major problems began to develop. For example, the government banned the use of a Belgium Air Force C-130 aircraft by OLS, alleging that it had been dropping arms and ammunition to the rebels. While no supporting evidence has been produced, the ban on heavy lift aircraft has remained. This has restricted OLS's delivery capacity.

While OLS retained a potential access to over a hundred flight

locations for most of the period from 1994 forward, a slowly increasing pattern of flight denial to areas controlled by the SPLM/A has emerged (UNICEF/OLS, 1996, April). From an average of four denials per month in 1994, there was an increase to ten denials per month in 1995, and twelve denials during the early months of 1996. In July 1995, following an attempt by non-OLS INGOs to access the Nuba Mountains by air from the South, the government called for the removal of the UNICEF/OLS Coordinator, the closure of the Southern Sector, and the basing of all Southern Sector activities at Malakal.

In November, as a result of a unilateral flight ban imposed by the GOS, more than 250 agency staff were stranded without warning in South Sudan. Most of these were Kenyan nationals. Apart from the disruption to programmes, the question of possible medical emergencies, and so on, the flight ban was tantamount to a hostage situation. In the event, for those emergencies that did occur, ad hoc special arrangements were made.

The consequences of flight bans for the modus operandi of OLS have already been discussed, including the ability granted to the GOS to divide the South into "war zones" and areas "affected by war", and, with the agreement of UNCERO, to restrict UN access to the former. This resulted in the first imposed no-go area in the South, in Western Equatoria between December 1995 and March 1996.

Following the lifting of the flight ban, the GOS has made increasing demands for information on OLS activities, with a view to controlling more of the Southern Sector operation from Khartoum. During the early part of 1996, rather than accepting a list of destinations, this largely concerned demands for information on the cargoes being carried into South Sudan. In April, a request was made by HAC that in future all flight requests should be accompanied by an Advanced Information Table (UNHCU, 1996, April 1). This table should include information on: the number of beneficiaries, the method of assessment used, the author of the assessment, the amount and type of relief, the cost of the commodities, the number of relief personnel, the method and cost of transport, and so on. In the opinion of one aid official, such demands are not only impractical, they indicate a growing pressure from the GOS to manage all OLS activities from Khartoum.

The UN position in the face of such demands has been to supply as much information as reasonably possible. This is fully in accord with the principle of transparency. However, the provision of information aimed at enhancing transparency does not imply an invitation for greater government control. Rather, the entire basis for UN

neutrality in South Sudan rests upon its ability to coordinate OLS activities in an impartial and an effective manner; any reduction in this ability would threaten the existence of OLS.

Following the departure of the Review Team from Sudan, pressure on OLS has continued. In many respects, it looks as though the GOS is putting into practice the opinions it has held about OLS consistently for some years.

2.7.2 The View from the South

Developments in South Sudan give the impression of an increasingly polarised situation. The GOS and its southern allies now confront the SPLM/A, which has emerged as the main opposition movement. This polarisation has much to do with the government's growing concerns about OLS. It has also been accompanied, however, by increasing factionalisation in South Sudan itself.

In 1991, the SPLM/A split roughly along ethnic lines. The SPLM/A Mainstream under John Garang, and what eventually became the SPLM/A United under Riek Machar are predominantly Dinka and Nuer, respectively. The former occupy parts of Bahr el-Ghazal and Equatoria, and the latter Upper Nile. Apart from several periods of reconciliation, the two movements have been in contention, if not open conflict, since the split. In October 1994, the SPLM/A United changed its name to the South Sudan Independence Movement/Army (SSIM/A).

The present period of factionalisation began in 1994. In February 1994, Lam Akol was expelled from what was still the SPLM/A United for alleged contacts with the GOS. He subsequently founded a separate and predominantly Shilluk wing of the SPLM/A United, based in Western Upper Nile. In July 1994, forces loyal to Kerabino Kwanyin Bol, allied to the Riek faction of the SPLM/A United, became active against the SPLM/A Mainstream forces in Bahr el-Ghazal and parts of Western Upper Nile. This insecurity has continued intermittently through 1995 and 1996. In August 1995, a predominantly Lan Nuer group under William Nyong broke from SSIM/A to form the SSIM/A II based in the Waat - Akobo area of Upper Nile. The SSIM/A II has subsequently allied itself with the SPLM/A.

By the end of 1995, there were four main groups: the SPLM/A, SSIM/A II, SPLM/A United and SSIM/A I. In addition, there were several smaller factions, including that of Kerabino in Bahr el-Ghazal allied

to SSIM/A I. Only areas controlled by two the four main groups - SPLM/A and SSIM/A I - were receiving assistance under OLS.

In April 1996, SSIM/A I and Kerabino both entered into a reconciliation agreement with the GOS. This appeared to confirm a long period of speculation that these forces had been acting in some form of alliance with the GOS. At the same time, the alliance of SSIM/A II with SPLM/A suggests a picture of growing polarisation between the GOS and its allies on the one hand, and the SPLM/A and its allies on the other.

These developments have had major consequences for OLS. In terms of the factional struggle, a new set of front lines has emerged (Saunders and Harvey, 1996, April 11). To the east, the Ayod-Waat-Akobo line divides the SSIM/A I forces to the North from the SSIM/A II and SPLM/A forces to the South. To the west, Bahr el-Jebel marks the Dinka-Nuer line, while in northern Bahr el-Ghazal, Kerabino's forces are active.

In the development of these lines, OLS has lost ground in northern Bahr el-Ghazal, Upper Nile, and northern Jonglei areas. In northern Bahr el-Ghazal, Kerabino's use of lorries and radios to mount attacks on aid locations has undermined OLS's security apparatus (Saunders and Harvey, 1996, April 11). Since mid-1995, within less than 48 hours of aid workers being on the ground, security incidents have occurred. Increasingly, evacuations have been last minute affairs. As a consequence, continuous agency presence has been withdrawn from northern Bahr el-Ghazal. A similar development has occurred in Upper Nile. No agency personnel have returned to the Waat area since February 1995, following a hostage incident.

During 1995, there emerged no-go areas associated with territories disputed by the factions. Continuous OLS presence has tended to gravitate to the south, to the more secure areas of Equatoria. In Bahr el-Ghazal and Upper Nile regions, at best, OLS has developed a mobile presence. This development can only accentuate the uneven development within South Sudan. Already, largely due to its accessibility, the Equatoria area is relatively better supported than other areas of South Sudan.

The change in the nature of the conflict, and especially the emergence of areas disputed between factions, has affected the pattern of aid obstruction on the ground. In February and May of 1995, in a new trend, there were two serious hostage incidents in the Upper Nile region (UNICEF/OLS, 1996, April). At a rate of one serious incident a month, acts of theft, looting, and the intimidation of aid workers

have also occurred. For most of 1995, barge access has been blocked by the failure of the SPLM/A United to allow passage. Apart from routes in Eastern Equatoria, many road routes have been blocked by the SPLM/A. While the SPLM/A has on occasion denied flight access, by March 1996, SSIM I and SSIM II were also denying flight access to each other's areas.

2.8 Conclusion

OLS is an example of a growing trend in humanitarian policy in relation to internal war. This trend aims at assisting internally displaced and war-affected civilians within the country concerned, as opposed to assisting them as refugees in neighboring countries. While OLS reflects this trend, it has important differences that make it distinct. While other operations have often involved the military protection of humanitarian aid and displaced civilians, OLS has not involved this kind of military humanitarianism.

Rather, OLS is best described as an "informal" safe area programme. It is informal for two reasons. First, apart from an equivocal, temporary, and partial ceding to the UN, the sovereignty of GOS has never been challenged. Second, in the absence of military intervention, access has depended on the vulnerability of the warring parties to international pressure and opinion.

Since 1989, a key OLS principle has been that of access to war-affected people irrespective of who controls the territory in which they are located. This principle has never been fully implemented, however, especially in GOS areas. Following DHA involvement in 1992, OLS agreements have adjusted to this de facto situation. While the principle of free access has been retained, under GOS pressure it has been re-interpreted as access to war-affected areas only. Hence, although founded on principle, in practice OLS has become an area programme.

Unable to directly challenge GOS sovereignty, there has been an implicit understanding since 1992 that OLS, as a neutral UN-coordinated operation, is confined to those non-government areas that the GOS is willing to concede are temporarily beyond its control. Restrictions and no-go areas have consequently been a continuous feature of OLS operations.

The de facto division of Sudan has major implications for the modus operandi of OLS. In exchange for a transient UN coordination in the

South, OLS humanitarian principles have never been robustly and openly pursued in the North. The equivocal autonomy of OLS in the South has thus been purchased at the expense of displaced and war-affected populations in the North. In the North, the role and effectiveness of OLS is both ambiguous and limited. This has been reinforced by the retention of a UNDP-appointed Resident Representative in Khartoum to act as overall OLS coordinator. For a programme aiming to provide assistance to war-affected populations within a sovereign country, the Review Team regarded this as a major flaw.

The effective confinement of UN coordination to the South is reflected in the overall management structure of OLS. The de facto division of OLS into Northern and Southern Sectors has resulted in an ill-defined relationship between UN agencies in Khartoum and Nairobi. As a way of countering the exercise of GOS sovereignty, Nairobi's reporting relations to Khartoum have been informally downgraded. This defensive strategy, mediated by DHA, has given some protection to UNICEF as lead agency in the Southern Sector. However, it has also exacerbated OLS's lack political cohesion and clarity of purpose. In a protracted political crisis, it is exactly political cohesion and clarity of purpose on the part of UN agencies that are most required. This is especially true when the capture and manipulation of aid by the warring parties is a distinct possibility.

During the course of OLS, two markedly different contractual and operational regimes have emerged in North and South Sudan. Within government areas, the GOS has established a very restrictive regulatory environment. In contractual terms, INGOs are little more than an extension of the state in Northern Sudan, and are bound by a code of conduct which defines humanitarian aid as a purely technical response blind to context or cause. This sits uneasily with current international expectations, and calls into question the role of INGOs in the North. Recently, physical access to some government areas has improved; however, the operational environment remains poor and restricted.

In the South, it is the UN that attempts to regulate the opposition movements. Here, the UN has established an entirely different contractual and regulatory system. As lead agency, UNICEF has, perforce, come to play a quasi-governmental role. The basis of this is the system of Ground Rules agreed between it and the opposition movements. Based on the principles of free access and the neutrality of humanitarian assistance, the Ground Rules seek to establish a framework of agreed standards to govern mutual behaviour. As a

result, the extent and quality of access in the South is much greater than in the North, and a broader range of programmes and approaches have been able to develop.

In essence, the critical weakness of OLS is that, through the astute exercise of its political authority one of the warring parties has retained and augmented its ability to define the humanitarian space that OLS occupies. It is this issue that indicates the extent of the challenge of reform of OLS in future.

3. THE OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT - SOUTHERN SECTOR

This chapter considers the operational environment of OLS Southern Sector. It begins with an overview of the war. As noted in chapter 2, war is a constant feature of the Southern Sector landscape, and OLS has been forced to adapt to the existence of protracted conflict as part of the operational environment. The chapter then goes on to consider the specific mechanisms for coordination in the Southern Sector. With UNICEF as lead agency, numerous NGO implementing partners, and counterparts from among the various opposition movements, OLS Southern Sector presents a highly complex scenario for coordination. The chapter will describe the structures that exist, the various actors involved, and the extent of coordinational coherence. Finally, the chapter will examine the distribution and scope of humanitarian activities and programmes in the Southern Sector.

3.1 War and the Targeting of Resources

Whatever the broader political and military objectives of the warring parties, the civil war has been fought on the ground as a resource war. Battles between organised armed groups, with the intention of seizing or holding territory, are only one aspect of the fighting. Civilians have been systematically targeted in asset stripping raids since the outset. The intention has been not only to seize whatever resources they possess, but to deny these resources to the opposing side. Civilian populations themselves have often been treated as resources to control. The pattern of this resource war has also expanded to include relief supplies, with the various parties adapting their strategies either to secure relief items, or to interdict the delivery of such items to their opponents.

The targeting of resources has changed as the pattern of war has altered. In the early years of the war (1984-1988), the GOS relied heavily on surrogate forces raised from tribal militias, now incorporated into the Popular Defence Forces. The most prominent of these have been the Murhalin (Missiriya and Rizeigat of South Kordofan and South Darfur), the Rufa'a of Southern Blue Nile, the "Anyanya II" (Nuer), the Murle of Upper Nile and Jonglei, and the Mundari and Toposa militias of Eastern Equatoria. These forces adopted tactics aimed at denying the SPLA a civilian base of support. Consequently, civilian settlements were attacked at least as often, if not more often, than SPLA troops. In Abyei and Northern Bahr el-Ghazal, attacks were aimed at driving people away from their settlements; houses were burned, crops destroyed, cattle seized, and people abducted.

The SPLA also attacked civilian settlements of those groups from which militias were recruited. The Mundari, Murle, and Toposa were the main targets of these attacks prior to 1989. In Eastern Equatoria, the SPLA has supported militias of a number of smaller groups, and has offered very little check on the raids they have undertaken on their own behalf.

It is not just the subsistence resources of rural populations which have been targeted in the war. Installations considered to be of strategic value have also been destroyed or occupied by the military. The Sudanese army regularly destroyed hand pumps and borehole wells before abandoning areas to the SPLA. The old rural road network is virtually unusable because of land mines laid at different times by the SPLA, the Sudanese army, and allied militias. In towns and smaller garrisons, buildings which once housed schools, health centres, or hospitals have been commandeered and occupied by the army, or abandoned altogether. Medical supplies have also been destroyed to prevent them from falling into enemy hands: government troops retreating from Maridi, for example, burned all medicines they could not take with them, as well as hospital equipment (AAIN, 1991, June).

The net effect of these activities has been massive population displacement. In some cases, individual families as well as large groups of people have moved into more secure areas near their original homes. In other cases, there have been movements of large groups of people out of the war zone altogether. For example, the Dinka of Abyei and Northern Bahr el-Ghazal have moved to sites in the Transitional Zone, or to Khartoum, while other populations have moved out of Equatoria and across border to become refugees in Kenya, Uganda, Zaire, and Central African Republic. Prior to 1991, the SPLA also organized movements of people to refugee camps in Ethiopia.

Other populations have sought refuge from war zones in government towns in the South, whether as people connected with pro-government militias, or as civilians forced to move due to attacks from government troops and SPLA alike.

By 1988, the frequency of attacks on civilians was on the decline as the SPLA gained control of more territory, and adopted a policy of wooing government militias to its side. Since 1991, however, the eruption of interfactional fighting between Southern opposition movements has led to both an intensification of attacks on civilians, and a focus of attacks more narrowly on certain regions.

For example, the Anyanya II of Fangak, who joined the SPLA Nasir faction

in 1991, continued their despoiling tactics when they attacked Kongor and Bor late in 1991. Civilians were also regular targets of both factions of the SPLA in the "Hunger Triangle" area of Kongor-Ayod-Waat in 1993. This type of fighting produced another great exodus of displaced people, as nearly the entire population of Kongor and Bor Counties fled to other parts of South Sudan.

The boundary between Western Upper Nile and Bahr el-Ghazal, coinciding as it does with the border between SPLA and SSIM territory, has also become a focus of raiding in which civilian populations and their livestock, rather than opposing military forces, have been the main targets. Troops coming out of the Nuer heartland of Western Upper Nile have been strongly supported by government forces in the Bahr el-Ghazal/Lakes perimeter. Some of the cattle seized in these attacks are reported to have been paid over to government garrisons, in exchange for weapons and ammunition; others have entered into the cattle trade network between Western Upper Nile and South Kordofan, which has greatly expanded since 1991. Finally, troops of the former SPLA commander Kerubino Kuanyin Bol, based first in Abyei and then in Gogrial, have made civilian settlements in Northern Bahr el-Ghazal their exclusive targets for attack. Not only have houses been burned and livestock and grain stores seized, but standing crops have also been destroyed, in tactics reminiscent of the Murhalin raids of the early 1980s.

The factional fighting between Southern movements includes competition for OLS resources. There have been attempts to secure control of contested areas by inviting OLS in, as happened when the SPLA United sought to establish its tenuous hold on Kongor in 1993, and is currently happening in much of Jonglei now being fought over by SSIM splinter groups. This parallels a policy of denying resources to opponents through the deliberate destruction of OLS inputs in rival faction areas. For example, donkey pumps installed by OLS at Waat and Ayod (to replace those earlier destroyed by government troops) were destroyed in the Hunger Triangle fighting of 1993. Veterinary and EPI cold chain equipment in Waat and Northern Bahr el-Ghazal have also been looted or destroyed in interfactional raids.

The presence of relief bases and relief stores in some places of the South now appears to invite attack. In Kongor in 1993, and in Northern Bahr el-Ghazal, raids have been timed to take place just after air drops of food. Kerubino's forces have also made primary health care facilities their specific targets, while the forces of William Nyuon and others have attacked camps of displaced persons in Eastern Equatoria, especially at Labone.

What is more damaging in terms of the working relations between OLS agencies and their counterparts in the Southern movements has been the looting of OLS bases under the cover of rival attacks. Both factions of the SPLA looted UN camps at Bor and Kongor in 1991, for example, and each accused the other of being responsible. SPLA troops in Akot and Akon looted OLS agency camps after they were evacuated during SPLA United/SSIA attacks, and OLS bases and barges have been looted by factions of SSIM and SPLA United during the last two years of interfactional fighting in Jonglei and Upper Nile. OLS-issued two-way radios are particularly prized objects in factional fighting, and there is evidence that they have been used (for example, by Kerubino) to listen to OLS networks in order to time attacks to coincide with relief deliveries.

The constant, if irregular, largescale movements of populations, the frequent evacuation of OLS personnel, and the destruction of OLS facilities and equipment have added further constraints on the planning and implementation of OLS programmes in the Southern Sector. The experience of many agencies has been that to resume a project after an interruption is virtually to start anew. This is because counterparts have typically been dispersed and have to be recontacted, or new ones identified and trained, new equipment has to be brought in to replace that which was lost, looted or destroyed, and often a new set of displaced people have to have their needs identified and assistance provided. Continuity in the field is thus being broken regularly, and any sort of progress is difficult.

It is against this background of ongoing and disaster producing warfare that the specifics of the operational environment of OLS Southern Sector must be considered. In the following section, the structure and mechanisms of coordination is considered

3.2 Coordination and Coherence in Southern Sector

The major actors in OLS southern sector are UNICEF, WFP, NGOs (both international and local), and the humanitarian wings of the Southern opposition movements - RASS and SRRA. UN agencies provide considerable assistance to war-affected populations in South Sudan, but the largest part of actual programmes are implemented by some 35 NGOs, in cooperation with counterparts from RASS and SRRA.

In discussions with OLS agencies in the Southern Sector, the Review Team noted time and again the importance of coordination for future

strategy and planning in OLS, a fact which is also acknowledged by UNICEF officials in Nairobi. The UN also acknowledges that interagency collaboration and coordination with NGOs is a key element in relief operations (UN, 1993, January). Given the number of actors involved in OLS, and the increasing scope and complexity of its work, coordination becomes even more critical for the effective delivery of humanitarian services. The task of coordinating so many actors and such a variety of programmes in a complex emergency situation is a herculean one, however, particularly when the lead agency - UNICEF - does not have the power of enforcement, and must instead rely on the goodwill, understanding, and cooperation of participating actors.

Coordination mechanisms used by UNICEF/OLS may be categorised broadly into two types: institutional and organizational. Institutional mechanisms refer to a set of rules and relationships which UNICEF/OLS uses as means of defining the contractual framework of the Southern Sector, and of gaining some degree of regulatory control over NGOs and movement counterparts. Organizational mechanisms refer to various established forums for coordination between various actors and components of the OLS operation.

In the section below, institutional mechanisms are considered first, after which an overview of the organizational structure of OLS in the Southern Sector is provided. The discussion will then move on to consider organizational mechanisms for coordination.

3.2.1 Institutional Mechanisms for Coordination

Institutional mechanisms include Letters of Understanding (LOUs), which UNICEF signs with NGOs, and Ground Rules, which the humanitarian wings of the opposition movements are expected to adhere to.

3.2.1.1 Letters of Understanding (LOUs) with NGOs

Letters of Understanding form the basis of UNICEF's agreement with NGOs, under which both parties undertake to cooperate in the provision of humanitarian assistance to war-affected civilians in South Sudan. An attempt to make LOUs tripartite, by including opposition movement counterparts, has not been successful.

The LOUs allow NGOs to operate under the OLS umbrella, and to make use of OLS supplies and logistics. Individual LOUs typically specify what humanitarian services the NGO is to provide, and where, according to

an agreed plan of action within a specified period of time. The responsibilities of the NGO and UNICEF are clearly spelt out in LOUs. For the NGO these include: implementing activities specified in the LOU, coordinating food and non-food assistance, and supporting training and capacity building of Sudanese organisations. LOUs also engage NGOs to submit quarterly progress and monitoring reports, as well as to cooperate in evaluations, assessments, and additional monitoring of the distribution of humanitarian assistance.

For its part, UNICEF undertakes to negotiate access to all project sites indicated in the LOU, provide logistical support to NGO staff and cargo according to OLS programme priorities (subject to availability of cargo space and flight permissions), allow the NGO use of OLS communications systems, keep the NGO informed of the security situation and facilitate the evacuation of its staff if necessary, and provide accommodation to NGO at the Lokichokkio base camp, and provide supplies, services, and funds according to an agreed list.

It is clear from the above that LOUs are designed as a mechanism to both regulate and coordinate the activities of NGOs. They also provide a framework through which UNICEF and NGOs are able to work together. Significantly, LOUs enable an NGO to obtain the free use of the OLS Southern Sector logistical network, including access to flights from Lokichokkio, and to OLS resources.

In practice, LOUs have not been as effective a mechanism for coordination as expected. This mainly due to UNICEF's incapacity to effectively monitor the agreed objectives in LOUs, and the specific NGO programmes they support. In this regard, the relationship of accountability between UNICEF and NGOs is relatively weak. Moreover, the inability of UNICEF to meet the cargo requirements of NGOs, and the sometimes untimely nature of the supply of inputs, especially for health, has undermined the credibility of the coordinating role of UNICEF.

Another defect of the current LOU system is that it does not link its present cargo prioritisation process directly to NGO requirements listed in LOUs, itself a reflection of the fact that NGOs do not necessarily have common priorities or common strategic programme objectives with UNICEF. Complicating the picture is the fact that, while UNICEF agrees to provide cargo support to NGOs through LOUs, the actual management of logistics remains with WFP, which is outside the OLS coordination structure and has its own priorities. Hence, although UNICEF undertakes to provide logistical support, it does not control logistics itself.

3.2.1.2 Ground Rules with Opposition Movements

According to senior OLS sources, the establishment of Ground Rules was prompted by the murder of aid workers in 1992. Following that incident, the UN saw the need for a framework with which to work with the SPLA.

Ground Rules are an agreement between UNICEF and the humanitarian wings of the opposition movements, which:

...lay out the basic principles upon which Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS) works and lay out the rules and regulations resulting from such principles. It seeks to define the minimum acceptable standards of conduct for the activities of OLS agencies (UNICEF/OLS, 1995, July/August).

Ground Rules also seek to define the minimum acceptable standards of conduct for the activities of SRRA and RASS - the present counterpart organizations of OLS in the South, in areas controlled by the armies of their respective military authorities. Respect for humanitarian principles, including the right of the child, the right to offer and receive humanitarian assistance, and the need to facilitate access to populations in need, form the cornerstones of the Ground Rules. Other aspects of the Ground Rules relate to mutual obligations of the parties to the agreement, and to how relief properties and supplies should be used.

The Ground Rules are meant to regulate opposition counterpart agencies and their relationship with OLS agencies. They are also a vehicle to enable OLS agencies work in non-government held areas with the agreement of the military authorities for those areas. The fact that Ground Rules have evolved is an indication of an adaptation by UNICEF of strategies designed to cope with an environment in which formal civil codes of law and order have either collapsed, or are being interpreted and implemented by armed political bodies. In this regard, the Ground Rules also provide a mechanism for attempting to regulate the extent of abuse against civilians in non-government areas by the various factions of the opposition movements.

By their nature, the Ground Rules require considerable publicity and education, especially within SPLA/SRRA and SSIM/RASS, for them to be accepted and effective. The impression of the Review Team from field visits was that the Ground Rules have yet to trickle down to the field staff of counterpart organizations at community level. The Review Team also noted the importance of dissemination and education around Ground

Rules to commanders and rank-and-file of the armies of the opposition movements, as well as to their civilian personnel.

Nevertheless, as noted in chapter 2, the Ground Rules represent the bringing together of humanitarian and human rights concerns, and provide a vehicle for OLS agencies to address incidents of abuse against civilians directly with the parties responsible. In this regard, they enable OLS agencies to maintain pressure on opposition movements for internal reform, and for the development and implementation of effective civil codes, within an agreed framework. Hence, the Ground Rules are an innovative adaptation to the provision of humanitarian assistance in the context of ongoing warfare, and indicate a laudable pragmatism concerning the need for UN agencies to engage directly with warring parties concerning their disaster producing activities.

3.2.2 The Organizational Structure of OLS Southern Sector

3.2.2.1 UNICEF as Lead Agency

UNICEF is the lead agency for coordinating OLS relief activities in the Southern Sector on behalf of the DHA. This makes UNICEF's Chief of Operations (Nairobi) the overall Coordinator of OLS in South Sudan.

The lead agency role of UNICEF can be traced to its experience in running operations in South Sudan prior to 1988, and to the appointment of James Grant as the Personal Representative of the UN Secretary General for Sudan in 1989, by which UNICEF came to play a leading role in negotiating and securing access through contacts with the warring parties. Its OLS programme coordination role began to develop, particularly from 1993, with the gradual expansion of OLS operations. The weak capacity of SRRA as a counterpart organization, and the absence of effective government in the South, meant that UNICEF moved in to fill a vacuum that would otherwise have been taken up by an indigenous civil/political authority (O'Brien, 1996, April 19).

The unique nature of OLS, based on negotiated access and the mutual agreement with the warring parties, means that all NGOs under the OLS umbrella in the Southern Sector are subject to the overall guidance of UNICEF. NGOs depend on UNICEF's ability to provide them with support, the most important being air transport for cargo and staff from Nairobi to the UN base camp in Lokichokio, and from there to various operational locations in South Sudan. Despite the lack of credibility in coordination that UNICEF has with many NGOs, it is this

logistical support, in large part, that attracts NGOs to remain under the OLS umbrella. Another important factor in NGO interest is the security and evacuation system that UNICEF has evolved to address the safety of NGO staff and programmes in the midst of continuing warfare. Finally, the OLS umbrella provides a legitimate cover for NGOs to work cross-border into non-government areas of South Sudan, which is especially important to NGOs that simultaneously run programmes in government areas.

In its lead agency position, UNICEF provides regular security briefings to participating agencies; daily situation reports keep NGOs and their field staff constantly informed of the security situation. The security and evacuation system developed by UNICEF, described in chapter 2, has been widely acknowledged by even the most critical NGOs as a necessary criteria for their operations in South Sudan; since it is unlikely that NGOs themselves would have been able to devise and implement such a system, it is probable that many of them would not be working in the South were it not for UNICEF's efforts in this regard.

By 1993, OLS had developed into a massive air lift operation. This required a greater capacity to manage logistics than UNICEF could cope with at the time. By agreement, UNICEF subsequently ceded responsibility for managing logistics to WFP in the same year, leaving UNICEF with the management of the Lokichokkio camp and programme coordination. With regard to programme inputs, there has been a division of responsibility between WFP, which is responsible for food aid, and UNICEF, which is responsible for non-food inputs.

3.2.2.2 Coordination Between WFP and NGOs

There is also a degree of division of labour between WFP and some NGOs. WFP operates food relief distributions in areas not covered by NGOs. Beyond this, however, WFP does not have effective coordination with NGOs.

The consequences of this are seen particularly in relation to support for agricultural production, and especially the provision of seeds and tools. In targeting vulnerable communities for the distribution of seeds and tools, sufficient food assistance should be available prior to the arrival of seeds. This helps ensure that households, pressed by food shortages at the leanest time of the year, are not forced to eat seeds. In addition, the provision of food assistance prior to agricultural production enables households to maximize labor for food production, rather than for other short-term strategies to fill food

gaps.

In practice, this has not worked satisfactorily, in part due to logistical constraints, but also due to security disruptions. Indeed, the pattern of militia raiding in some areas of the south - for example, Bahr el-Ghazal - has itself been influenced by the pattern of WFP food distributions; raiding often follows food distributions in particular locations. According to one WFP source, it is for this reason that NGOs have come to regard WFP as a liability in the field, and are reluctant to be present with WFP in the same area during a food distribution. In relation to one incident of attack, an NGO staff member expressed the following view:

I personally feel extremely angry that WFP, against the advice and reports from their field officers, continue to dispose of their (food) surplus...in places which neither require nor at present want it. Over the last few months they have even had difficulty of giving the food away, let alone finding enough people to whom to distribute it. It is entirely irresponsible and is putting other aid workers at risk, as it seems that Kerubino Kuanyin Bol is specifically (at the moment) targeting distributions of food...Kerubino Kuanyin Bol now has at least five OLS radios, and the timing of his last two attacks on food distribution points is not coincidental. I personally would insist that I do not in future coincide in a location with food intervention.

This statement illustrates, among other things, the growing tension between WFP and NGOs in the field. This makes coordination between WFP and NGOs, especially in the distribution food aid, and seeds and tools during the farming season, more difficult.

3.2.2.3 UNICEF's Operational Structure

In terms of OLS programmes, it is the UNICEF Programme Coordinator in Nairobi who is responsible for liaison both with NGOs and with UNICEF's and WFP's sectoral project offices. Figure 3.1 below indicates the central role of the Programme Coordinator in the overall UNICEF structure.

(Insert "Figure 3.1" here. Filename = "Figure-3.1").

Work at sectoral level is coordinated by the respective UNICEF project officers, who liaise with NGOs working in that sector, as well as UNICEF's own field staff. In this regard, it should be remembered that

UNICEF also runs its own country programme. Hence, the UNICEF Chief of Operations, the Programme Coordinator, and the project officers have to oversee UNICEF own country programmes as well as coordinate the work of UNICEF's own and other agencies OLS activities. In practice, combining the lead agency role with the implementation of its own country programmes, especially in the context of a complex and multi-agency operation such as OLS, appears to have overstretched UNICEF project officers.

There have also been complaints from some NGOs about the bias of UNICEF's programme coordination, an issue that will be considered in more detail later. On the other hand, some UNICEF sources suggest that the call for better coordination is in some cases aimed at protecting specific areas covered by specific NGOs.

UNICEF also has a field programme office in Lokichokkio, established in 1994 in a move to decentralize the Nairobi office. Until recently, a UNICEF had a field liaison officer based in Lokichokkio; he was replaced, however, by a field officer with no decision making authority. Rather, the present field officer in Lokichokkio can only implement decisions taken in Nairobi.

This has considerably weakened both the coordination and coherence of UNICEF's work out of Lokichokkio, and illustrates the more general constraint of the administration of OLS Southern Sector being split between Nairobi, Lokichokkio, and the field inside South Sudan. At present, the UNICEF office in Lokichokkio is overwhelmed by the sheer weight of coordinational responsibilities, particularly in dealing with NGO requests and complaints. In a discussion with the Review Team, it emerged that the present Programme Coordinator in Nairobi spends approximately 50% of her time in Lokichokkio (Nichols, 1996, April 1). Even so, a common complaint by NGOs is the weak level of coordination between Nairobi and Lokichokkio levels in decision making and implementation.

NGOs also face the constraints caused by the spacial split between Nairobi, Lokichokkio, and the field. Most NGOs have their programme officers based in Nairobi. Important decisions affecting programmes in the field are thus taken at the Nairobi level, and communicated to field staff in both Lokichokkio and inside South Sudan. Distance and problems in communication sometimes make coordination between these three levels problematic. Delays are often caused when matters that crop up in the field have to be relayed to Nairobi-based officers. Field staff inside South Sudan also sometimes receive contradictory directives from Lokichokkio and Nairobi, respectively.

It should be mentioned here that the Review Team's attention was drawn to a possible restructuring of UNICEF/OLS Southern Sector. The limited information available on the proposed restructuring suggests that UNICEF intends to appoint a Senior Field Programme Coordinator to be based in Lokichokkio, whose responsibilities will be to ensure coordination among various OLS partners - WFP, NGOs, and Southern Sudanese counterparts. This person will also be expected to supervise UNICEF programme staff in the field, who will still have to report to their respective project officers.

The proposed appointment could potentially improve coordination. However, it may also lead to overlap in responsibilities with the current Programme Coordinator. More importantly, the new post still combines UNICEF's OLS coordination function with UNICEF's own country programmes. The Review Team felt that what may be required is to dedicate a new post to OLS completely, and avoid mixing responsibilities with UNICEF country programmes. This would free the proposed Senior Field Programme Coordinator to concentrate on the coordination of OLS agencies, a large and critical task given the complexity of the OLS operation, and the difficulty of ensuring adherence to its principles in the highly politicized context of South Sudan.

There is also a proposal to establish a new post of Deputy Chief of Operations for UNICEF, to free the UNICEF Chief of Operations/OLS Coordinator to concentrate on both coordination and negotiation of access. In light of the above discussion, the Review Team felt this would represent a good step forward in separating UNICEF's own programmes from those of OLS.

3.2.3 Organizational Mechanisms for Coordination

The organisational mechanisms for coordination in the Southern Sector take various forms. These include regional coordination meetings, sectoral coordination meetings, and the INGO Forum. The issue of cargo prioritization is also considered in this section.

3.2.3.1 Regional and Sectoral Coordination Meetings

Regional and sectoral coordination meetings began in 1994, in response to the increased access for, and growing number of, NGOs under the OLS umbrella.

Regional coordination meetings provide a forum for OLS agencies to discuss problems in a specific geographical area. The demand for such coordination is especially high in unstable areas (Kagunde, 1996, March 31). The meetings are typically run by Sudanese counterparts (SRRA or RASS), and attended by both NGOs and WFP. Although in theory regional meetings are held for all regions accessed in the Southern Sector, in practice meetings for Upper Nile, Bahr el-Ghazal, and other regions have been dormant for some time. Attendance at such meetings is also said to be poor, in part due to lack of transport for agency personnel. Moreover, friction between NGOs serving populations in the same geographical area sometimes inhibits the effectiveness of regional meetings. As a result, "coordination is patchy...and there is less sharing of resources" (Southern and Clarke, 1996, March 29).

Part of the problem of regional level coordination also appears to result from the fact that most NGOs operate in two or more regions, meaning the same set of people have to attend several meetings. Also, the extent of counterpart capacity may limit regional meetings in some areas; where counterparts are cooperative and dynamic, field-based coordinational meetings are said to be quite effective.

The value of good coordination among NGOs working in the same region can be illustrated by the following case. Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and Action International Contre le Faim (AICF) both work in Nimule/Mogale and Labone in Eastern Equatoria. Inputs from UNICEF and WFP, including Unimix and vegetable oil, are brought into Labone by air at considerable cost from Lokichokio. In order to cut costs, and reduce the inefficient use of air cargo space, AICF and CRS have made a deal under which CRS delivers vegetable oil by road to AICF programmes in Nimule/Mogali and Labone. This kind of cooperation between NGOs, where it has not evolved naturally through field level contact, or on the content of regional meetings, needs to be encouraged, especially given the pressure on air cargo space and the high running costs of the air operation.

According to impressions gathered by the Review Team, sectoral coordination meetings - run by UNICEF project officers based in Nairobi - appear to have been relatively more successful than regional meetings. They are said to have been generally useful, and to have produced important results. The frequency, format, and quality of coordination varies from sector to sector, however. Water and livestock were frequently mentioned as areas where coordination is running effectively, while health was noted as a problematic area, mainly due to the unwieldiness of health sector programmes. For

example, some 23 NGOs operate health-related programmes. Further, the technical demands of the sector, and need for regular logistics and supply of inputs, makes coordination far more challenging.

For the water sector, meetings are said to be very regular at two levels: general coordination meetings to discuss transport, areas of operation, and who is doing what, held every two months, and technical coordination meetings to discuss technical issues. According to the logistics and field officer based in Lokichokkio, coordination in this sector also operates in a more decentralized manner, from Lokichokkio itself and two bases inside South Sudan covering particular regions. There is also a regular and effective system of reporting, collation, and computerisation of data at the Nairobi level concerning water programmes.

In general, most NGOs work across sectors. SCF (UK). for example, operates programmes in education, veterinary services, and agriculture, while AAIN is in health, education, water and women's programmes. The demands on staff time to attend sectoral coordination meetings are thus great, especially for programme or field coordinators.

3.2.3.2 The INGO Forum

Formed in July 1995, the original aim of the INGO Forum was to be a consultative group playing an advisory role to UNICEF at the highest level. UNICEF, however, preferred a management advisory group including NGOs and donors; subsequently, counterpart agencies from opposition movements also sought to participate. As a result, the initiative became unworkable in practice, and the INGO Forum was reformed as a forum for NGOs alone, in order to discuss common problems and form a collective influence on OLS decision making.

The Forum considers operational, especially logistical, problems in OLS, and innovations in programming. While it is too early to assess the effectiveness of the Forum, it is worth noting that, so far, the Forum has been able to successfully lobby donors for USD 2 million to clear the backlog of cargo to South Sudan. As NGOs acquire more financial muscle within OLS, the Forum will no doubt provide an increasingly important mechanism for NGOs to influence OLS policy and programme decision making.

On the other hand, the growth of the NGO sector, both in terms of resources and programmes, raises the question of the extent to which

NGOs will remain willing to submit to UN coordination and regulation. Already there are complaints from NGOs that UNICEF is too powerful, that there are too many regulations, and that decisions are too centralised. Calls for deregulation and decentralisation from NGOs are now becoming common.

3.2.3.3 Cargo Prioritisation Decision Making

One of the main issues the INGO Forum considers is logistics, and specifically the growing problem of limited air cargo capacity. In the face of increasing demands by NGOs for air cargo space, it has become necessary to prioritise cargo in a more coherent manner.

As an indication of the scale of the problem, the number of locations served by OLS rose from 30 in the early 1990's to over 100 at present, while the number of NGOs rose from a few to almost 40 today. The pressure on the OLS logistical system that this has entailed has been substantial. Moreover, with the increased emphasis on capacity building and insitutional development, demands for personnel transport, as well as cargo transport, have also grown.

At the same time, the availability of aircraft has been limited by a number of factors, including, importantly, the decline in funding that allows for bigger and longer aircraft rental contracts to be made. The accidental loss of the Twin Otter aircraft has also contributed to the limitations on air capacity.

The contraction of air transport capacity has meant that UNICEF's commitment to meet the transport requirements of NGOs, pledged in the LOUs, has been compromised. Since demand for air transport far exceeds supply, prioritisation has become a necessity.

In principle, cargo prioritization is based on needs assessments, as well as on seasonal requirements to have certain inputs in place - for example seeds and tools - prior to the start of the rains. Prioritisation meetings take place in Nairobi among heads of agencies - what is called the Executive Group - and decisions taken are communicated to field staff and logisticians in Lokichokkio. Allocation of air cargo space is then determined by logisticians on a weekly basis according to cargo prioritisation guidelines from Nairobi. NGOs submit their priority locations and cargo to logisticians in Lokichokkio, who then decide, together with UNICEF's field officer, what can be moved by the aircraft available. Aircraft availability is, in turn, determined by flight operations.

Cargo prioritisation has operated on the basis of identifying requests as either high or low priority cargo, or high or low priority destinations (O'Brien, 1995, September 29), rather than on a first-come first served basis (Nichols, 1996, April 1). In practice, however, WFP and NGO logisticians, respectively, tend to make different decisions on cargo priority. Further, the absence of NGOs from consultation on cargo prioritisation decisions at the Nairobi level means that there is tendency for conflict between OLS cargo priorities and NGO priorities. Finally, both UNICEF and WFP, aside from operating a coordinational and logistical management role, are also implementing agencies with their own programmes.

The conflict of programme interests between NGOs, WFP, and UNICEF are thus a common source of argument vis a vis cargo. According to one senior UNICEF official, another facet of the problem is the fact that some NGOs obtain funding from donors outside the OLS framework; once funding is secured, the NGO then comes to UNICEF to demand logistical support regardless of whether the project is within the OLS framework or not. Hence, the OLS logistical system is supporting a larger traffic of air and personnel cargo than its formal agreements would indicate. In addition, although cargo priorities are expected to be based on annual assessments, individual NGO programme needs do not feature in these assessments.

What the above indicates is that there is no consensus between UN OLS agencies and NGOs concerning the overall priorities of OLS programming. That there is so much cargo to move with a limited air capacity gives rise to tremendous pressures from different sources, which makes the reaching of decisions about cargo priorities both difficult and controversial. The fact that NGOs have a limited input into cargo priority decisions exacerbates this difficulty. Further, the majority of people who decide on cargo priorities are logisticians, who have little or no knowledge of programme requirements, and especially the critical issue of seasonality for some inputs.

In general, the Review Team felt that present mechanisms for coordination are inadequate for an operation of OLS's nature. This inadequacy becomes more important in light of the fact that OLS has grown in both scope and complexity.

3.3 Growth, Complexity, and the Unevenness of Assistance

3.3.1 Increasing Scope and Complexity of the Southern Sector

Part of the operational landscape of the Southern Sector is the increasing number of sectoral programmes under the OLS umbrella. Sectoral programmes have grown substantially since 1989; although relief food and basic health care are still integral parts of OLS, programming has broadened over the years beyond these two concerns. Programmes now cover household food security, including rehabilitation of agricultural production and livestock, roads, water and sanitation, primary education, capacity building, and promotion of humanitarian principles. Figures 3.2 and 3.3 below summarise the sectoral programmes under the OLS umbrella, including those of UNICEF and WFP, and of NGOs, respectively.

(Insert File "Figure-3.2" and File "Figure-3.3" here. Filenames = "Figure-3.2" and "Figure-3.3").

The number of approved locations has also grown from 77 in May of 1994, to 115 in 1995 (DHA, 1996 February), and 120 in 1996. Cotermisus with this extension of access has been a phenomenal increase in the number of INGOs and Sudanese Indigenous NGOs (SINGOs) operating, or seeking to operate, under OLS. The growth in number of INGOs was particularly noticeable following the 1992 agreement (O'Brien, 1996, April 19). While there were only two SINGOs (CRRS and SMC) in mid-1993, by early 1996 the number of those seeking to register with OLS had reached nearly 30, out which six have signed Letters of Understanding with UNICEF. Figure 3.3 also presents the list of NGOs operating in the Southern Sector as of April 1996.

The number of implementing agencies within any given sectoral activity has also increased. For example, the number of INGOs delivering livestock/veterinary services is presently ten, as compared to one in 1989, while the health sector now has 23 NGOs apart from UNICEF, compared to three in 1989.

Part of the growing complexity of OLS Southern Sector has to do with the rise of factionalisation within opposition movements, and the simultaneous rise of potential new counterparts for OLS. In this respect, the Southern Sector presents a more complex picture than the North, where there is a single political authority to act as counterpart. Finally, OLS Southern Sector has changed from being a mainly land-based operation prior to 1992, to a massive airlift (O'Brien, 1996, April 19).

3.3.2 The Distribution of Humanitarian Services

The growth of OLS programmes, however, has not guaranteed equitable distribution of humanitarian services to all populations in need in the South. Despite the dearth of data, there is some evidence of concentration of humanitarian services in some regions at the expense of others.

An examination of the list of NGOs and their activities, provided in Figure 3.4 below, suggests that, while there is a good presence of OLS NGOs in Western and Eastern Equatoria, Upper Nile, and Lakes, there is a much smaller number of NGOs covering Bahr el-Ghazal and Jonglei. For lack of complete data and absence of sectoral mapping, it is difficult to show the coverage of sectoral programmes. It is however reasonable to infer from the spread of NGOs that populations in some areas of maximum vulnerability or of greatest need, but insecure and access-restricted, such as Bahr el-Ghazal are under serviced by OLS agencies.

(Insert File "Figure-3.4" here. Filename = "Figure-3.4").

The uneven distribution of NGOs is explained by a combination of factors. First, there is an informal division of labor between WFP and NGOs, whereby WFP does not operate in areas where NGOs distribute relief food. Hence, WFP and NGOs do not necessarily have knowledge about the extent of coverage of each other's food aid programmes. Despite this, there does appear to be a de facto division of labor with regard to food aid coverage; NGOs tend to operate in relatively secure environments such as Western and Eastern Equatoria, while WFP operates in some of the most difficult and insecure regions such as Bahr el-Ghazal.

Second, and more importantly, flight bans and the manipulation of access by warring parties have not enabled OLS to operationalize an equal coverage of all affected populations. In worst-affected areas such as Bahr el-Ghazal, Jonglei, and parts of Upper Nile, relief programmes have been ad hoc, according to the extent of access allowed and the security situation at any given time. In the view of NGOs consulted by the Review Team, erratic flight bans constitute one of the most disruptive factors in their coverage and programming; in this regard, areas that are accessible by road, and hence not subject to interdiction through flight bans, may appear more attractive to many NGOs. In terms of formal access, Bahr el-Ghazal and parts of Upper Nile became accessible relatively late, following the December 1992 agreement; as a result, OLS Southern Sector operations to Bahr el-Ghazal did not commence until February 1993.

Fighting between the GOS and the SPLA, as well as interfactional fighting within Southern movements, and militia raiding, have also rendered some areas chronically insecure. In terms of NGO coverage, a pattern that has been evident is the fact that NGOs tend to congregate in areas of greater relative security. The implications of this for programming is considered later in this section.

Third, the fact that there is a heavy presence of NGOs in some parts of Upper Nile (especially the west) which, like Bahr el-Ghazal, is both distant and liable to insecurity, suggests that there is another dimension to NGO coverage. According to some NGO officials, this has to do with the willingness of NGOs to have a presence in areas controlled by SSIM/A, either because there was no other choice, or more significantly, in order to establish a neutral balance between work with SPLA and SSIM.

Finally, the unevenness of NGO coverage of the South is a result of the lack of effective, centralized coordination by the UN of NGO operations. NGOs by and large decide where they want to work in the Southern Sector, in some cases with donor approval. Hence, the pattern of NGO coverage does not necessarily correspond to a rational division of labor among OLS implementing partners, but has evolved on an ad hoc and historical basis according to individual NGO interests and capacities. Because NGO site selection tends to favor areas both further south and relatively more secure, this has led to uneven coverage. WFP and UNICEF are then left to operate in areas where NGOs are not willing to go. It must be acknowledged, however, that a few NGOs are working in some of the most difficult operational environments in South Sudan, as in Northern Bahr el-Ghazal.

3.3.3 The Distribution of Programme Types

Closely linked to the uneven security situation, there is a noticeable difference in the type of programmes being implemented in various regions of the South, and an unevenness in the extent to which implementing agencies are attempting to apply a shift away from relief toward rehabilitation.

In general, more rehabilitation-oriented programming has gravitated toward the more stable regions in the south of South Sudan, and away from from Bahr el-Ghazal and other insecure regions in the Transitional Zone. In theory, more stable areas present greater opportunities for enhancing coping strategies, supporting production, and restoring basic social services. In Equatoria, for example, NGOs have actively

embarked on rehabilitation projects such as roads, support for agriculture through the provision of inputs and revival of extension services, and attempts to revive the local economy by providing opportunities to exchange surplus grain for commodities.

One of the assumption underlying the shift toward rehabilitation and away from relief is that the operational environment will remain stable in those areas where rehabilitation is taking place. However, the pattern of the war indicates that the frontline is constantly in flux; moreover, the emergence of factions within the Southern movement hostile to each other, and the extent of raiding by various groups, means that stability in terms of the war cannot be predicted with any degree of certainty. Such conditions place any rehabilitation or development projects at risk.

In this regard, one of the key features of the operational environment in the Southern Sector is the unpredictability of warfare, and the extent to which this unpredictability has influenced programme coverage and type. NGOs and UN agencies cannot know the extent to which programmes will endure. In this respect, the cross-border operation in South Sudan presents a very different picture from the other major cross-border operation in the Horn, that to Eritrea and Ethiopia during the 1980's and early 1990's. In that situation, aside from air attacks, the frontline of warfare was relatively easy to predict in advance, and conditions in non-government held areas were relatively stable. Without a stable frontline of fighting, however, and without international military protection for humanitarian operations, OLS Southern Sector programmes and coverage must remain flexible. This does not lessen the need to enhance mechanisms for a more rational coordination of NGO programme coverage, however.

3.4 Working with Southern Movements

Another of the defining features of the operational environment is the extent to which international agencies have been placed in direct contact with sections of the Southern opposition movements, and the degree to which this contact has informed a process of institutional reform within the movements. This section considers the evolution and implications of this contact.

The Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Association (SRRA) was founded in 1984, as an independent and non-political association to provide for the relief needs of refugees, mainly in Ethiopia (SRRA, 1984, September 2: 1). Since that time, SRRA has had to reform its structures several

times. This has involved both a shift from refugees to the more diverse needs of the internal populace, and the need to deal more effectively with a greater variety of external agencies.

INGOs attempting to work through the SRRA immediately before OLS often experienced difficulties; indeed, at that time the SRRA had gained a reputation for "paranoia" when dealing with foreign organisations (Scott-Villiers, 1988, April 21). With increased NGO activity in the South by the end of 1988, the SPLM attempted some reform of the SRRA, by placing it under the direct responsibility of a member of the SPLA Political/Military High Command, and moving its headquarters from Nairobi to Kapoeta.

Although the SRRA represented itself as an NGO, it was tied very closely to the SPLA, and this seriously affected its efficiency. Because SRRA officials retained their ranks in the SPLA, and local commanders appointed and promoted their own SRRA field secretaries without reference to headquarters in Kapoeta, the authority of the Secretary General and his executive was undermined, and the SRRA's internal chain of command was almost non-existent. Indeed, the reality was that OLS was dealing with SPLA commanders without being fully aware of it. In practice, local programmes were implemented only through negotiation with local commanders.

OLS required a central authority through which planning could be made, but there was no functioning central system. Not knowing the precise nature of the structural weaknesses within the SRRA, OLS attempted to solve the problem by strengthening the headquarters and the Nairobi liaison office. At the end of 1989, WFP provided the SRRA with USD 20,000 for support costs (Daniel Deng Kut, 1989, November 16), the first attempt at "capacity building".

The SRRA headquarters for its part lobbied the SPLA for the appointment of an Executive Director, who could coordinate the activities of the headquarters and the liaison office, and try to improve working relations with OLS agencies. An Executive Director was appointed in 1991, but in practice this appointment further emphasised the importance of the Nairobi office at the expense of the headquarters in the field. In the words of a former SRRA secretary, "Nairobi became everything, the field nothing". This had disastrous results when personality clashes developed between the SRRA Executive Director and the OLS Coordinator in Nairobi.

The split in the SPLA in 1991 forced changes in the SRRA structure. The creation of the Relief Association of Southern Sudan (RASS),

representing the Nasir faction - SPLM/A United (later SSIM/A), introduced a new element of competition for relief resources. The RASS structure paralleled that of the SRRA, and also came under the jurisdiction of the SPLA United's Secretary for Humanitarian Affairs. At first, the experience of OLS agencies was that RASS officials allowed greater freedom of access to local communities than was frequently the case with the SRRA. This put further pressure on SRRA for internal reform, which began in 1992 with the appointment of the current Secretary General, Mario Muor Muor, following the breakdown in relations between the SRRA and OLS that same year. In 1993, the SRRA was officially separated from the SPLA, becoming a department under the Secretary for Humanitarian Affairs and Relief, a move confirmed at the SPLM's first National Convention in April 1994.

The humanitarian wings of the two movements have had diverging experiences in recruitment. In 1991, both drew heavily on the military personnel already in their ranks. RASS grew out of the SRRA committee appointed in Nasir to look after the returnees from Ethiopia, which was initially dominated by the former SPLA administrators of Itang. As the SPLA United came increasingly under the control of Nuer commanders, and was riven by intersectional Nuer conflicts, there was an exodus of non-Nuer from the ranks of both SPLA United and RASS. This included some of the more qualified Dinka and Equatorian civil personnel, who had originally joined SPLA United because of its public stance on humanitarian issues. There has thus been a decline in the number of RASS field staff capable of performing competently the functions OLS expects of them.

The SRRA has had the opposite experience. In 1992, the new Secretary General found that the appointment of field personnel followed the recruitment pattern of the SPLA generally, meaning that the majority came from the Dinka of Bahr el-Ghazal, Lakes, and Jonglei. In response, he attempted to give the SRRA a more diverse character by recruiting persons from throughout South Sudan (Mario Muor Muor, 1996, April 7). This has opened the SRRA up to a wider pool of expertise. This reform was also necessitated by other reforms the SPLM/A has implemented in civil administration, and in its policy towards SINGOs. These reforms have meant that SRRA faces more competition for experienced civil staff than was previously the case.

Local relief structures also vary throughout the Southern Sector. Initially, assessments and distributions were made through the hierarchy of local chiefs, and access to the chiefs was mediated by the SRRA. Following the establishment of SPLA administration in Western Equatoria, a new system of Joint Relief Committees (JRCs) was

set up, with a membership composed of local representatives from UN agencies, INGOs, the SRRA, the New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC), and representatives of the community. The JRCs together were responsible for local assessments and planning, as well as implementation. This system was expanded to other areas under SRRA jurisdiction.

Problems of over formal structure, plus the growing desire of INGOs to have greater access to "the community", have meant that in some areas where JRCs have not been set up - for example, northern Bahr el-Ghazal - WFP has developed its own community-based Relief Committees. These Relief Committees operate closer to the community, and include representatives chosen at village level. Relief Committees are involved in identifying and distributing relief to those deemed most vulnerable within a community.

Hence, there are now three types of relief or distribution structures in operation within the Southern Sector: relief distributions organised by chiefs, mainly in RASS areas such as Western Upper Nile, relief projects ostensibly planned and implemented by Joint Relief Committees, mainly in Western Equatoria and Lakes, and relief distributions implemented through Relief Committees, mainly in Northern Bahr el-Ghazal.

In the early years of OLS, SRRA field staff were inextricably connected with the civil administration of SPLA held territories; indeed, many staff doubled as Civil/Military Administrators, responsible for collecting taxes from the civilian population and supervising the court system within their jurisdiction, under the authority of the SPLA Area and Zonal Commanders. With the introduction of OLS and its relief requirements, however, this led to a direct conflict of interests. As a Civil/Military Administrator, an SPLA officer would be involved in collecting taxes from his people, often in the form of livestock or grain; meanwhile, as an SRRA agent, the same person was involved in assessing relief needs and the distribution of items (usually food) to local communities.

The reforms at the first National Convention in April 1994, which brought about a separation of the SRRA from the SPLA, also began the process of separating the civil from military administration, and formalizing a new civil administration more generally. Pre-1976 provinces were formally designated as regions, and former districts (called provinces in GOS federal nomenclature) became counties, which were then further subdivided into payams. Governors have been appointed to administer the regions, and Commissioners to run the

counties. While Regional Governors and County Commissioners continue to be political appointments by the SPLA, a civil administration is being reconstituted within each county, under the supervision of an Executive Director. The payams are the responsibility of the Payam Civil Administrators (PCAs), and villages are administered by Executive Chiefs. Many of the new PCAs were formerly CMAs in the old SPLA, although many also had been in civil administration before the war.

The role and influence of the different officials within the counties is still emerging. There is quite clearly a conflict of jurisdiction between the SRRA, and the civil administration at all levels. In the National Executive Council, the responsibilities of the Secretaries of Health, Education, and Agriculture, among others, overlap with the responsibility of the SRRA's Secretary for Humanitarian Affairs; the SRRA is still responsible for the implementation of programmes now theoretically being planned by the other secretariats. In the field, the SRRA has direct access to the resources of OLS, but finds itself in competition with the civil administration for the control of these resources.

Administration in the SPLA United/SSIM areas has remained under the military, mainly because of the political and military factional fighting which has affected the Jonglei and Sobat areas. In 1994, the SSIM attempted an administrative reform, retitling its regions as states (paralleling GOS usage), but civil structures outside Liech State (Western Upper Nile) have been more theoretical than actual, due to continuing insecurity.

The drive by INGOs to circumvent the military and deal directly with civilian institutions has been an important factor in the creation of local level relief structures, and in the reform of civil administration within the SPLA. It has also contributed to the creation of Sudanese indigenous NGOs (SINGOs) within the South. When OLS began, the SPLA prohibited the hiring of Southern Sudanese relief staff outside the structure of the SRRA. Parallel to the SRRA, and working sometimes in an uncomfortable alliance, was the New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC), with churches employing their own staff, as well as receiving assistance from expatriate church staff. Since 1992, there has been a greater liberalisation of employment practices, not only in terms of INGOs hiring Sudanese in various capacities, but in the encouragement of SINGOs. Many of these have been set up by ex-SRRA and RASS staff, some with considerable experience in OLS projects. The major weakness of SINGOs is that they depend on the UN and INGOs for support, and have yet to establish any independent source of funding.

Only a few SINGOs have progressed beyond the planning stage, and only a few manage their own field operations.

Given the above, it can be seen that one of the factors behind the impetus for reform of civil administration in non-government areas of the South, and the impetus to separate civil from military authorities, has been the existence of OLS Southern Sector. Since the provision of humanitarian resources through OLS depends in part on the existence of competent and autonomous counterparts, political authorities in the South have been pressed to move away from a purely military orientation toward civilian populations, and toward the development more formal structures of civil society administration. While these reforms cannot be said to have been caused by OLS, and while the extent of their depth versus superficiality cannot be judged at this stage, the fact of OLS has acted as an important catalyst in the impetus for reform. If one accepts that large parts of South Sudan are administered by opposition movements - which, however it may be debated according to one's sentiments about the warring parties, is nevertheless the reality on the ground - then the impetus to reform that OLS has provided is a positive step for war-affected populations.

4. THE OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT - NORTHERN SECTOR

4.1 Introduction

This chapter considers the policy framework and operational environment of OLS Northern Sector. It begins with a discussion of UN responses to the issue of war-displaced populations, and the establishment of a framework that defined OLS in the Northern Sector. It then goes on to consider the operational environment, with regard to government structures, NGO implementing partners, and the structure and coordination of UN OLS agencies. Throughout, examples are drawn from OLS Northern Sector operations generally, and from the various sites that the Review Team visited. In Chapter 7, the programming and social impact of Northern Sector operations are considered.

In general, the Review Team felt that an analysis of the organization and structure of OLS Northern Sector should be made in terms of the extent to which they allow the defining principles of OLS to be operationalised. These principles, laid out in various OLS agreements, include neutrality, transparency, and accountability. Accordingly, the implications of Northern Sector structures and organization as described below are considered with reference to these principles at various points throughout the chapter.

4.2 Defining OLS in the Northern Sector

4.2.1 Responding to Internal Displacement: The Development of a Framework for OLS

OLS in North Sudan has its origins in the issue of internal displacement. In 1989, an estimated two million people were displaced throughout Sudan. In 1994, the total number of war-displaced living in Greater Khartoum alone was estimated at 800,000 people (UN, 1994, August).

By the late 1980s, internal displacement had become a matter of concern at policy level for the GOS; internal displacement was seen to contribute to rapid and potentially destabilizing urbanisation in Khartoum. Further, the plight of the displaced had attracted negative publicity, particularly in the transition zone, where the famine of 1987/88 left nearly quarter of a million people dead.

In September 1988, the GOS issued a draft of its general policy towards the displaced, reaffirming the rights of displaced citizens and

emphasising government efforts to provide relief (GOS, 1988, September 22). For the short term, the policy highlighted the importance of creating employment opportunities in rural and urban areas to increase self-reliance, and the upgrading of spontaneous settlements. For the medium term, GOS policy called for the establishment of reception centres at interregional frontiers, in order to stem movement to the capital and other urban centres, and facilitate returns to home areas (GOS, 1988, September 22).

The GOS policy statement coincided with the arrival of a UN team in September 1988, aimed at developing a UN/GOS response to the emergency situation. This mission would establish a framework for international appeals and, subsequently, for the formation of OLS (UN, 1988, November 10). Importantly, this framework endorsed the government's approach to the issue of displaced populations. Government policy is reflected, for example, in various UN appeals, including those prepared for OLS (UN, 1988, November 10; UNDP, 1989, August 9; UN, 1990, March 26). In 1988 and 1989, the UN adopted a three pronged approach that fits well with GOS policy as set out in September 1988, which aimed to combine the provision of relief commodities with:

....a comprehensive set of programmes to assist people migrating out of conflict areas into the transitional zone of Darfur and Kordofan; comprehensive urban strategy to direct urban growth and reduce adverse environmental consequences of overpopulation and resultant poverty (UN, 1988, November 10).

The early stages of UN policy with regard to displaced peoples were thus significant in establishing a framework for OLS responses to the humanitarian needs of these populations, which involved a convergence with, and accommodation of, government policy. For the Review Team, this has a number of critical implications for the definition of OLS Northern Sector.

4.2.2 Implications of the Framework

First, the framework set out by the GOS in 1988, and endorsed by the UN in 1988 and 1989, does not include an analysis of the origins of displacement, or of the risks faced by people moving into the Transitional Zone, or to government-controlled towns. The omission of such crucial considerations is especially noteworthy given the widespread public knowledge of, for example, the massacre of Dinka in Ed Da'ein and Wau in 1987 and 1988, respectively, which left several hundred people dead. The failure to situate the humanitarian response

to war-displaced populations within the broader context of internal conflict has meant that human rights concerns for these populations is effectively absent from the definitional framework of OLS. This, in turn, has left the UN without a clear mandate to address the issue of protection. In the case of Greater Khartoum, this has meant a de facto accommodation with the forced resettlement of war-displaced populations.

Second, the framework reflects a convergence of thinking between the UN and the GOS regarding the need for a transition from relief to development. Thus, the UN noted in 1990 that:

The status of many of the displaced in the transitional zone has moved from an emergency phase into one of maintenance and thus a priority for 1990 is to encourage as many of the displaced as possible to become productive, through, wherever possible, their return to areas either in the south or through location to other suitable sites (UN, 1990, March 26).

Indeed, emergency relief had come to be viewed as a means of achieving a developmental agenda in the previous year:

...help the Government of the Sudan to put sizeable amounts of its displaced citizens back into the mainstream development process of the country...(and) that the displaced populations will make no contribution to the development of the country unless they are i) rescued from starvation; ii) provided with the means of ensuring their own subsistence (UNDP, 1989, August 9).

The idea promoted by the UN that developmental strategies can be used to overcome the dependence on relief of people made destitute by the war fits well with those of the GOS. The National Development Foundation, for example, stated that:

For food security we as a Foundation and the states can do a lot together. As far as agriculture goes we have 600,000 feddans; if we can make this productive it will provide food in those states...The aim is to bring peace to the South through development (NDF, 1996, March 28).

It should be noted that it is not clear how the land referred to above was acquired, nor the extent to which plans for agriculture on such land will displace pre-existing subsistence practices.

The convergence of thinking between the UN and the GOS with regard to the transition from relief to development is not unique to Sudan. Within the international humanitarian community, the concept of a "relief-to-development" continuum has gained popularity in recent years. Increasingly, the idea of the continuum is seen as a means to make aid expenditures in complex emergencies more efficient, and as part of wider strategies of conflict management (Boutros-Ghali, 1995; DHA, 1995). Hence, despite the effective embargo on development assistance in Sudan, a number of NGOs reported that:

We perceive that donors, particularly the European Commission and Euronaid, would prefer that we do rehabilitation rather than relief...The Euronaid funding guidelines stress rehabilitation and development, and will therefore not give relief food (Christian NGOs, 1996, April 20).

Although the concept of a "relief-to-development" continuum may have legitimacy on its own terms, its application as a policy framework in the midst of internal warfare raises critical questions. In the Northern Sector, for example, the shift in focus from relief to development at policy level has not been matched by the realities on the ground. Rather, as will be seen further in Chapter 7, the UN was promoting development programming at a time when continued displacement as a result of war was undermining the subsistence economy and trading networks in the South, and when the condition of war-displaced peoples was steadily deteriorating. Hence, the conceptual basis for much of the UN's developmental programming for the war-displaced has been deeply flawed. Further, the focus on development programming as a means of addressing the socio-economic impact of warfare contributes to the failure to define a humanitarian agenda in which an analysis of the causes of displacement, and protection for the displaced, play a central part.

4.2.3 OLS Northern Sector as a Government Programme

In general, the framework established in the late 1980's and continuing today defines OLS Northern Sector as a government programme; indeed, the GOS has systematically emphasized its ownership of OLS operations. The UN for its part has continued within this definitional framework to work with government authorities responsible for implementing GOS policy with regard to the war-displaced, initially through OLS agreements, and subsequently through the expansion of UN country programmes in OLS areas, as security has improved.

At the same time, there have been important initiatives by the UN in recent years to increase its autonomy relative to the GOS, and thereby protect the neutrality and accountability of UN operations under OLS. However, these have been only partially successful, and have been undermined by the UN's own pursuit of strategies that tend to reinforce GOS policy, but which conflict both with OLS principles and the needs of its beneficiaries.

The original definition of OLS did not address the contradiction between humanitarian goals in the context of a political emergency, and the alignment of the UN with a government which was also a party to the conflict. The paradox of portraying itself as simultaneously a government programme, and a humanitarian relief operation in the midst of internal warfare, continues to lie at the heart of OLS. Thus, in 1989 the agency coordinating OLS - UNDP - signed a project agreement (SUD/032/88) with the GOS which aims to:

...enhance the capacity of the Government of Sudan to put in place key elements of the agreed UN/GOS strategy to successfully deliver assistance to the south (UNDP, 1989, August 9).

In addition to the delivery of relief assistance to war-displaced populations in the South, this agreement provides for the relocation and resettlement of war-displaced peoples according to GOS directives.

The interpretation made in the late 1980s and early 1990s was that the problem of responding to the needs of war-affected populations in Sudan was largely one of a lack of government capacity and finances. This approach was also endorsed in OLS II, which emphasised a capacity-building element:

[OLS II] support will be given to on-going GOS efforts to find durable solutions for the displaced through the funding of pilot projects for relocation and income-generating schemes and the provision of high level consultants.... [who] will assist the GOS in its review and refinement of these and other proposals, and more substantial funding for comprehensive, large scale programmes will be sought (UN, 1990, March 26).

Thus, government ownership of OLS was not only defined early on through agreements, but sustained by a UN approach which recognized the primacy of sovereignty over the maintenance of humanitarian principles. This approach was reinforced by the organisational structure of OLS, and

in particular the choice of UNDP as the coordinating agency for the operation. UNDP's involvement was justified by the need to:

...help the government to put sizeable numbers of displaced citizens back into the mainstream development process of the country, as well as to develop perennial structures for emergency preparedness (UNDP, 1989, August 9).

UNDP continues to perceive that the lack of effective administrative capacity is a primary constraint to humanitarian programmes in North Sudan. For example, with regard to the internally displaced in Khartoum:

There is no [Government] strategy for the displaced and therefore no systematic approach...this results in things like the destruction of UNICEF's water pumps and other assets. It is not a deliberate policy of the Government; these things happen because of administrative problems...I really feel that it is an organisational problem...If we want to make changes they have to come from within the Government. [We] need to show the Government from the inside why existing systems don't work (Jaeger, 1996, April 17).

This approach has been reinforced by the fact that the UNDP Representative is also the UN Coordinator for Emergency and Relief Operations (UNCERO). Also, the Secretariat for OLS - UNHCU - continues to be funded through UNDP channelled appeals (Taha, 1995), and all UNHCU staff are employed under UNDP contracts.

4.2.4 Implications of Government Control

The Review Team noted a number of important implications of government control for the OLS Northern Sector operations.

First, the scope of coverage of OLS Northern Sector is determined not by overall needs, but by negotiated agreements with the GOS which delimit the areas OLS can formally access. More specifically, needs assessments - which define the scope of OLS in any given year - are limited to sites that have been agreed by the RRC (Painter, 1996, March 24; INGO Meeting, 1996, March 27). This has led to considerable unevenness in coverage; for example, war-displaced populations in Greater Khartoum were excluded from OLS needs assessments until 1994; at present, only those war-displaced living in GOS recognized

displaced camps are included in OLS, while displaced living in unofficial settlements continue to be excluded.

Second, agreements with the GOS for OLS access do not always correspond to the actual sites OLS is able to serve. For example:

Access to the Nuba mountains was not agreed in the OLS agreement, but this year GOS has facilitated movement into the Nuba mountains...UNICEF does things de facto not de jure (Tayarah, 1996, March 28).

In the case of the Nuba Mountains, WFP is using OLS resources to respond to needs in areas where the GOS has facilitated access, despite the fact that these areas have been systematically excluded from formal agreements, and despite on-going efforts by the UN to negotiate their inclusion (Bailey, 1996, April 1).

Hence, government control over the scope of OLS needs assessments allows for the formal exclusion of certain sites from the framework of OLS agreements. At the same time, by extending access selectively outside the OLS framework, the GOS is de facto sidestepping the application of OLS principles, while still obtaining its resources. Moreover, in the case of the Nuba Mountains, efforts by the UNHCU to promote strict adherence to OLS principles were eclipsed by WFP and UNICEF's sense of obligation to respond operationally to urgent needs in the area (Painter, 1996, March 25; Bailey, 1996, April 1).

Third, with regard to the allocation and distribution of relief assistance, the 1992 Relief Act, together with the original OLS Plan of Action, establishes a framework for government control of relief resources down to beneficiary level. The 1992 Relief Act, for example, states that once relief arrives in country, it belongs to the State. Thus, in legal terms, relief assistance cannot be considered as having been misappropriated by the GOS, since it is already GOS property once it has arrived in Sudan.

At local level, a network of Local Relief Committees has been established to manage relief resources in affected areas (described in more detail below). As the 1990 Draft Plan of Action makes clear, it is these committees which are "...responsible for the receipt and distribution of relief and rehabilitation inputs" (UN, 1990, March 26). Hence, Local Relief Committees (LRCs) and other local government institutions are of central importance in determining the quality of access enjoyed by the UN and its implementing partners. They are responsible, for example, for the registration of beneficiaries, for

determining the conditions for visiting beneficiary populations, and they are consulted on all assessments, appeals for supplies, and distributions. Information from local authorities also typically forms the basis for OLS assessments (INGO Meeting, 1996, March 27).

In a similar regard, the GOS exercises significant control over the choice of UN implementing partners, through regulatory mechanisms that restrict OLS operationality (see below).

In general, the primacy granted to sovereignty poses a myriad of structural and operational dilemmas for OLS Northern Sector, particularly with regard to principle of neutrality. Because the GOS is a party to the conflict, the principle of neutrality is frequently violated both by the government's insistence on ownership of the OLS operation, and by the fact that this ownership has not been sufficiently challenged by the UN. As noted in Chapter 2, the UN's acceptance of the primacy of sovereignty is seen by some to be a pragmatic position which ensures continued access in the south:

There is a balance to be struck. To allow the Southern Sector to carry on means that we meet their (the Government of Sudan's) needs in the North (Painter, 1996, March 24).

Hence, the Review Team felt that the UN has accepted a hierarchy of principles, whereby neutrality is subjugated to sovereignty, in order to ensure access for the Southern Sector. In this context, the scope for application of OLS principles is perceived by the UN to be limited by the contractual and regulatory framework defined by sovereignty; in other words, the UN believes that "We do not have the right to apply principles" (Lynch, 1996, March 26). For UNDP and UNICEF in particular, enhancing the government's capacity, which in effect involves a deepening of government ownership of OLS Northern Sector, is seen to be an explicit and necessary objective of UN operations - including OLS and other UN country programmes - in order to respond to the humanitarian crisis in Sudan.

4.3 Structures and Organization of OLS Northern Sector

Having outlined key issues in the definitional framework of OLS Northern Sector, this section considers in more detail the structure and organization of the operational environment. It begins with a description of government structures at national and local level that participate in the implementation of OLS programmes. Subsequently, NGO

implementing partners are discussed, followed by the structures established both between and within UN agencies.

4.3.1 Government Structures for Relief Management

4.3.1.1 Local Relief Structures

GOS structures responsible for relief policy in Sudan have undergone significant changes since OLS began in 1989. Under the Federal Constitution, individual states have been granted responsibility for relief matters within their territory. These responsibilities are discharged through committees operating at state, provincial, and local level. At federal level, the RRC in Khartoum is responsible for overall coordination of relief resources, and has also has RRC offices located in the capital of each state, and in some cases in provincial capitals.

In practice, what these changes have meant is that additional layers of authority between the beneficiaries and OLS agencies have been created, and that the particular configuration of authorities responsible for relief matters in a given area is complex.

For example, in South Darfur, state bodies responsible for the war-displaced include the Department of the Displaced, in charge of developing state-wide policies, and the Food Security Committee, in charge of monitoring food needs and the allocation of aid resources. The Department of the Displaced liaises with the state RRC office, which also participates in needs assessments (Osman Nasir, 1996, April 11). It is not clear, however, how agreements are reached between state and federal governments. The RRC office for South Darfur noted, for example, that they do not receive the results of needs assessments, nor of allocations that are likely to be received in Ed Da'ain Province (Osman Nasir, 1996, April 11).

In Ed Da'ain province, there is no RRC representative. The provincial government's High Committee for the Displaced is responsible for managing the provision of relief to displaced populations. The High Committee comprises representatives from provincial government departments, Public Security, the police, local, and international NGOs, and the Dinka Paramount Chief (Sharif, 1996, April 3). The Chair of the High Committee for the Displaced is appointed by the Provincial Commissioner, who is the executive head of provincial government. There are also a number of sub-committees chaired by representatives of relevant provincial government departments, and NGOs selected

according to their specialization. Thus, for example, SCF (UK) chairs the provincial Food Committee. Below provincial government authorities are Rural Councils. While the role of Rural Councils in relief operations has not been formally enhanced through federalisation, they are nevertheless increasingly important in determining the availability of basic services, including those that serve the war-displaced.

In Wau, the Local Relief Committee has, since 1992, controlled the allocation and distribution of relief aid. The Local Relief Committee is a state authority that includes representatives from relevant government departments, Provincial Commissioners, Public Security, the RRC, UN agencies, and national and international NGOs. The Local Relief Committee is chaired by the state Commissioner for Relief.

In Khartoum, there are currently several GOS authorities responsible for squatters and war-displaced in Khartoum, including:

COVA: The GOS focal point for international and national NGOs. Since 1996, COVA has become part of the Humanitarian Aid Commission.

DOD: Responsible for the organisation, services, and coordination of NGOs working in the four official displaced camps, and issuing travel permits for INGOs staff and visitors.

KSRC: Responsible for the control and coordination of all food and non-food relief within Khartoum. All NGOs are required to have a technical agreement with KSRC. They also assign national NGOs to work with INGOs.

MOH: Monitors health and nutrition. NGOs working in health require technical agreements with the MOH.

NPC: Data collection and analysis.

RRC: Responsible for the coordination of all relief and rehabilitation activities throughout Sudan, and for the counterpart of OLS. Its original responsibilities for displaced throughout Sudan have been passed to the COD.

MOHPU: Responsible for urban planning. Controls allocation of land.

4.3.1.2 Implications of GOS Structures

What is apparent from this overview is both the complexity of government structures, and the large number of government authorities and committees involved in relief assistance. Several points are worth noting in this regard.

First, the number government authorities with responsibility for managing OLS resources has increased. This means additional administrative layers have been created between UN agencies and OLS beneficiaries. Further, despite the number of authorities that exist, very few government services are actually provided in Ed Da'ain, Wau, and Khartoum. Instead, the provision of basic services has largely been delegated to NGOs.

Second, in some locations local committees are obtaining material benefit through the management of relief operations, which can also be seen as a factor contributing to the increase in their number. In Wau for example, the committee which oversees the distribution of WFP food in the displaced camps is composed of five Local Relief Committee members (representing four organisations), three people from Public Security, eight porters, drivers, and support staff, four members of the National Youth, and one WFP monitor. In exchange for facilitating distributions, this committee receives 40 sacks (two metric tons) of sorghum, ten sacks of pulses, and 16 gallons of oil per distribution (Gichigi, 1996, January 22/February 17).

The review Team was consequently not surprised to find a feeling among the displaced in various locations that their entitlements to relief were being compromised:

Quantities are determined in Wau. Large numbers of people will oversee the distribution, including youth and security people, and NGOs...They have their own cards and will take their own share. An educated person knows how to get food (Interview, Wau).

There is a man in the middle here. As soon as the facts are known, the man in the middle stops any action being taken. Somebody who is hungry can't give to the hungry. If there is no man in the middle, we can seek food ourselves. There is someone taking care of the man in the middle here (Interview, Ed Da'ain).

The fact that such committees are regularly obtaining OLS aid resources raises important questions about the extent to which local GOS administration and related institutions have become economically dependent on OLS. Indeed, the Review Team felt the question of aid

dependency merited more scrutiny in this regard, than in terms of the extent to which it may be discouraging self-sufficiency among the war-displaced.

Third, there is a notable absence of representation from war-displaced communities in formal relief structures that determine both needs and recipients. The Review Team was told by one displaced person that:

We have not been given the opportunity to solve our problems. We have no power to think and talk alone and have a definite person who is responsible for us...members of the [High] Committee do not call on us except when there is some food for them (Interview, Ed Da'ain).

Where formal representation does exist, it is largely in the form of Popular Committees, appointed and supported by the government. In Ed Da'ain, even this form of representation is absent; the Dinka Paramount Chief who sits on the High Committee is rather considered to be a token representative only.

Given the complexity of the administrative structures mediating the relationship between the UN and OLS beneficiaries, and given that under present arrangements OLS is constrained to work within GOS policy in the Northern Sector, the Review Team felt that the UN should be more assertive with the GOS regarding OLS principles, if these principles are to be fully implemented down to beneficiary level. The Review Team also noted that the development of an effective UN capacity at field level is crucial to achieving this, however.

4.3.1.3 UN Response to GOS Structures

In general, the UN has tried to address the issue of the complexity and number of government structures dealing with relief, by proposing alternative structures. In 1996, for example, WFP terminated an arrangement in Wau whereby all food aid was distributed through the Local Relief Committee. This was done on the grounds that:

We observed that the LRC is using large numbers of people in the distribution and that they are paid in food. There is also a big problem in holding the LRC responsible for food distribution because they feel it is theirs to distribute how they wish. There is a national relief policy which says that food is the responsibility of the LRC, we have this problem all over the South, and we have overcome it through enforcing conditions...

Wau has the highest food prices in the country. We don't know whether this is linked to the reluctance of the LRC to distribute relief aid or they are "rigging" the system. (Adly & Bailey, 1996, April 20).

It is important to note, however, that while fewer WFP food resources for direct distribution may be channelled through the Local Relief Committee, the LRC retains the management authority for the displaced camps, and it is LRC figures which are likely to determine future needs assessments.

Also in Wau, the UNDP Wau Agricultural Rehabilitation Project (WARP) has established Village Development Committees (VDCs) to enhance community participation in decision-making and the management of project activities. Emergency supplies of seeds and tools provided by UNICEF are distributed through these committees. Within the first year of the project, however, an Advisory Committee was established the state government to oversee the project. Of the 23 members of the Advisory Committee, only seven are from the VDCs; the remainder are comprised of representatives from state ministries, the Agricultural Bank, and Public Security (UNDP, 1995, December). The UN-supported creation of VDC's has thus done little to alter the structures that ultimately control access to OLS resources.

In Khartoum, the UN and INGOs have frequently cited the lack of a single focal point of responsibility within the GOS for the war-displaced, and have noted that this has been a constraint on their operations (INGOs, 1995, July). As noted above, there are many government authorities from whom approval must be obtained for programmes for the war-displaced. The position of the UN, INGOs, and some donors has been that the lack of a single agency with sole responsibility for the war-displaced is an indication of an absence of clear policy on the part of the GOS toward this population (Esmieu, 1996, March 30; Jaeger, 1996, April 17).

The history of the RRC, however, suggests that there is not so much a failure of government policy, as an attempt by the GOS to implement a policy that is at odds with the UN's. During the 1984/85 famine, the RRC was the national body responsible for the coordination of famine relief, and substantial funds were invested in the RRC to develop a competent Sudanese relief agency. The RRC was the main government partner during the first year of OLS, and continues in this role today. However, in 1989 the new GOS promoted the Department of the Displaced as an alternative government partner for war-displaced populations. In the view of some observers, the GOS's aim in so doing was to reduce

the role and influence of international humanitarian agencies (Burr, 1990, August). This is illustrated in the following observation:

Bureaucracy, personal, and institutional rivalries are utilised to the maximum to thinly disguise what in fact is a systematic and homogeneous policy of exclusion of international NGOs and other expatriates from efforts to assist the displaced in Khartoum (Akram, 1992, March 23).

4.3.2 OLS Implementing Partners - NGOs

This section considers the operational environment of OLS Northern Sector with regard to the non-governmental implementing partners of OLS.

4.3.2.1 Changes in the NGO Community in Sudan

With important exceptions, such as the barge operation, the UN does not directly deliver services to beneficiary populations in the Northern Sector. Rather, it works through partner agencies, including national and international NGOs, and national/local authorities and ministries of the GOS.

Since the famine relief operations of the mid-1980's, there has been a marked change in the composition of the NGO community in Sudan. The number of international NGOs (INGOs) operating in the North has declined, while the number of Sudanese and regional NGOs has increased. In Figure 4.1 below, a rough indicator of size of operations of various NGOs presently working in the Northern Sector is provided (excluding some INGOs such as ADRA and MSF).

(Insert "Figure 4.1" here. Filename = figure-4.1).

As the Figure suggests, the work of Sudanese and regional NGOs (such as IARA -Islamic African Relief Association) is significant. This shift in NGO composition has been underpinned by GOS policies explicitly aimed at encouraging the expansion of Sudanese NGOs, while simultaneously reducing the operational scope of INGOs (Janvid, 1993, June 1).

4.3.2.2 Differential Access

The range of NGOs that the UN can select as operational partners is determined by the different degrees of access that various types of agencies are able to obtain. This access has fluctuated over time, and different agencies have benefited to different degrees.

Prior to 1989, for example, several INGOs, the ICRC, and a number of Sudanese Christian NGOs were supporting relief operations in Wau. In 1996, only one INGO - SCF (UK) - is operational in Wau, and the activities of the Sudanese Christian NGOs have been curtailed. In Ed Da'ain a consortium of INGOs were operational in late 1988 and again in 1992. Today, however, only SCF (UK) is operational in Ed Da'ain. In Greater Khartoum, a 1983 report notes only three Sudanese NGOs working with displaced and squatter communities (Burr, 1993, May). In 1995, it has been suggested that there were some 50 Sudanese NGOs working in these same communities (Meadows, 1996), while the access of INGOs to the displaced camps in particular is heavily restricted. One of the advantages for Sudanese NGOs working with displaced populations in Greater Khartoum is the close proximity of their beneficiaries to their headquarter offices. These examples indicate the extent to which INGO operations have been reduced, and the extent to which Sudanese NGO operations have grown.

Recently, the fact that SCF (UK) was able to obtain permission from the GOS to work in Wau in late 1995, and that MSF France has received permission to begin work in Meriam and Dill in South Kordofan, has been interpreted as a sign of general improvement in physical access for INGOs (Jaeger, 1996, January 30). However, the kind of operational access granted to INGOs by the GOS is limited. In Ed Da'ain, for example, although SCF (UK) is allowed to visit displaced camps unaccompanied by Sudanese security, it is not allowed to establish services such as health facilities there, nor is it able to conduct itself the physical distribution of food aid; food distributions have instead been allocated to the Sudanese Red Crescent by the Provincial High Committee for the Displaced. Similarly in Wau, SCF (UK) activities are restricted to the town itself, and staff are unable to visit or provide services to displaced peoples in the displaced camps villages.

In Khartoum, although INGOs report that the problem of obtaining travel permits for their personnel to visit displaced camps appears to have been resolved, they continue to be issued on a case by case basis (UNEU, 1996, March 20). Further, although State authorities have expressed a willingness for more INGOs to become operational, travel permits and project agreements are signed in Khartoum and hence control over INGO activities is still vested in the national government. Improved access

to the Transition Zone also needs to be placed within the wider context of the war; the easing of access in the North has coincided with greater restrictions in the South.

4.3.2.3 The UN Response to Differential Access

During the course of successive OLS negotiations with the GOS, the UN has tried to increase access for INGOs. This has been justified by concern that Sudanese NGOs (SINGOs) lack the capacity to respond fully to the large-scale emergency. Given this, one of the central dilemmas confronting the UN has been whether or not the capacity of SINGOs should be increased - and if so, how this can be done in an even-handed way - as well as how to ensure that, in the interim, populations in need receive adequate assistance.

One strategy, first advocated in 1988 and formalised in 1993, is that of "twinning" INGOs and SINGOs (UN, 1988, November 10; GOS/INGOs/UN, 1993, January). The framework for twinning arrangements was "...a formalised relationship between an international and a national NGO. The selection of partners is voluntary, but should be guided by: geographical presence; consideration of sector expertise; organisational capacity, and the offering of the widest distribution of capacity-building among national NGOs" (GOS/INGOs/UN, 1993, January). In addition to capacity-building, twinning could provide UN and international NGOs a means to increase the coverage of their activities, and a framework for monitoring and needs assessments.

However, the four formal twinning arrangements established in the wake of the 1993 agreement was largely unsuccessful. Access for INGO monitoring did not materialise, and in some cases there were allegations of misappropriation of funds (Painter, 1996, March 24). While the twinning policy appears to have quietly disappeared at the formal level within OLS, it continues informally by a number of INGOs, particularly in Khartoum, in order to enhance access to displaced populations (Higgins, 1996, March 27). The quality of these partnerships appears to be variable; in some cases, they appear to be only arrangements of administrative convenience, with few resources actually channelled through the SINGO partner. At the same time, project agreements specify that on termination, project assets including vehicles and equipment will be handed over to the SINGO partner. This contractual condition is likely, however, to conflict with INGO agreements with donors, which specify that the international NGO is responsible for determining how assets are disposed of.

Some regional NGOs in particular are also facing a crisis in funding for their development programmes. This reflects changes in external relations between Sudan and its regional neighbours following the Gulf War, and the fact that these agencies relied heavily on investments within Sudan which have been affected by the deteriorating environment for business and trade. For example, as a result of funding problems, Muwafaq is the process of closing down its Sudan office (El Din A. Bary, 1996, April 16); the Islamic African Relief Association (IARA) - the second largest regional NGO operating in Sudan - is also reported to be facing financial difficulties. Funding problems have also emerged as a result of problems in accountability and monitoring; UNICEF, for example, has reduced its cash assistance to national NGOs for this reason (MacCarthy, 1996, April 1).

In a context of declining sources of funding for development programmes, there is a perception that Sudanese NGOs are becoming more reliant on emergency aid programmes (Christian Agencies, 1996, April 20). This means, however, that Sudanese NGOs receive only material supplies and compensation for the cost of internal transport and handling. No support, however, is forthcoming to cover the costs of salaries and office expenses from the UN, leaving many Sudanese NGOs in a weak position to fulfil their contractual obligations. The Sudanese Red Crescent (SRC) receives additional support from the Red Cross movement, which meets many of their overhead costs; it also undertakes local fundraising initiatives. The SRC volunteer network also provides resources for relief operations in Sudan, including those receiving material support through OLS. However, the scope for volunteers to occupy fulltime posts is limited, and the need to recompense staff is clear.

The issue of UN-supported capacity-building of Sudanese and regional NGOs in the Northern Sector is complicated by concerns regarding neutrality. This arises as a consequence of the fact that an "even distribution of capacity-building" (GOS/INGOs/UN, 1993, January) is limited by the differential access granted to some Sudanese/regional NGOs over others. Further, some Sudanese/regional NGOs have not sufficiently established their neutrality and autonomy from the GOS. For example, the NGO Da'wa states that its objective is to support the GOS's policies, and to build the GOS's capacity, while the former Director of Da'wa was later appointed as the Secretary General of the GOS National Development Foundation; during 1994, official government meetings were held in the Muwafaq offices in Wau. In a context where the GOS is a party to the on-going war, this kind of blurring of the boundaries between government and NGOs is highly problematic for OLS principles of neutrality. In many cases, it is these same NGOs who have

exclusive operational access to heavily militarized and restricted areas that are otherwise inaccessible to the UN, such as displaced camps in Wau, Ed Da'ain, Attido, and Getti.

The dilemma for the UN is thus whether or not to work within a policy that excludes some NGOs from operating in favour of others, thereby providing a legitimacy to the policy, as well as how to ensure that evenness in support for capacity-building can be maintained in a context where some NGOs have greater access than others. In terms of capacity-building, a key factor for the UN will in future be the establishment of a formal and enforceable system of contracts and cooperation between itself and all its implementing partners, which clearly outline their respective roles and responsibilities, particularly with regard to the principles of OLS. Historically, and despite on-going negotiations to increase INGO access, the Review Team found that for the UN it has largely been a case of working with what is there. In other words, maintaining operationality has in some cases taken priority for the UN over ensuring the effectiveness and humanitarian principles of the implementing partner.

4.3.2.4 Contractual Relations with Implementing Partners

At present, the contractual environment in the Northern Sector does not reflect the mandate and principles of OLS. Contracts signed between UNICEF/WFP and their partners agencies are standard country-wide contracts, and make no reference to OLS principles, nor how these will be monitored. Not only does this vague contractual environment contribute to the lack of distinction for, and knowledge of, OLS generally, it also means that implementing partners are not fully aware of the principles to which they must adhere.

At present, contracts between UNICEF and implementing partners involve signing both a standard UNICEF country agreement, and a project specific agreement. For various reasons, however, including the uncertain division of labour between the Emergency Unit and the decentralized offices, this practice is not consistently enforced. As a result, NGOs and other implementing authorities have received OLS resources without having signed a contract. After questioning this, the Review Team was assured that measures were in place to address the situation (MacCarthy, 1996, April 19).

Throughout, the Review Team was struck by the assertion of different "rules" that applied to the Northern Sector as distinct from the Southern Sector. In particular, it was stated that in the North it was

impossible to apply OLS principles through contractual arrangements (Lynch, 1996, March 26; Jaeger, 1996, March 25; Painter, 1996, March 25; MacCarthy, 1996, April 19). In addition to the basic constraint of sovereignty, the perception of UN personnel was that, since they had little leverage in relation to NGOs - for example, control of logistics - NGOs would be unwilling to accept a more rigorous regulatory framework for their operations established by the UN.

In fact, in discussions with national and international NGO personnel, considerable interest was expressed in an overall framework of humanitarian principles, but it was also noted that there is a lack of awareness that such principles might exist, as well as a lack of information about how they could be implemented. A sample of comments made to the Review Team are provided here:

There is no attempt by the UN to explain the principles of OLS to national NGOs (El Amin Osman, 1996, April 15).

This is the first time we have heard of OLS principles (Abelzahir Ajaj, 1996, April 16).

NGOs' desire for independence should not preclude them from working with the UN. There have to be certain mutually accepted values and standards. Freedom is not about no rules; it is about knowing what the rules are (Kumar, 1996, April 17).

While OLS principles remain opaque to implementing partners, so the standards according to which UN materials must be delivered remain unevenly monitored, and apparently rarely enforced. Although there have been workshops for partner NGOs, for example, on using essential drugs, the capacity of the UN to monitor the performance of NGOs and government authorities in this area is limited, as is the UN's advocacy of good practice. As far as the Review Team is aware, guidelines for utilization of UN supplies are not appended to contracts, although doing so would provide an important baseline against which NGO partner operations could be monitored and evaluated.

4.3.3 Organization and Structure of UN OLS Agencies

4.3.3.1 Humanitarian Relief Versus Development Agendas

Within the UN OLS agencies themselves, the Review Team found a considerable blurring of humanitarian relief and development

programme agendas among UN agencies in the Northern Sector. The implications of this are considered below.

The role of UN Coordinator for Emergency and Relief Operations (UNCERO) is vested in the UNDP Representative. In addition to his responsibilities for the humanitarian relief operation, he is also in charge of UNDP's development programming. With improvements in security and access in and around some government-held towns, UNDP has been expanding its operations in the South.

The way in which humanitarian relief and development agendas are reconciled is illustrated by the following comment from UNCERO:

We often define humanitarianism as putting bread in the mouth of a starving person, but it is not humanitarian to let him get into that situation. We should replace free food deliveries and make people repay what they have received, this is what we are doing in Wau...People should repay this humanitarian loan not to us but to their community. We are taking them out of the beggar mentality. People are proud to pay for themselves...this is part of society building, enabling people to feel more consciously self-reliant. It is linked to democracy building because people have to elect a management committee (Jaeger, 1996, April 17).

In addition to influencing the overall policy of OLS as a result of its leadership of UNCERO, UNDP is also linked to OLS in several other ways. The UNDP Field Adviser for Wau, Kadugli, and Juba, for example, is also a field monitor for OLS, under UNHCU. Also, OLS resources, notably UNICEF seeds and tools, are allocated to the UNDP programme.

The blurring of boundaries between development and humanitarian relief operations also characterises UNICEF's operations. The UNICEF Country Representative, for example, described OLS as "...an outreach programme of UNICEF" (Farooqui, 1996, April 17), in effect perceiving OLS as a mechanism through which wider developmental goals can be achieved. This view is reinforced by the pattern of UNICEF country programming, which is extending increasingly into OLS areas:

Priority states for the country programme are the three southern states, Darfur and Kordofan and one in the northern area. There are links between the emergency and country programme: UNICEF aims to reach global goals which are set in Sudan by GOS...The emergency programme is supported by the development budget of the country programme and vice versa. The linkages between the

Country Programme and OLS are determined by funding, security and priorities (Tayarah, 1996, April 16).

Indeed, UNICEF has a clear policy of using increased access for relief operations as a means of expanding country programming. Thus:

As access widens and local security improves so opportunities for rehabilitation are increasing. Analysis of non-food services under OLS indicates that 75% of the assistance was related to mid-decade and decade goals...Rehabilitation is the entry point for these goals (Farooqui, 1994, October 29).

Statements such as these, which exude a certain amount of optimism for the scope of expanding developmental programming, stand in sharp contrast to a statement by the UN Secretary-General made within the same time period in 1994:

Since September 1993 government military activity has intensified... causing massive displacement of people...government planes have carried out aerial bombardments with many bombs falling in and around civilian areas including displaced persons' camps. Conflict has disrupted relief programmes...and prevented people from planting, despite the delivery of seeds, in time for the rainy season. In some cases, populated civilian areas that had been relatively stable have been left deserted as a result of these military activities [by both sides], completely destroying the achievements of previous rehabilitation activities (UN, 1994, September 12: 2-3).

The lack of clear, strategic distinction between objectives and principles of OLS and the UNICEF Country Programme is reflected in organizational structures. For example, with the exception of the Household Food Security Unit, the UNICEF Emergency Unit is dependent for technical advice from specialists working under the Country Programme.

This lack of distinction has important implications in terms of conflicts of interest that may arise. The government counterpart for UNICEF's Country Programme is the Ministry of Health, whereas for OLS it is the RRC. A priority for the Country Programme is to maintain good working relations with the Ministry of Health in order to facilitate implementation of UNICEF programmes. This has the potential to conflict, however, with UNICEF's emergency mandate.

For example, in 1995 there was a serious cholera outbreak in one of the displaced camps in Khartoum, where UNICEF provides essential drugs. The UNICEF Health Unit was reportedly unwilling to challenge the government on its failure to declare the outbreak, however, arguing that this would undermine its relationship with the Ministry of Health, and was in any case the responsibility of WHO. On the other hand, failure to acknowledge the outbreak had implications for UNICEF's own response, since only when a cholera epidemic is formally declared can UNICEF place special orders for the necessary IV fluids. An estimated 57 people died in the outbreak. Such examples illustrate the trade-offs which are regularly made between reaching developmental goals, and the mandate of UNICEF to protect the health of women and children in the context of its humanitarian work.

In addition, the lack of dedicated technical support for OLS has raised problems of accountability. Heads of technical departments of UNICEF country programmes, for example, have signed agreements with NGOs to receive OLS resources without the knowledge of either the Emergency Unit or the relevant sub-offices. The Review Team was assured, however, that measures have been put in place to formalise arrangements, so as to prevent this situation arising in future (MacCarthy, 1996, April 19).

In general, although there is overlap in the content of some humanitarian relief and development programming - for example, EPI - the aim of expanding country programmes is often in structural conflict with the aim of pursuing a rigorous humanitarian agenda. This is especially true with regard to the issue of neutrality. The working relationships with the GOS that are required for the implementation (and expansion) of UNICEF's country programmes are not conducive to simultaneously dealing with the GOS as one party to a conflict which underpins the chronic emergency UNICEF is trying to address. Further, as will be seen in Chapter 7, the conceptual framework driving UNICEF's approach to developmental programmes is itself deeply flawed, and based on the assumption that the emergency is now largely over.

4.3.3.2UN OLS Coordination: UNHCU

The Review Team found significant problems with regard to UN coordination in the Northern Sector, which has resulted in a lack of coherence in significant areas. Coordination problems are, in part, a function of the unwieldy nature of the structural relationships between various UN functions, positions, and agencies pertaining to OLS.

At present, UNHCU acts as the Secretariat to the UNCERO. This office combines a mandate for liaison with the GOS with respect to the Southern Sector, and a mandate to facilitate UN agency, NGO, and GOS coordination in the Northern Sector. As such, while UNHCU staff are employed through UNDP, they act as interlocutors - together with UNCERO - for DHA in the field (Painter, 1996, March 24). UNHCU staff report to DHA New York solely through UNCERO; no other formal channel for direct communications exists (Painter, 1996, April 16).

Until June 1995, there were 25 staff at UNHCU. Presently, there are six international and two national support staff, excluding drivers (Painter, 1996 March 24). Of the six international staff, one acts as the Unit Administrator, while three pursue Northern Sector-specific issues, including: internally displaced in Khartoum, liaison with NGOs, and field support in Wau, Kadugli, and Juba. The Chief of the Unit and the Information Officer are responsible for monitoring and support to both Northern and Southern Sectors.

The majority of senior UNHCU management time appears dedicated to trouble-shooting, particularly on problems arising in the Southern Sector, and on activities related to North-South liaison and negotiation. The Review Team noted that this tends to create a lack of coherence with regard to monitoring, assessment, and evaluation in the Northern Sector. For example, although the number of sites accessible from Khartoum has risen, the UN has not been able to produce a unified strategy on how to use this access to increase the quality of programmes. As the Chief of the Unit noted:

Political matters take precedence over everything else and this has a negative impact on longer-range programmes. For example the flight ban had a negative impact on putting together the northern assessments in November 1995. Our main task in this office is monitoring negotiated access in the south. In the north access is less controversial (Painter, 1996, March 25).

Further, the Review Team believes that the absence of a coordinator within UNHCU dedicated to monitoring developments in the North means that staff working exclusively on Northern Sector issues do not receive sufficient management support.

For example, a United Nations Volunteer is presently responsible for monitoring the status of the estimated 800,000 war-displaced people living in Greater Khartoum, and the relief response provided by the UN and NGOs. The Review Team felt that the junior status of this

position does not provide the necessary scope for UNHCU to advise and coordinate UN agency responses to war-displaced in Khartoum, or elsewhere. Further, while a number of UN studies have been commissioned, particularly with regard to war-displaced population in Khartoum, the Khartoum Displaced Officer in UNHCU reported that she had not received copies of some of these, especially Project Amal documents. Similarly, the UNHCU Field Adviser for Wau and Kadugli does not appear to have received adequate support in securing travel permits for his visits to these areas, nor has he received briefings either before or after field visits. Finally, it was reported that regular staff meetings of the UNHCU team were introduced only during the visit of the Review Team; prior to this, staff relied on ad hoc bilateral meetings with the Unit Chief.

Field Advisers are of particular importance in communicating the principles of OLS, and facilitating inter-agency coordination at state and provincial levels. In the early years of OLS, there were five international Field Advisers based in Juba, Wau, Aweil, Kapoeta, and Malakal. These advisers were seen by a senior UN official as providing:

...an objective adjunct and backup function to the operational monitors from UNICEF and WFP and the NGOs. They are non-interested parties, particularly in areas where there is not a full UN presence.

In addition to five international Advisers, there were also senior national staff acting as Field Advisers for East/Central Darfur, Kordofan, Juba, Wau, and Malakal (Taha, 1995). The system of UNHCU Field Advisers virtually disappeared in 1993, however, due to lack of resources. In 1994, funding was secured from the Dutch government for the single UNHCU Field Adviser for Wau and Kadugli. Despite appeals, however, no funding has been forthcoming to finance senior national staff as Field Advisers.

The value of Field Advisers lies not only in providing support to UN agency and NGO staff working in difficult conditions, but also in providing first-hand accounts that can feed into assessment processes, inform strategic planning, and improve institutional memory with regard to changing conditions in specific locations. At present, however, the Field Adviser appears confined to the first role only, and few mechanisms exist to expand this. Moreover, in the absence of a clear strategy for advocating the principles of UN engagement, and the absence of dedicated management support, much of the potential value of a Field Adviser's role cannot be realised. This situation is also exacerbated by limitations of access, and by the fact that the

single Field Adviser also carries out work for UNDP during field visits.

The capacity of UNHCU was also reported to have been undermined by the lack of funding to maintain its own plane. It was not possible for the Review Team to examine this issue in detail. However, the UNHCU chief noted that the plane

...enhanced our capacity to assist in humanitarian operations and to back up what we said with some action. For example, if we wanted to access a particular area we could take a couple of NGOs with us to get in and facilitate an assessment. We have lost our flexibility and become more dependent on others (Painter, 1996, April 16).

The lack of recognition of OLS in the Northern Sector is also reinforced by the absence of a dedicated OLS forum - monthly Inter-agency meetings, for example, are not referred to as OLS Inter-Agency meetings - or a monthly newsletter or information sheet reporting on different OLS agencies' activities and policies. The poor public understanding of OLS has also been compromised in this regard by the lack of continuity in the post of Information Officer in UNHCU.

In general, the Review Team felt that the lack of coherence in the UNCERO/UNHCU can be attributed to: a lack of management capacity, which is itself a product of an erratic and declining funding base for UNHCU; the imperatives of negotiating access in the South, which occupy a significant portion of the unit's time and energy, and generally poor management practices. This lack of coherence, in turn, contributes to the perception among many NGOs and some governmental bodies - particularly at regional and provincial levels - that OLS lacks a clear strategy for managing the chronic political emergency in the Northern Sector.

4.3.3.3 Sector-Specific Coordination

The coherence of various UN agency mandates is of particular concern with regard to food security interventions. At present, UN agencies involved in food-related interventions include WFP, FAO, UNDP and UNICEF. However, the Review Team noted a poor coordination between these agencies at both strategic and operational levels, and especially between food security-oriented programmes and the provision of food aid.

For example, the majority of UNICEF's household food security programmes involve the delivery of seeds and tools, an activity which also lies within the scope of FAO and UNDP's Agricultural Development Schemes programme; WFP is responsible for the provision of food aid. However, WFP and UN programmes aimed at food security are not sufficiently coordinated. Consequently, a situation arises in which WFP justifies a reduction in rations on the assumption that seeds and tools will be delivered by other agencies, while seeds and tools are allocated on the assumption that sufficient food aid will be available to support people during the growing season. The lack of coordination between these two spheres was illustrated for the Review Team when it asked WFP in Ed Da'ein whether or not FAO was delivering seeds and tools to this location, and was told that WFP does not monitor the outcome of FAO appeals.

With regard to supplementary feeding, UNICEF distributes Unimix for wet feeding, and WFP provides dry rations. In order for NGOs to undertake supplementary feeding programmes, therefore, two contracts are required with each agency, respectively. Further, although WFP provides materials to UNICEF to produce Unimix, it has no information or control over where these materials are allocated, nor does it have a mechanism to ensure that wet feeding is accompanied by appropriate dry rations (Fadl, 1996, April 16). This kind of practice contributes, in turn, to poor NGO practice with regard to supplementary feeding programmes more generally (Mohamed El Badawi, 1996, April 18).

The lack of coherence with regard to food security interventions also contributes to a negative perception on the part of NGOs; as one NGO staff noted:

...Joint appeals are not based on a coherent programme. When WFP and UNICEF sit together in a household food security meeting it is clear that they have not sat together to form a joint plan, but are running separate operations. It is not just an issue of cooperation, but of coherence. UN agencies should not be [just] exchanging information at coordination meetings but working to a comprehensive plan (Kumar, 1996, April 17).

In the health sector, NGOs appear to have taken the lead in creating a forum for coordination. Lead by MSF Holland, and with support of a temporary member of UNICEF staff, this forum includes a number of sub-groups working on issues such as revolving drug funds, nutrition, and primary health care for internally displaced persons. Both UNICEF and WHO attend these meetings, and the GOS Ministry of Health attends irregularly (Bos, 1996, March 27). However, the Review Team found it

surprising that this initiative has come only recently, and that the UN - a major supplier of essential drugs and other health and nutrition support - has not been more proactive in establishing such a coordinating forum. Not only do such coordinating forums improve the standard and effectiveness of health coverage, they can also be used to collate available mortality and morbidity data in key OLS areas, a move that would greatly enhance monitoring of the impact of UN-supported health programmes.

4.3.3.4 Decentralization

With consolidation of GOS control in the North, and increased access obtained through the December 1992 and August 1993 agreements, decentralization of OLS monitoring and programme activities has increased (UN, 1994, September 12).

In the case of UNICEF, this has involved (re)opening sub-offices in key locations. Whereas in 1991 there was only one UNICEF field office, at present there are regional offices in Juba, Wau, and Malakal, and sub-offices in Kadugli, Ed Da'ain, Abyei, and Nasir (MacCarthy, 1996, April 19; UNICEF, 1996, March 28).

The Wau sub-office was reopened in May 1993, following the withdrawal of UNICEF staff in 1990. The office has a technical staff of seven people, and covers four states, including North and West Bahr el-Ghazal, Warap, and Lakes. It supports some 204 different activities in 50 different locations. Materials are delivered by truck to Abeyi, which has become the logistics base for the region, and from there supplies are flown into Wau and other areas. Since late 1993, planes have been able to stay longer in the different sites covered by the regional office, enabling staff to spend more time in the field monitoring distributions and assessing needs (Paulino, 1996, April 9). The UNICEF office also has a store, which includes relief materials such as shelters, utensils, and Unimix, thus enabling it to respond to new population influxes. The Review Team felt that the UNICEF officer and staff in Wau deserve credit for the expansion of the UNICEF programme in the region; UNICEF was clearly respected within Wau town for its work, and most importantly by beneficiaries in the camps. UNICEF's Ed Da'ain office is much smaller, and is managed under the UNICEF regional office in El Fasher. As such, it lacks the level of technical, logistical, and communications support present in Wau, and is not engaged in the same range of activities. For example, there is no household food security component or emergency relief provision in Ed Da'ain. Instead, the primary focus is on the provision of educational materials, essential drugs, and EPI programmes.

The establishment of sub-offices is seen by UNICEF as an opportunity to strengthen UN working relations with beneficiary populations, local authorities, and partner NGOs. Building on improved access, UNICEF reports that:

Over the last 18 months there has been a more deliberate attempt to ensure that basic principles are adhered to. We have put more monitors in the field and conducted workshops on drug use and management. If then find that drugs have been misused there is something to refer to (MacCarthy, 1996, April 19).

However, although decentralization has increased the visibility of UNICEF, it has not increased the visibility of OLS. Senior members of state and provincial government where UNICEF has field offices were either unaware of OLS, or believed it to have ceased in 1991/2 (Bal, 1996, April 10; Sharif, 1996, April 2). Indeed, one UNICEF staff in charge of a sub-office was unaware that his office actually came under OLS, until the time when the Review was being planned. The need to induct staff on the mandate and principles of OLS is clearly central, if these are to be effectively coordinated to UNICEF's partners in the field, and used to serve the interests of beneficiaries.

In general, the Review Team felt that UNICEF's decentralization has further blurred the distinction between its country programme and its humanitarian role within OLS. While UNICEF staff, particularly in Wau, have managed to protect the integrity of UNICEF programming in general from political interference, the Review Team had deep concerns regarding the potential conflict of interest between humanitarian and developmental programming.

For example, the Review Team was also surprised to note that there is no dedicated UNICEF officer currently responsible for the Khartoum displaced. For several years, an Assistant Project Officer was the only person in UNICEF responsible for covering the displaced camps. As the number of NGO health clinics in the displaced camps increased, and particularly as SINGOs expanded their work, UNICEF sought to expand its own capacity in this sector. It was not until 1995, however, that UNICEF had a medically qualified member of staff in place, responsible for supervising its health work in the displaced camps. At the same time it should be noted that UNICEF has made efforts to improve its impact monitoring capacity, through improving information collection and the reporting capacity of NGOs (MacCarthy, 1996, April 1).

Nevertheless, the Review Team considers the lack of a dedicated officer for monitoring the needs of the war-displaced in Khartoum to be a major gap in UNICEF's programming, especially in light of the size and vulnerability of this population. This situation appears to result from a lack of distinction between UNICEF's country programme and its humanitarian role within OLS, as reflected in the following statement:

In Khartoum, I don't think there is any official recognition that the internally displaced are under OLS; our response there is not very different from the normal country programme (MacCarthy, 1996, April 1).

Further, accounting and management systems have not kept pace with the trend towards decentralization of programming:

Decentralized systems mean that regional offices in Juba, Wau and Malakal don't report on what quantity of supplies are provided to different NGOs...We don't have an established reporting system in terms of which NGOs are receiving what; we count on our regional offices to do that, and to report to us if there are problems (MacCarthy, 1996, April 19).

In the absence of clear reporting guidelines, UNICEF Khartoum is unable to adequately monitor the terms of OLS contracts, or trends in the kinds of institutional partners the agency works with. Moreover, given the general level of insecurity, the wide geographical areas served by regional offices, fluctuating access, and limited transport, the capacity of the regional offices to monitor implementation of the projects it supports is also constrained. As described further below, there are important reasons why this information should be available to the UN.

4.3.3.5 Human Resource Management

The quality of any programme is determined in large part by the quality of staff employed, and by the quality of management they enjoy. This is particularly the case in the difficult working conditions associated with highly politicised and insecure environments such as pertain in OLS.

A significant proportion of OLS staff are employed through Special Service Agreement (SSA) contracts - some 75% in the case of UNICEF (MacCarthy, 1996, April 19) - and it is these staff who are responsible for working in some of the most difficult conditions confronting OLS,

in particular barge operations. While using SSA contracts is standard UN practice in order to maintain the flexibility required by a volatile funding environment, the Review Team was concerned that there appears to be no induction for such staff into OLS principles, and the responsibilities they must assume to ensure these principles are operationalised. Indeed, one former SSA contractor noted that it was only through his own initiative that he became aware of OLS principles. In addition, the lack of regular meetings of UN staff - for example, WFP field monitors, both national and international - reduces the ability to develop a consistent approach among staff to interpreting and enforcing OLS humanitarian principles in such a complex working environment (Watson, 1996, April 10).

Another key concern for the Review Team was the acute feeling of insecurity among a significant number of permanent and SSA staff in reporting serious problems to their line managers. For example, quarterly visits to areas where permanent monitors are based have only recently been instituted by WFP. As a result, management support to field staff who face chronic problems of harassment and attempts at manipulation of UN resources, or who perceive beneficiary populations to be under significant threat, has been poor. Further, the willingness of staff to report such incidents was limited in a number of cases either by the insistence that they provide a formal written report for the file, or by the perception that their managers would rather not know.

Although prompt action has been taken when serious incidents have occurred, the Review Team felt that this not mitigate the fact that management has failed to create an environment where field staff are positively disposed toward signalling problems of whatever magnitude, should they arise.

Staff morale is also undermined by inflexible and insensitive handling of compensation issues. For example, one former SSA staff reported being taken hostage by the SPLA for 12 days. When applying for his DSA, he was told that he would only receive 20% of the allowance for these 12 days, as the SPLA had fed and accommodated him. It was also reported that if SSA staff are killed during the course of their duties, mechanisms for compensating their families are ad hoc and prolonged. Also, no SSA staff employed by UNICEF receive full debriefings following major incidents (MacCarthy, 1996, April 19).

Similarly for WFP, the Review Team found that criteria for monitoring staff performance had only recently been introduced. This is the case despite the fact that WFP management has had serious reservations

concerning the performance of some of its staff, and has wanted to reward those who have performed well (Bailey, 1996, April 20).

4.4 Conclusion

Analysis of the performance of the UN in the Northern Sector must be set within the context of constraints imposed by working under the conditions of a sovereign government that is a party to the war. The extent to which the UN is willing and able to maintain a humanitarian space in this context, and to defend the principles which it has both advocated and secured agreement on, is the central issue to be considered.

The original framework of OLS, which defined the operation as a government programme, focused on achieving and reinforcing government objectives with regard, among other things, to its agenda for development. This developmental agenda - for example, the attempt to establish self-reliance among internally displaced populations through settlement schemes - fitted well with the UN's own adoption of a relief-to-development continuum approach. It thus provided a means for the UN to continue working within the highly constrained and politicized context of North Sudan. In this regard, the Review Team feels that it is not entirely correct to say that the UN has been hostage to the demands of sovereignty in the Northern Sector. Rather, there has been a convergence of interests between UN and GOS - and indeed donor community - objectives with regard to developmental programmes.

However, the UN's adoption of a developmental agenda has eclipsed the need to aggressively assert humanitarian principles in a chronic political emergency. This is especially true since, as will be seen in Chapter 7, OLS developmental programmes in the Northern Sector are deeply flawed, as a consequence of their intimate connection to the war and to a broader political agenda for the country. Further, the operational distinction between relief and development programmes does not lie in the content of the programmes themselves, but rather in the different strategies that are employed in their delivery. In particular, ensuring the neutrality of relief operations is contingent on a more pro active and discriminating approach to the selection and monitoring of implementing partners.

The failure of the UN to assert humanitarian principles in the Northern Sector is a failure at the level of both analysis and management. It is an analytical failure in the sense that the UN has not properly

addressed the nature of the underlying political crisis, which constitutes the fundamental threat to the physical and socio-economic security of war-affected populations. Rather, it has concentrated on the more visible crisis of material supply. It is a managerial failure in that neither the contractual relationships the UN undertakes, nor the human resource strategies it follows, have been sufficient to address the challenge to neutrality that OLS faces. This has contributed to the overall failure of the UN to provide an adequate framework for the rights of beneficiaries to security and material support in the Northern Sector.

5. FOOD AID AND FOOD SECURITY

5.1 Shifting Objectives of OLS: From Saving Lives to Supporting Coping Strategies

Over time, OLS understandings of the problem it is trying to address, and the manner in which needs are identified, has changed. This has led to a broadening of the objectives of the operation, and a change in the focus of interventions.

At the start of OLS in 1989, the problem was clearly perceived as one of a large number of people being at risk of starvation (UN, 1989, March 15). In 1988, death rates among famine victims in Bahr El Ghazal and South Kordofan had been among the highest ever recorded (Keen, 1991). Although not mentioned in the Plan of Action for OLS, it is logical to assume that the objectives of OLS I were to prevent this type of situation from recurring. OLS I aimed to pre-position food and non-food relief in areas with populations at greatest risk, who would be inaccessible during the rainy season. The objective was thus to prevent starvation and save lives, by accessing high-risk populations with emergency relief.

In less than a year, however, these objectives broadened in OLS II to include assisting displaced populations toward productivity and self-reliance. Emergency relief was still considered necessary, but the focus of the Plan of Action was on longer-term solutions, and relief strategies were to be informed by the overall objective of increasing self-reliance (UN, 1990, March 26).

As noted earlier, the initial Plans of Action for OLS were drawn up between the GOS, UN, and NGOs, or between the GOS and donors in Khartoum, with little or no involvement of the Southern Sector. Consequently, the objectives of OLS programmes in the early years were shaped by the perceived needs of displaced populations in government-controlled areas, and needs of people outside of these areas were considered too difficult to estimate (UN, 1989, March 15).

Although OLS III never really got off the ground, events in both North and South Sudan in 1991 firmly re-established the objective of OLS for the next several years as the provision of emergency relief.

In the North, widespread drought had triggered a major drought relief operation among international agencies, and the merging of drought relief with OLS Northern Sector operations:

Since it is recognized that the drought is a new and urgent matter, the corresponding emergency operation should be treated differently, taking into account that certain of the principles of OLS will be applicable to the relief operation (UN, 1992, September 3).

In the South, no substantial assistance was provided by UN OLS agencies until the return of Sudanese refugees from Ethiopia in 1991, the same year in which splits within the SPLA led to additional population displacements. After 1991, the provision of emergency relief to these groups in the South became the focus of OLS Southern Sector for the next several years.

Although Southern Sector assessment reports for 1992 and 1993 indicate the objectives of OLS as being "to enhance local coping mechanisms in areas of greatest vulnerability", the needs identified are mostly emergency relief for war-displaced and returnee populations, and the provision of food aid dominates the recommendations. In the same regard, a focus on mortality and malnutrition rates (in addition to analyses of vulnerability), and responses that take the form of nutritionally balanced food aid rations and emergency health care provision, indicate that preventing malnutrition, disease, and associated deaths constituted the main objectives of the operation in the South.

In 1993, a review of the implementation agreements of OLS recommended that more resources should be allocated for rehabilitation and development programmes (Traxler, 1993). Subsequently, in 1994, the focus of the OLS assessment shifted to household food security and public health care. This representing a broadening of objectives from the previous few years, and a return to an emphasis on the promotion of self-reliance.

In 1994, with the first signed agreement between the GOS and the SPLA, the objectives of OLS were clearly spelt out first time (GOS/SPLM/UN, 1994, March 23):

- * To prevent unnecessary hunger and suffering through the timely delivery of required food aid.
- * To lower unacceptably high levels of morbidity and mortality of the civilian population, particularly of women and children.
- * To assist the civilian population re-establish traditional

survival and coping mechanisms.

* To restore basic social services.

The Southern Sector later modified these objectives to include enhancing the lives and livelihoods of the people of South Sudan, and protecting and promoting the rights of war-affected civilians, particularly women and children. A reduction in malnutrition, in addition to morbidity and mortality, through the provision of relief and basic services was also added (Nichols, 1995, May 5).

The objectives of OLS have given food aid a central role in its operations; indeed, the provision of food aid has been the main activity of OLS agencies from the start of the operation until the present. As the objectives of OLS have shifted from emergency relief to food security, however, the role of food aid has also changed.

Initially, it is clear that food aid is provided as a nutritional resource for people cut-off from their usual sources of food supply, and the inclusion of three types of food aid commodity in the general ration is intended to meet their nutritional requirements. From 1994, food aid is increasingly seen not just as a life-saving input, but also as a means to promote self-reliance by supplementing peoples' own strategies for access to food, enable people to rely increasingly on own production, and in some cases facilitate returns to home areas.

At the same time that the role of food aid has shifted, there has been an overall reduction in food aid rations. This has happened in two ways. First, the quantity of food provided per person or per family has been reduced. Initially, this was done by reducing the number of months in a year when food aid was provided, and later by also cutting full rations to half or quarter size. Second, food aid has been restricted to specific geographical areas, or to specific groups within areas. While the provision of food aid has been reduced, there has been an increased emphasis on the provision of agricultural inputs for food production.

5.2 An Examination of OLS Assessments

5.2.1 Introduction

As OLS objectives have shifted, it is reasonable to assume that the way in which needs assessments are conducted should also have changed to accommodate new priorities. An operational focus on starvation,

malnutrition, and death, for example, should be reflected in assessments that concentrate on determining food aid requirements by estimating the number of people at risk, and by the prevalence of malnutrition and mortality. An operational focus on food security, on the other hand, should be reflected in assessments that analyze mechanisms for access to food, and that contribute to the development of understanding of food economies.

However, the Review Team found that OLS assessments in the Northern Sector in particular are not providing information that will enable OLS to fulfil its stated objectives. For example, coping strategies have rarely been assessed. Moreover, OLS assessments in the Northern Sector in particular have, in most cases, been limited to attempting to measure only the most visible aspects of the crisis, in order to determine immediate material needs, with little analysis of the socio-economic situation of OLS beneficiaries, or the root causes of the crisis they face.

An analysis of assessments is provided in this section, beginning with an overview of the role of assessments in the broader context of OLS.

5.2.2 Proliferation and Change

In the highly politicized context of OLS, the provision of assistance based on the objective assessment of needs is held up as proof of OLS neutrality by UN OLS agencies. Of greatest importance is the Annual Needs Assessment, which forms the basis of the annual UN Consolidated Appeal, and UN/OLS programme activities for the coming year. Annual assessments are thus of critical importance to the UN for continued donor funding; for the warring parties, annual assessments secure resources for areas under their respective control.

Not surprisingly, both access for assessments and the reliability of assessment methods are frequently debated at the highest political levels. In recent years, for example, assessments have often been on the agenda of the missions of Ambassador Traxler, and reviews of the implementation of agreements includes an appraisal of the number of assessments done, and who participates in them.

The objectivity of OLS assessments has been questioned by both the GOS and donors, for different reasons. Whereas the GOS has claimed that assessments are biased, and lead to disproportionate deliveries to non-GOS areas (Traxler, 1995, August 2), donors have claimed that OLS Northern Sector inflates population figures, and that assessments have unsound and unreliable methodologies (UNEU, 1995).

Hence, in analyzing OLS assessments, the Review Team considered both their technical aspects, and the extent to which they are influenced by the particular operating environments where they are carried out.

The preparation of the SEPHA Appeal for 1992 marks the start of regular annual assessments conducted in the last few months of each year, which form the basis of the Consolidated Appeal launched early in the following year. Although Plans of Action prior to this time give estimates of the needs of war-affected populations, it is unclear to what extent these were actually based on assessments. Consolidated Appeals include not only OLS requirements, but also the needs of other disaster-affected populations in Sudan. Food aid needs for Sudan are assessed in annual FAO/WFP Crop and Food Supply Assessment Missions, which incorporate OLS requirements. These assessments have used information from OLS Annual Assessments to varying degrees over the years.

From 1993 forward, there was a proliferation of assessment processes. This includes re-assessments of need during the course of the year, and an increased number of emergency assessments, monitoring assessments, distribution assessments, and follow-up investigations. In South Sudan, discussions in Nairobi between the UN, the GOS, RASS and the SRRA in December 1992, led to agreements that air access would be facilitated for locations where displaced persons were assessed as in need, and that updated assessments and monitoring would be conducted whenever the need arose (UN, 1992, December 5). In addition to joint OLS assessments, each UN/OLS agency may also conduct their own sectoral assessments and evaluations. Partner agencies of OLS also carry out numerous sectoral assessments.

An example of the extent of proliferation of assessments was given by the UNICEF Programme Coordinator, who indicated that more than 200 assessments were carried out in the Southern Sector during 1995 (Nichols, 1996, April 20). Similarly, WFP monitors in the Southern Sector judge that approximately 75% of their time is now taken up with assessments, which represents a reversal compared to previous years. This has been made possible, in part, by an increase in staff; prior to 1994, WFP had just one assessment officer for the Southern Sector, whereas now there are 14 monitors, and WFP aims to increase this number to 20.

Aside from a proliferation of assessments, there have also been changes in assessments methods over the course of OLS. These changes reflect changes in levels of access over the years to affected

populations, and the different natures of the operating environments in the Northern and Southern Sectors. More importantly, as will be seen later, they reflect changed perceptions among OLS personnel about the extent to which beneficiaries are increasingly able to "cope" with the crisis.

In the Northern Sector, although efforts have been made by UN OLS agencies to improve on assessments, the assessment process and methodology has stayed more or less the same over the course of OLS, as a consequence of a deeply constrained operating environment. Although the number and coverage of assessments has increased, the quality of assessments has been severely hampered both by UN organizational structures and capacity, and by the lack of control by OLS over the assessment process. Further, because all UN energies are invested in negotiating access and participation for assessment missions, there is a perception that there is little scope or time to engage in negotiations on changes that would lead to an improvement in their quality (UNEU, 1995).

In the Southern Sector, on the other hand, the process and method of assessments has progressed over time. Until 1993, assessments included information on malnutrition and mortality; from 1994 onward, they have focused on food security. Hence, assessments have generally reflected changes in the perception of the type of crisis that OLS is trying to address. They also reflect attempts to provide more accurate information and to exploit increases in access. This, in turn, is linked to the relatively less constrained operating environment of the Southern Sector. OLS agencies have taken advantage of this environment to conduct detailed investigations into the livelihoods of rural people in South Sudan and how these livelihoods have been affected by the war. They have also attempted to tailor intervention strategies more closely to actual needs.

5.2.3 Assessing Needs Versus Determining Access

The objectives of assessments are not always mentioned in assessment reports, but from recent documentation it appears that the broad objectives of assessments for the Northern and Southern Sectors are the same:

...to provide the basis for prioritizing and projecting needs in Southern Sudan for 1996 planning purposes (OLS Southern Sector, 1995, November).

The objective of the assessments is for the GOS, NGOs, Donors, and the UN to establish by consensus the priority humanitarian needs. The findings provide the justification for interventions proposed in the consolidated appeal or in the case of NGOs, by independent means (UNEU, 1995).

Upon closer examination, however, the objectives of assessments in the Sectors are seen to be different. This is, in part, a result of the uneven development of an information base over the duration of OLS between North and South.

Southern Sector assessments, for example, have been focused more on food security because it was felt that sufficient information on other sectors was already available through regular monitoring. The annual assessment exercise is thus increasingly focused not on assessing needs in general, but on assessing needs for food security interventions. At the same time, UNICEF conducts separate surveys to assess its own food production inputs and the needs for the coming year. The annual assessment for the Southern Sector therefore provides the primary input for the estimation of food aid needs.

In the Northern Sector, on the other hand, limited access, or the lack of permanent UN presence in many locations, means that a much broader range of information needs to be gathered (Painter, 1996, March 25).

The different objectives for assessments between Northern and Southern Sectors became clear during the first attempt to conduct a comprehensive assessment of both using a similar methodology:

The objectives of the assessment are not clear. It appears that OLS Nairobi, UN Khartoum, and DHA Geneva have differing opinions regarding the mission mandate...OLS Nairobi and the UN in Khartoum have discussed extensively the questionnaires to be used on the assessment; it appears that while the two operations agree to assess needs, the Operation ex-Khartoum may have different aspirations as to what can be accomplished with the assessment...the operations ex-Lokichokio has extensively easier access for INGOs and therefore are not as concerned as Khartoum with some data that we feel is necessary, namely water, medical, nutrition and the sanitation situation. We indicated in meetings with the OLS team that one of our priorities is to determine areas lacking sufficient services in order that we may encourage the GOS to allow expansion of INGO presence (UNEU, 1993, October 3).

The different objectives of the Sectors are also shaped by different levels of UN OLS agency control over the assessment process. In the Northern Sector, UN authority is limited by the fact that the assessment process is largely controlled by RRC and COVA (now HAC). In the Southern Sector, although the SRRA and RASS may attempt to increase in the number of locations assessed, the UN has the final say in where assessments take place. Consequently, UN agencies in the Southern Sector have much greater scope to select, for example, a representative sample of the population, or to identify areas where limited information is available for further investigation.

The lack of clear definition of OLS in the Northern Sector also means that assessments have become a political bargaining exercise. Both the GOS and the UN are aware that the assessment exercise largely determines the operational field of OLS, and will each argue for locations to be included according to their own priorities. In 1994, the debate over locations lasted for more than six weeks (UNEU, 1995). In general, the UN tries to limit assessments to war-affected populations that it perceives are in need of assistance, whereas the GOS tries to broaden the assessment as much as possible to include locations such as the Red Sea Hills, Nyala, and Kost. However, this is not universally the case. For example, the UNEU was unable to persuade the GOS to include the Khartoum displaced in annual OLS assessments until 1994, and even then only those populations living in official displaced camps were included. At the same time, the UN welcomed the inclusion of the Nuba Mountains by the GOS in assessments in 1995.

Dependence on the RRC for arranging travel permits further limits the UN's control in the Northern Sector. Attempts by UNEU to regain a measure of control over the assessment process have been resisted, as excerpts from a letter to UNEU from COVA indicate:

...We object to the UN undertaking the job of the Commission of Voluntary Agencies...The Commission will specify the right organization in the right place...The proposed list, which has been sent by your office, is not accepted (COVA, 1994).

Further, some locations are left out of assessment missions by the GOS because they are assumed to have achieved self-reliance:

You may notice that last year and also this year some locations have been excluded from the annual needs assessment, having achieved self-sufficiency and self-reliance, thanks to your joint cooperation in this regard (Agbash, 1995).

In such cases, the UN finds itself in the position of essentially having to prove that needs exist prior to the needs assessment itself.

In general, the Review Team found that for the Northern Sector, locations included in the annual assessment mission are not the result of objective methods, but rather reflect a compromise with GOS priorities.

5.2.4 Problems with the Quality of Access

An important factor in the validity of assessments is not simply physical presence in a given location, but the ability of the assessment team to contact the affected population, and to interview them on any subject judged to be relevant.

In the early years of OLS, access to civilian populations was limited by the respective authorities in both Sectors. It was not until 1993, for example, that the affected population itself became an explicit factor in assessment methodologies, through the development of a household questionnaire. Not surprisingly, this questionnaire became a source of controversy between the UN and the GOS in the Northern Sector, because it implied a quality of access that was contentious. The issue was only resolved with high-level intervention by Ambassador Traxler. For the UN, the household questionnaire assumed a crucial importance:

The household surveys are especially important to the Khartoum teams in that it will allow us the opportunity to actually see the population in certain locations. In the past, access to outlying areas, where the majority of the population reside, has been refused mainly to security constraints...If we are only allowed to land on airstrips and interview local authorities we will end up duplicating past mistakes and delivering relief items to non-existent beneficiaries (UNEU, 1993, October 3).

In 1994, the introduction of assessment methods based on Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) techniques caused further friction. This method not only required access to the recipient population to obtain information from them directly, but also the freedom to conduct an interview that was not predetermined by a structured questionnaire. Initially, both RRC and counterparts of OLS in the Southern Sector were reluctant to permit the use of the method. Reservations in the Southern Sector were overcome by SRRA/RASS involvement in training

sessions, however; indeed, the SRRA not only adopted a similar methodology, but also adopted a food economy approach, meaning that it speaks the same language in terms of assessments as WFP food monitors.

In the Northern Sector, on the other hand, attempts to use qualitative methods such as PRA as part of the annual assessment process have largely been unsuccessful. Although UN OLS agencies state that a food economy approach has been adopted since 1995, and indeed a training workshop which included an introduction to qualitative methods was held, the Review Team was not convinced that this is the case; information is still mainly gathered at central locations, and provided largely by local government officials.

5.2.5 Analyzing the Crisis through the Assessment Process

In the Northern Sector, the annual assessment is aimed at all UN sectoral activities, including sectors that OLS covers. The Review Team found a number of significant problems with these assessments.

First, there is a lack of a coherent conceptual framework that informs the assessment process. For example, assessment questionnaires and reports show little attention to the interaction between different sectors, or to the interrelationship between different factors that contribute to food insecurity, malnutrition, and mortality. It is also not clear how various indicators are analyzed in order to prioritize interventions.

Second, much of the information gathered does not contribute to an understanding of the health status or level of food security of the populations concerned, but rather concentrates on the level of services or the delivery of inputs. Indeed, the Review Team was surprised to find an emphasis on gathering this type of information through assessments, since it must already exist in the institutional records of OLS agencies. Hence, for example, the Review Team found it problematic that a joint assessment including WFP and UNICEF asks questions regarding food deliveries, logistics, health facilities, and number of feeding centres, which in many cases are supported by OLS resources. The lack of use of information from NGO partners, who conduct regular assessment and monitoring missions, also exacerbates the problem of duplicating the production of information. By recording the same type of information year after year, analyses of the

effectiveness of past interventions is severely hampered.

Third, and as a consequence of all of the above, recommendations are rarely supported by information contained within assessment reports, and do not follow from an analyses of the situation on the ground.

UN and other OLS agencies themselves have questioned the usefulness of the assessment process; for example, at a workshop to prepare for the implementation of the assessment questionnaire, it was noted that:

... participants found themselves with a "fait accompli". A thick questionnaire packed with questions which were to produce "data" which in turn would provide useful "information". However, this data information link did not seem evident. On the contrary, participants did observe that much of the data to be collected by the assessment teams (in an already limited amount of time) would not lead to any significant information (Bulla, 1995, October 19).

The lack of a conceptual framework to inform the assessment process in the Northern Sector is surprising, given the institutional expertise that exists in some UN OLS agencies. For example, UNICEF has a well formulated nutrition strategy that includes an explicitly formulated framework to understand both biological and social causes of malnutrition and mortality. The framework breaks down these causes into immediate, underlying, and basic causes of malnutrition, and indicates how these different levels are interrelated. Immediate causes include food intake and disease; underlying causes have been grouped into three clusters of household food security, maternal and child care, and health services and the health environment; basic causes are influenced by potential resources, economic structure, and the political and ideological superstructure (UNICEF, 1990).

In the Southern Sector, there has been an explicit attempt to understand the nature of the emergency through the assessment process. Notably, the Southern Sector has adapted a version of the UNICEF framework for the 1996 assessment. However, it was decided to limit the analyses to immediate and underlying causes only, and to define needs in terms of what was operationally feasible:

Given scarce resource and the constraints imposed by the civil war, needs are...defined in restricted terms, based on those interventions which are most urgent and currently feasible...Based on this causal analysis, the needs assessment focuses on the two key elements which most affect vulnerability

to malnutrition and disease and for which it is possible to develop a meaningful proxy indicator, demonstrating significant change and allowing a prioritization of needs in rough regional and sectoral terms; these are health and food security (OLS, 1995, November).

Consequently, the assessment process in the Southern Sector focuses only on what can actually be measured, and what can reasonably be responded to; basic social and political dimensions of the crisis are thus neglected. While it is true that there are no inputs as such that can address the socio-political problems, this information is crucial for determining implementation mechanisms, or for the design of relief programmes and targeting strategies.

Southern Sector assessments for 1992 and 1993 also made attempts to provide a broader picture of rural vulnerability (OLS Southern Sector, 1991, December; OLS Southern Sector, 1993, February). Areas were ranked according to vulnerability, and were to be prioritized according to the type of vulnerability identified. Indeed, this is the only example of assessments that explicitly attempt to incorporate the concept of political vulnerability. However, at the time decision-makers were placing more emphasis on quantitative estimates of numbers of people in vulnerable groups, malnutrition, and mortality. Further, because the 1993 assessment focused on food security at household level, wider contextual factors were generally excluded from the framework of analysis.

The Review Team also noted that early OLS assessments, while less developed in terms of assessing needs, nevertheless included some information on modalities for delivery of assistance. Later assessments, on the other hand, focus entirely on defining need, and have neglected information on how these needs are to be met. This means that there is no analysis of the effectiveness of previous modalities of implementation for reaching beneficiaries, nor are there recommendations on implementation modalities for the future.

5.2.6 The Food Economy Approach: Assessing Food Security by Measuring Food Gaps

In the Southern Sector, WFP with the assistance of SCF (UK) introduced the food economy approach in 1994, in order to better target the allocation of food aid (Allen, 1994, August 16). This marked a change from a focus on malnutrition and mortality rates, and from a food aid programme driven primarily by logistics. This change in focus was the

result of increased access to rural populations, which allowed for more decentralized deliveries, as well as bumper harvests at the end of 1994, which meant food needs were likely to be more localized and less widespread, hence requiring better targeting of assistance.

The food economy approach aims to determine the relative importance of different food sources to the annual food requirements of a household. In order to understand the "expandability" of different food sources, information is collected on food sources before the war, as well as in good and bad years of crop production during the war. It is assumed that, as people survived these years, food sources must "add up" to the required 1900 kcals/person/day. A deficit is identified if the loss of one or more food sources cannot be made up by other food sources.

The only food source that can be predicted with any certainty at the time of annual assessments is the expected harvest. Predictions of food deficits are thus made on the basis of the expected harvest, and knowledge of the contribution of crop production to specific food economies. However, since these predictions must make assumptions about access to other food sources (based on knowledge from baseline assessments), re-assessments and monitoring are usually required closer to the time of year of the expected deficit.

The strengths of the food economy approach are its use of qualitative methods - which overcomes problems of sampling - and the introduction of a common framework for assessing and understanding food security. Indeed, the enthusiasm with which the food economy approach was adopted by WFP food monitors reflects the analytical vacuum that existed in preceding years. By providing a simple framework that can be adopted by non-specialists, food monitors and other field workers were effectively empowered in their work. As a result, a degree of decision-making responsibility has been transferred from central offices in Nairobi to food monitors in the field.

The weakness of the food economy approach has to do with the interpretation of food deficits, and underlying assumptions about people's priorities when faced with the threat of famine. While the food economy approach provides information about potential sources of food, it does not indicate whether people will actually be able to make use of these options. For example, although the concept of exchange is included in the food economy approach, knowledge of constraints on exchange that may derive from political causes is very limited. The fact that the food economy approach focuses on the household also exacerbates the lack of broader contextual analysis.

In the midst of internal war, the food economy approach's essential concentration of the economic aspects of food supply, to the neglect of the politics of food, is worrisome. Further, because the focus of the food economy approach as used in the Southern Sector is on estimating food aid needs, its ability to understand the constraints on coping mechanisms within the complex dynamics created by the war is limited.

Recently, attempts have been made to introduce the food economy approach to the Northern Sector, with little success. This is due not only to the different degree of access in the Northern Sector, but also to a failure to take into account components of the food economy particular to war-displaced populations. Food economies in the Northern and Southern Sector are substantially different. Whereas the Southern Sector assesses the subsistence economy of rural populations, subsistence for war-displaced populations in the Northern Sector is based primarily on wage labour, including agricultural labour, sharecropping, and low status trades. However, the real options available to the war-displaced to achieve food security have not been investigated in the Northern Sector. The presence of information gaps of this type is considered further below.

5.2.7 Additional Problems in the Annual Assessment Process

In both Northern and Southern Sectors, the UN theoretically coordinates the annual assessment process.

In the Northern Sector, as noted earlier, it is the RRC or COVA (now HAC) which finalizes negotiations about where assessments will take place, who will take part, and what is assessed. The UN's role, through UNEU, includes compiling assessment reports from both Southern and Northern Sector to produce a comprehensive report on OLS. However, UNEU has been unable to accomplish this. Rather, the only assessment report which combines Northern and Southern Sector assessments - that of 1994 - was prepared by the Southern Sector. Further, for the Northern Sector alone, UNEU has only been able to prepare an assessment report once, for 1995.

In the Northern Sector, although the OLS assessments are commonly referred to as joint RRC/UN/NGO assessments, NGOs actually play little part in planning the assessment process. Rather, they are usually presented the final questionnaire, and informed how they will take part in the assessment. Moreover, until 1995, training and orientation time for NGO assessment personnel was very limited. In 1993, for

example, NGOs were shown the assessment questionnaire only two days before the assessment was due to begin.

In 1995, this situation was addressed to some extent by the introduction of training workshops prior to the assessment. The continued lack of NGO involvement at the early stages of the process, however, contributes to the failure to make use of existing information, and to problems for NGOs in making qualified people available.

Information collection during assessments is hampered by the lack of clear assignment of tasks to team members, and of clear direction as to how to conduct surveys; for example, there is no indication on the questionnaire as to who should ask the questions, and who should be interviewed. Limited time to actually carry out the assessment also hinders information collection. The length of questionnaires is also a constraint; for example, the final questionnaire for the 1995 assessment was 24 pages long. Even well qualified and highly trained personnel would find such a lengthy questionnaire difficult to implement. Not surprisingly, assessment reports rarely include all the information requested. Importantly, this means that final reports are of widely varying quality and type of information, making comparisons between years extremely difficult.

In the Southern Sector, NGOs, and counterparts from administrative authorities have only recently become involved in the planning of annual assessments. In 1994, guidelines for assessments were prepared for the first time, and training of assessment teams organized. In 1995, a planning committee was organized, which included representatives of RASS and the SRRA, and meetings were held with heads of agencies (Nichols, 1996, April 20). Importantly, the training of assessment teams in the Southern Sector, in contrast to the Northern Sector, involves reviews of assessment techniques as well as reviews of a wide range of secondary sources on the area to be assessed. Also, as far as possible assessment teams include those who had already been trained in the food economy approach.

In general, the main use of the annual assessment is to form the basis of the annual Consolidated Appeal. Hence, assessments appear to play little part in programme planning, or in the formulation of a common strategy or plan of action for all OLS agencies. For example, the Review Team was informed by UNICEF staff in both Sectors that they rely more on their own information systems to assess needs for the coming year, than on the annual assessment. It is only recently that UNICEF Southern Sector began to use the annual assessment as the basis for preparing a plan of action for the following year, and prioritizing

interventions. However, this only includes UNICEF programmes, and does not include those of NGOs (Nichols, 1996, April 20). In the Northern Sector, NGOs rarely get to see final assessment reports, unless specifically requested. In some cases, even UN agency field staff may not be aware of the recommendations made in the reports.

The failure to adequately incorporate NGOs in the assessment process is significant, especially since they comprise a major part of food aid and food security inputs provided by OLS. Without involvement in assessment planning, there is little sense of ownership of the resulting information in the NGO community, and they continue to base resourcing on their own assessments and monitoring systems. This means that the scope for preparing an integrated plan of action for the whole of OLS remains limited.

5.3 Information Gaps in Understanding Livelihoods, Food Security, and Malnutrition

As is to be expected from constraints in carrying out proper assessments, there are significant gaps in information, and hence understanding, about malnutrition, mortality, and their underlying causes. Changes in assessment methods have also meant that it is difficult to get coherent picture of the changing food security situation. However, even when certain indicators are regularly available, they are rarely used. This is the case, for example, for market prices in GOS-held towns. Although prices have been consistently reported, the Review Team was surprised to discover that no one in the Northern Sector had thought of using this information to monitor trends over the years.

This section considers the kinds of gaps in information that exist, and the implications.

5.3.1 Malnutrition and Mortality

In the Southern Sector, reliable estimates of excess mortality based on records of actual deaths are not available. Attempts have been made to estimate morality, but the reliability of these estimates is debatable. For example, the OLS assessment conducted in 1993 reported 220,000 excess deaths over the non-war expectation, based on estimates of population decline and expected peacetime growth rates. Failure to take into account a decline in fertility, and the limited coverage

of the estimate, however, makes the figure of 220,000 excesses deaths open to question. The report itself acknowledges the uncertainty in the estimate, but states that:

...the only debate is over the magnitude of excess deaths, not the fact that they are occurring (OLS, 1994, March).

More localized estimates of mortality rates were assessed in household surveys in OLS Southern Sector assessments for 1992 and 1993. These reported extremely high mortality rates, but their reliability is limited due to the small sample size, and bias in selection of households closest to the airstrip (OLS Southern Sector, 1993, February). From 1994 forward, mortality rates were no longer included in Southern Sector.

Although no regular morbidity surveillance system exists, all available assessments report the major causes of morbidity to be malaria, diarrhoea, respiratory tract infections, and measles. Studies of famine-related excess mortality have shown these to be the most common causes of death during famines and in displaced populations; they can thus be expected to have a major contribution to the immediate causes of death in South Sudan. Understanding the causes of death is essential for appropriate programming, especially in determining the relative importance of food aid and health interventions. More-over, without a regular surveillance system it is difficult to determine whether there has been a deterioration or improvement in people's health status.

UNICEF Southern Sector has recently introduced the concept of "health security" to describe the cluster of potential underlying causes of malnutrition and mortality related to access to health services and the health environment (OLS Southern Sector, 1995, November). However, assessments of access to health services is limited to potential coverage, by multiplying the number of health facilities by the numbers of people they are expected to serve; actual utilization numbers are not produced. The health environment is described mainly in terms of outreach - for example, measles vaccination - and information on morbidity. Other key aspects of the health environment, such as access to safe water, are reported to be difficult to measure, however.

The Review Team is not aware of any such analysis in the Northern Sector, although the lack of hygiene, sanitation, or adequate water supply is sometimes mentioned in assessment reports as a contributing factor to morbidity. On the other hand, there is a great deal of

information in the Northern Sector on nutritional status, which is also true of the Southern Sector. Numerous nutritional surveys have been conducted within OLS, and in particular by NGOs. These surveys have concentration on war-displaced populations, both because of the limitations of access until 1993, and because nutritional surveillance of large, dispersed rural population is extremely difficult.

However, methodology varies both within the same location over time, and between locations. In addition, within the Northern Sector UN OLS agencies do not always have access to NGO nutritional survey reports, and their own nutritional surveillance capacity has been limited; for example, UNICEF Khartoum has only recently appointed a nutritionist, as well as field nutritionists in places such as Malakal and Wau. In contrast, although UN OLS Southern Sector has not had a nutritionist on staff, nutrition consultants have been hired who have attempted to standardize nutritional surveillance, by preparing guidelines and organizing workshops. In addition, there have been attempts in the Southern Sector to review past nutritional information, as well as to identify past problems and their implications for future assessments (MacAskill, 1993, August 31/December).

Seasonal patterns in the prevalence of malnutrition have not been systematically investigated, which makes it difficult to distinguish unusual patterns. Nutritional surveys done in rural South Sudan in 1989 during the rainy season indicated malnutrition rates of less than 10% of the population at less than 80% weight-for-height. This rate is now generally used as a baseline for South Sudan, as this was considered a period of relative stability, and none of the populations surveyed were receiving any free food distribution (MacAskill, 1993, August 31/December). However, available information indicates that there are seasonal variations in malnutrition both in rural populations in the South, and among war-displaced populations in the North. Highest malnutrition rates generally occur at the start of the rainy season, and lower rates occur towards the end of the year following the harvest.

Finally, both UNICEF and the Ministry of Health increasingly sample geographical areas for nutritional surveillance, rather than the specific populations included under OLS, as a consequence of the merging of humanitarian relief and country programming. For example, the Ministry of Health in Kordofan began nutritional surveillance of the displaced camps, including peace villages, in 1993, recording rates of around 30% (<80% WFH) in Abyei and Meiram in July. Later sampling, however, shifted to Rural Councils, meaning that even if

the displaced camp populations were included, they could not be disaggregated as a group. This is also true of a large, multiple-indicator cluster survey recently carried out by UNICEF Khartoum for the entire country (UNICEF, 1995). In this case, surveys were designed to give the prevalence of malnutrition for entire regions, thus masking the differences found among different populations within regions, and effectively "hiding" higher prevalence in certain groups or locations.

5.3.2 Livelihoods and Food Security

From the start of OLS, more information has been available on livelihoods and food security of populations served by the Southern Sector than those served by the Northern Sector.

Especially since the introduction of the food economy approach in 1994, detailed descriptions of livelihoods and production systems in South Sudan have been produced. Baseline information collected in the Southern Sector has recently been compiled by WFP; in addition, the Food Economy Unit in Lokichokio has prepared "A Background Guide for Field Staff to the Food Economies of South Sudan" (WFP, 1995, December), which makes use of research studies and historical information. However, as noted by personnel who conduct assessments in the Southern Sector, little is still known about the extent to which social networks such as kinship may function as a coping mechanism, or about the role of wider economic and trading networks in this regard. Arguably, it is difficult to develop this level of in-depth understanding, especially without a long-term and permanent field presence on the ground.

As noted earlier, the food use of the food economy approach in the Southern Sector involves important gaps in information. With its emphasis on the household, and on quantifying deficits, the food economy approach neglects the wider picture of food security. Prior to the introduction of the food economy approach, a 1990 assessment in the Southern Sector included a detailed qualitative analysis of wider socio-economic support networks of affected populations, and - importantly - how these have been affected by the war (UN/OLS, 1990, June). With the introduction of the food economy approach, however, this type of information has been lost.

In the Northern Sector, little information is available on the livelihoods of displaced populations served by OLS. Assessment reports may give some information on the expected harvest, and

agricultural activities, and some of the strategies that war-displaced use to gain access to food. These include the sale of firewood, grass, and mats, collection of wild foods, fishing, and casual labour. Sometimes, kinship links between the displaced and local population are reported. However, the structural conditions for war-displaced that contribute to chronic food insecurity are rarely considered.

Attempts to introduce the food economy approach in the Northern Sector have not helped matters much. This is because the food economy approach has been applied in exactly the same manner as in the South, without regard to the very different food economies faced by OLS beneficiaries in the Northern Sector. Hence, there are descriptions produced in the 1995 joint OLS assessment such as the following for Wau:

The main food in Wau are grain crops, wild food, non-grain crops and exchange food from the local market. Meat is used as a complementary food...Income-generating activities especially for women will contribute to improving living conditions of people in Wau.

or, from the same assessment, for Abyei:

A local harvest normally lasts for five months for an average family. Since 1995 is the first year for the displaced to cultivate for themselves, it remains to be seen how long a harvest will last. 10% of families were reported to be unable to cultivate. In Abyei the dry season starts in November and ends in April while the wet season starts in May and ends in October. Relief assistance is expected to contribute 40% to the HH in the dry season and 60% in the wet season. However, main sources of income for an average HH are selling grass and mats, firewood, gum, fishing and honey.

Such descriptions reveal nothing about people's actual access to food. In fact, when the Review Team visited Wau, they found people's main source of food to be mango and watermelon. Further, such descriptions contain no information concerning the reliance of war-displaced on wage labour and petty trading, nor how their food security is impacted by access to employment, wage levels, labour relations, and market prices. Rather, the descriptions above suggest that war-displaced have land. In reality, the war-displaced do not have access to secure tenure on land, and consequently the arrangements through which they are able to farm are in fact more important than the amount of harvest they produce. Unusually, this issue was mentioned in a report on a

joint RRC/UN mission to Meiram in 1994:

...in the long term, the displaced farmer may not profit. This is because the displaced farmer receives from the landlord advanced food rations during the off season. The cost of food is repaid after the harvest, which subsequently leaves little or no profit for the displaced farmer. During the off-season, the displaced collect firewood and grass to sell in the market to enable them to survive on a subsistence basis (RRC/UN, 1994, March 17/24).

Food economies of the war-displaced in the Northern Sector are often intricately linked to the food economies of the host population, although not necessarily on an equal basis. Consequently, analysis of the food security of the war-displaced needs also to include an understanding of the host population economy, and the relationship between the two. This type of analysis is rarely evident in Northern Sector assessments, however.

Finally, since assessment reports are generally not prepared for OLS as a whole, it is difficult to obtain a picture of the food security of populations being assisted through OLS as a whole. While it is true that the situation of beneficiaries in the North and South is different, much could be gained by combining and cross-checking information from both Sectors. For example, population movements between North and South, and between GOS-held towns in the South and the surrounding rural areas could be better understood. Instead, GOS-held towns in the South and the surrounding rural areas are analyzed separately.

In general, the Review Team felt that the decision to focus assessments on measurable outcomes such as food deficits and malnutrition rates has meant that the "technical" aspects of food insecurity have been separated from their underlying social and political causes in the context of internal warfare.

5.3.3 The Erosion of Standards and Misconceptions About "Coping"

The Review Team was deeply concerned at the way in which a shift to the food economy approach, together with the evolution of OLS operations in general, has led to an erosion in the standard of what constitutes an emergency situation for OLS beneficiary populations.

In the Northern Sector, for example, extremely high rates of

malnutrition have been reported this year. They were summarized in the appeal for 1996:

Nutrition surveys conducted in September/October 1995 reflect global malnutrition rates ranging from an acceptable 13.7% to 36.8% in displaced camps around Khartoum, and from 16.1% to 30% in the transitional zone and Government-held areas of southern Sudan (DHA, 1996, February).

This statement is surprising in that it considers malnutrition rates of 13.7% and 16.1% to be "acceptable". According to RRC guidelines, nutrition rates are considered to be cause for concern if there are more than 10% of a population less than 80% weight-for-height, which also corresponds to the baseline used for the Southern Sector, mentioned above.

While malnutrition rates cannot be interpreted in isolation, the prevalence of malnutrition indicated above would almost certainly have been used as evidence of an emergency in the early years of OLS. Not only are the malnutrition rates among the war-displaced in Khartoum high at the present time, if they change "it is in the direction of a steadily worsening situation" (ADRA, 1995, April/May). Indeed, malnutrition rates in the officially recognized displaced camps in Khartoum, where OLS assistance is targeted, are actually higher than in squatter settlements that fall outside the formal scope of OLS.

Similarly in Ed Da'ein, data from SCF (UK) indicated that in 1994 there was an unusually severe hungry season, and that in 1993 malnutrition rates among the war-displaced were higher than for the host population (SCF (UK), 1993, August). This information was being produced just at a time when general food aid rations were being reduced, on the assumption that people were gaining a degree of self-sufficiency.

In the Southern Sector, nutritional surveillance played a major part in the assessment of conditions of the war-displaced until 1994, and was one of the major triggers for international response:

...a significant proportion of the international aid that has gone to Southern Sudan, in the last 10 years, has been in response to crises when malnutrition rates and mortality have reached catastrophic levels (MacAskill, 1994, April 19).

This changed, however, with the start of the food economy approach:

What was previously classified as an emergency, we are now not responding to (Wilson, 1996, April 9).

The shift to the food economy approach has meant that nutritional surveillance data has lessened in importance. Although the Southern Sector assessment for 1995 reports both food economy information and nutritional survey results, the two are not combined (OLS Southern Sector, 1994, October). Even in regular assessments carried out during the year, analysis of the food economy and malnutrition information is rarely combined.

In effect, the food economy approach, which is based on the principle that if people are surviving, they must be meeting their minimum energy needs, has helped to erode the standard of malnutrition that constitutes a crisis situation. In reality, the food economy approach does not provide a basis for knowing if people are indeed surviving at an adequate level.

In addition, all potential crises are now assessed on the basis of food deficits, whether as a result of drought, war-induced displacement, violence, or other causes. Hence, deficits are the sole basis for determining whether or not food aid should be provided as an emergency relief input, or as an input for support to agricultural production. For example, if a population faces a 5 to 10% food deficit, agricultural support may be the recommended intervention, whereas if a population faces a 25% food deficit, emergency food aid may be recommended (Coutts, 1996, April 9). What this means in practice is that there is no distinction made between periods of severe food insecurity as a result of internal warfare, violence, or other factors, and general famine conditions associated with excess mortality. Indeed, the approach used is unable to differentiate between different causes and implications of food shortages.

While more information on access to food has undoubtedly led to better assessments of food aid needs, it has also led to an unrealistic confidence in the food economy approach. This is illustrated by a dispute between Northern and Southern Sectors concerning barge assessments carried out by the Northern Sector in a non GOS-held area. The barge team reported extremely high malnutrition rates, which arguably were unreliable because of the survey methods used. However, the results were rejected out of hand by the Southern Sector as a result of faith in their knowledge of food economies in the surrounding areas, which was based on crop production, assets, wild foods, and people's ability to exchange livestock for grain with surplus areas (Boudreau, 1995, June 14). In response, the Northern Sector rightly asked:

If available wild foods are so expandable and waterlily so nutritious, it is difficult to explain why nutrition problems were identified with no apparent health epidemics (Anderson, 1995, June 26).

This example highlights the focus of the food economy approach on identifying potential sources of food and their nutritional content, rather than analyzing the types of strategies that people actually use to obtain food, and the constraints they face in so doing.

Indeed, although support for coping strategies is included in the objectives of OLS, the concept of coping strategies is not well defined for war-affected populations in Sudan. The concept is derived from drought-induced famines, and is generally used to describe strategies that are often pre-planned, and adopted temporarily in periods of shortage, after which there is a return to normality. The aim of these strategies is to preserve the basis for livelihood.

However, this conceptualization of coping strategies is not necessarily applicable to war-affected populations in Sudan. During prolonged periods of acute food insecurity, people may be forced to adopt crisis strategies that threaten their future livelihoods. Indeed, for most war-affected populations in Sudan, the basis for livelihood has fundamentally changed, as a result of the war. In rural South Sudan, for example, many of the strategies that people traditionally used to cope with food shortage are now blocked either as a result of warfare, or as a consequence of deliberate strategies of either of the warring parties.

For war-displaced populations in the North, the coping strategies people use are essentially an unsustainable adaptation to chronic food shortages. Although the war-displaced may in some situations be meeting their food needs, they remain extremely vulnerable:

...the relatively small food deficit of communities in this group should not be mistaken for a problem easily addressed...They are almost totally without access to food sources linked to livestock and with that they have lost their traditional way of life, yet they still manage to cover their total food requirements. Their ability to cover food requirements is dependent on labour for hunting, gathering wild foods, and fishing. They are however, totally destitute in terms of assets. It is this destitution and the related absence of kinship ties to wealthier neighbours that makes this group particularly vulnerable (OLS, 1994, October).

In this regard, the term "coping strategy" is actually inappropriate, because it implies that whatever a household does to secure access to food must be positive, even if leads to costs in the short term. It also implies that people will be able to build on their strategies to achieve food security in the long term.

Given the structural factors that erode food security in Sudan, this kind of orientation to coping strategies is inappropriate. In many cases, the strategies used by the displaced to gain access to food are becoming more limited, and vulnerability is increasing. Nevertheless, there continues to be an assumption on the part of UN OLS agencies that any strategy that contributes to immediate food intake is beneficial.

5.4 Food Aid Programming

5.4.1 Estimating Needs and Calculating Food Aid Requirements

Given the dominance of food aid in OLS, the Review Team was surprised at how little information exists to indicate how food aid needs are actually estimated. Recommendations for food aid needs are rarely given in OLS assessment reports, and FAO/WFP Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission reports, although specifying food aid needs, do not disaggregate these needs for OLS specifically, but include all war and drought-affected populations in Sudan. (See Chapter 8 for a more detailed discussion on the problems of information management between FAO/WFP missions and OLS assessments). It is only in the last two years, when OLS has been in need of emergency food aid, that food aid specifically for OLS-assisted populations can be distinguished in FAO/WFP reports.

This section examines the way in which food aid needs are estimated, the extent to which a reduction in food aid has been based on information available to OLS, and how changes in perceptions concerning the nature of the crisis, as well as changes in assessment methodologies, have influenced the estimation of food needs.

5.4.1.1 Estimating Populations in Need

A key component of assessing food aid requirements in Sudan is the estimation of populations in need of food. Estimating populations in

need has a political dimension, since these estimates are often also assumed to represent the numbers of people who live on either side of the conflict. The contentiousness of population figures is considered further in Chapter 8. Here, we concentrate on the way populations in need are estimated vis a vis the process of calculating food aid requirements.

In the early years of OLS, estimations of people in need focused on the estimation of number of people in vulnerable groups, for example the displaced. The various difficulties in assessing such populations was expressed by the FAO/WFP mission of 1993:

The mission found the assessment of the number of displaced a difficult task. In non-Government areas, the mission was denied access to large concentrations of displaced because of lack of security...In the north, the short time available for the visits at the many dispersed sites, and the varying estimates of camp population from various sources at the sites which were visited, presented a different set of problems (FAO/WFP, 1993, March).

In the Southern Sector, many assessment reports prior to 1994 did not include estimates of populations in need in areas inaccessible at the time of assessment. Needs for populations in rural Bahr el Ghazal were left out of the 1993 FAO/WFP report of March, for example, even though it was realized that people in this area are among the neediest. The situation has improved somewhat with the increased knowledge base developed by the food economy approach. Hence, although some areas were not accessible for assessment in 1995, projections for food aid for 1996 could still be made according to the number of people within a specific food economy identified as having deficits. Greater knowledge about recipient populations, as well as greater access, has thus contributed to increased estimations of populations in need in the Southern Sector.

As WFP food monitors have gained greater access, information about needy populations has become more accurate. However, estimating populations that are in need still remains an exercise in balancing calculations of the same population from different sources. The Review Team recognized that making accurate estimates of populations in need will continue to be a challenge for OLS, in a context where populations are large and dispersed, and where conditions are constantly in flux.

Within these overall constraints, however, the Review Team was concerned by the lack of consistency in the use of criteria for estimating how much food is actually required by needy populations.

5.4.1.2 Estimating Food Aid Requirements

In the Plans of Action, food aid is recommended with little or no supporting information on how these needs were calculated. For OLS II, there is no consistent relationship between the estimated number of people in need, and the food aid required by this number. In 1990, for example, 40,000 displaced people in Meiram and 70,000 displaced people in Yei were both estimated to require 4,000 MT of food aid, while 50,000 displaced people in Kongor were estimated to only require 705 MT (GOS/UN/Donors, 1990, March 26).

Figure 5.1 and Figure 5.2 below indicate the lack of consistent relationship between the estimates of populations in need, and the calculation of amounts of food aid that these populations require. The Figures cover both GOS and non-GOS held areas, from 1989 to 1996. No data for 1991 and 1994 is indicated, since it was not possible to disaggregate OLS populations from needy populations in Sudan as a whole for these years.

Figure 5.1

Estimate of Populations in Need of Food 1989 - 1996

(Insert graph "Persons Needing Food Aid" here. Filename = SUSANNE4.DOC).

Figure 5.2

Estimate of Food Aid Needs 1989 - 1996

(Insert graph "Food Aid Needs" here. Filename = SUSANNE3.DOC).

The Figures above show clearly that, although the estimated number of people in need is roughly similar in GOS and non-GOS held areas, the food aid requirement calculated for each is very different. Food aid requirements are estimated to be much higher in GOS areas. Reasons for this are considered later in this section.

In addition, there has also been a lack of consistency in the way information is interpreted to arrive at food aid requirements. Indeed, it appeared to the Review Team that these interpretations vary according to the relative policy importance of food aid within OLS at any given time. More specifically, assessment reports over the years indicate increasingly assumptions entering into food aid calculations about the extent to which needy populations have access

to other food sources besides food aid.

In 1992, for example, the Southern Sector assessment recommends different amounts and durations of food aid rations for displaced/returnee populations, as opposed to those affected by natural disasters (OLS Southern Sector, 1991, December). The FAO/WFP assessment for the same year mentions that food aid estimates are based on possible additional sources of food, and a return to a certain degree of food self-sufficiency after a period of 4-10 months (FAO/WFP, 1991, December). A year later, the FAO/WFP assessment considered access to employment in estimating the food aid needs of the displaced (FAO/WFP, 1993, March). Although incorporating a broader understanding of the socio-economic context of OLS beneficiaries in the Southern Sector, these earlier assessments did not take into account the ability of people to actually access of people to food.

From 1994 forward, however, the ability of people to access food sources is assessed for the Southern Sector. Although recommendations for food aid are not provided in OLS assessment reports, the Review Team was nevertheless given information that indicated how food aid needs were calculated. According to this information, it was possible to see that food deficits identified in the OLS Southern Sector for 1995 were directly translated into food aid needs. Hence, 1995 is the first year where a clear justification is provided for the amount of food aid stated as required. For 1996, the Southern Sector again uses the identification of food deficits as a methodology in the annual assessment, but this time taking into account the self-sufficiency point, or the point at which people switch from strategies that reflect an adaptation to chronic food deficits, to strategies that indicate crisis.

For the Northern Sector, information concerning food deficits, and hence the basis for calculating food aid requirements, is more limited. Further, with an increasing realization of the complexities of local food economies, there has been an increasing reluctance to provide any recommendations concerning food aid needs. Instead, most area assessments for 1996 recommend re-assessments of food aid needs around March of the following year. This does not solve the problem of estimating overall food aid needs in time for them to be incorporated into the Annual Consolidated Appeal. As a result, food aid needs for the Northern Sector are not only based on very limited information, they are also formulated in the absence of recommendations from OLS assessments.

According to WFP in Khartoum, findings are discussed among team members and WFP staff in Khartoum, who then try to make their best estimate according to the information available (Adly, 1996, March 31). An example of the type of information available is indicated below, which describes the situation in Bentiu, with an estimated population of 8000, including 519 displaced and 187 returnees:

In the dry season, grain crops, meat, exchange, milk, fish and non-grain crops are the key sources of household food income. In the wet season, grain and non-grain crops, meat, milk, relief food constitute household food income. Cash is derived from livestock sales, labour (Government employees), other sales, petty trade and crop sales (WFP, 1995, November 19).

Given the isolation of the town and difficult access during the rainy season, an assessment for relief needs is recommended before the beginning of the 1996 rainy season (WFP, 1995, November 19).

The recommendation for food aid derived from the above information is a three months half ration for 4500 people, and an eight months half ration for emergency school feeding. The Review Team found it difficult to understand how this recommendation was derived from information provided in the assessment.

Estimates of food aid needs can never be precise, not least because of the difficulties in estimating population size, but also because accurately quantifying access to food is difficult given the complex social and political factors that influence food access. However, the Review Team felt that such difficulties do not justify the estimation of food aid needs purely on the basis of speculation, as appears to be the case in the Northern Sector.

Estimating food aid needs should at least be based on an informed assessment of the food security situation. In the absence of such an informed assessment, the calculation of food aid needs is highly susceptible to unsubstantiated assumptions about the increasing level of self-reliance among OLS beneficiaries.

Although it has its limitations, the introduction of the food economy approach in the Southern Sector has greatly improved the estimation of food aid needs for this Sector, if only because food aid is now allocated on the basis of clear justifications. Estimating food aid needs based on access to food is clearly an improvement on the estimation of needs based on numbers in vulnerable groups multiplied

by standard rations.

5.4.1.3 Non-WFP Food Aid Providing Agencies

Further complicating the picture of estimation of food aid needs is the fact that agencies providing non-WFP food aid, whether they are part of OLS or not, do not necessarily estimate food aid needs using the same methods as WFP, nor do they necessarily follow the recommendations of the OLS assessment (if there are any). In the Southern Sector, non-WFP food aid is generally provided to displaced populations, by agencies such as NPA, CRS, and World Vision. NPA, although not part of OLS, is adopting the food economy approach (Calvert & Wood, 1996, April 16). CRS, on the other hand, finds the food economy approach inappropriate for estimating food aid needs of the displaced, and instead bases food aid requirements on population estimates, food production from seeds and tools provided, in combination with nutritional surveys (Chaiban, 1996, April 16). In the Northern Sector, although agencies such as ADRA take part in the Annual Assessment, they resource food for the Khartoum displaced independently from OLS, and distribute it according to their own policies.

5.4.2 Food Aid Targeting and Food Aid Allocations

5.4.2.1 Identifying the Vulnerable

Any food distribution system must have clearly defined target groups who are perceived to be at particular risk. As OLS has progressed, increasing attempts have been made to refine targeting strategies.

In the Southern Sector, whereas initially virtually the entire population was perceived to be at risk, increasing attempts have been made to refine targeting strategies to ensure that the most vulnerable are reached.

In the early years of the Northern Sector, better targeting was thought necessary primarily in order to discourage dependence on relief among OLS beneficiaries, despite a lack of information on health and nutritional conditions of the displaced:

Efforts will be made to discourage dependency on emergency food aid by the introduction of income generating schemes.. and new approaches, where feasible, in food aid delivery (UN, 1990, March

26).

This approach in the Northern Sector appears to have derived directly from GOS comments on the draft Plan of Action, which include:

...relief should be distributed only in emergency cases, including children under five, aged, disabled, pregnant and lactating mothers, malnourished and other urgent cases....Relief operations should be directed to encourage production and promote self-reliance and as FFW wherever possible (RRC, 1989, December 5).

It was not until 1995 that better targeting in both Sectors of OLS became a major part of relief strategy:

In light of improved food supply prospects, beginning in 1995, food assistance program focus on: 1. improving monitoring and assessment capacities to better identify needy and vulnerable groups and target assistance (FAO/WFP, 1994, December).

In the Southern Sector, the aim of targeting, in addition to ensuring that food reaches the most vulnerable, is also aimed at allocating limited resources more effectively. This was one of the specific purposes of the food economy approach. In the Northern Sector, however, fears of developing relief dependency still appear to predominate.

Both Sectors face problems in identifying vulnerable households or individuals, due to the difficulties of "measuring" vulnerability in a chronic emergency. Although the problem is now commonly perceived as one of inadequate access to food, this is the result of a complex interaction between economic, social, and political factors. As noted earlier, access to food, as well as malnutrition and mortality, is in many instances related to political vulnerability.

Nevertheless, UN OLS agencies and NGOs have continued to target almost exclusively on the basis of physiological or socio-economic criteria only. In this regard it is also clear that targeting strategies differ between Northern and Southern Sectors. In the North, targeting may include children between 80% and 85% WFH, or all under fives, pregnant and lactating women, elderly, the disabled, etc. (Adly, 1996, March 31). Although criteria for targeting are given by WFP, actual targeting decisions are frequently left up to food monitors, implementing agencies, and local relief committees. In the Southern Sector, there is more emphasis on socio-economic criteria, which often

includes female headed households. Where food is also intended as agricultural support, targeting may be extended to include farmers.

Such strategies, which make use of categories of people who have been interpreted as being vulnerable, do not necessarily solve the problem of identifying those who are actually vulnerable in a particular socio-economic and political context, however. Further, where targeting is left to local authorities, the political vulnerability of beneficiaries is increased.

In the Southern Sector, WFP has attempted to resolve the problem of targeting vulnerable households by setting up community based relief committees. Targeting within displaced populations in the Northern Sector has not been implemented, however, except in the case of the Khartoum displaced. Here, ADRA has introduced a policy of targeting only the malnourished for food distributions, on the basis that this will discourage relief dependency.

However, the Review Team felt that, while targeting only the malnourished may be acceptable in a situation of very scarce relief resources, it is not acceptable when justified by perceptions of relief dependency, especially when such perceptions have not been based on proper assessments. (The extent to which relief dependency actually exists in the context of war-displaced populations in the Northern Sector is considered in Chapter 7). If targeting toward malnourished sections of the displaced population is to take place, it should be done in addition to a general ration that makes up for the structural food deficits which exist. While WFP Khartoum is aware of differences in policy towards food aid for the displaced, it is unable to influence ADRA due to the fact that ADRA has no agreement with WFP, and resources its own food aid. The same is true for agencies that provide assistance to the displaced in the Southern Sector.

5.4.2.2 Balancing Allocations Between North and South

WFP in both Sectors of OLS notes that their operation has progressed from a programme driven by access and logistics, to a more needs-driven programme, as a result of the increase in number of assessments (WFP, 1996, April 13).

Initially, in the absence of detailed assessment information, the OLS Plans of Action targeted food assistance at accessible areas. The amount of food aid allocated was based on estimates of the number of displaced populations within these areas. Although no allocation

figures are given in the first Plan of Action, the number of displaced and war-affected people in the rural South was estimated at over 3 million, which must have been close to the entire population (UN, 1989, March 15). In effect, OLS I moved as much food as possible into accessible areas of the South, prior to any assessment of need (Scott-Villiers, 1996, April 15).

At the same time, it appears that during the early years of OLS there was a perceived need to balance food aid deliveries between Northern and Southern Sectors, in the interests of neutrality:

Mr Grant...insisted that the number of affected population in Sudan should be reported to be 2.2 million, roughly half of which was in government controlled areas and the rest in SPLA held areas (Haider, 1989, March 28).

I am anxious that we maintain the appropriate balance of operation Lifeline Sudan in responding to the needs of both north and south (Baker, 1990, November 1).

This need for balance is also illustrated in barge deliveries, which also applies to some extent today. Based on an informal agreement, a balance was established between GOS and non-GOS areas. The balance was to be achieved through the provision of additional supplies to Juba, where food aid resources in any case were never enough to meet needs (Adly, 1996, March 31). Although deliveries are now based far more on assessments, it is still difficult to pass through an area without delivering at least some supplies (Hayes, 1996, April 4), and barge deliveries still show frequent distributions of 10 MT of cereals by the barges, regardless of the number of people in the "drop-off points".

When the GOS closed OLS II at the end of 1990, agreements on access continued on a more or less ad hoc basis until 1993. In 1991, the balance of allocations between North and South appears to have been greatly influenced by the impending famine in the North, as a result of drought. Although at this time the Southern Sector had established an ongoing system for assessing needs, and a special WFP/NGO/donor assessment mission had estimated food aid needs for both the North and the South, no WFP deliveries took place into the Southern Sector until mid-1991. Indeed, the Southern Sector was unable to obtain clearance for deliveries according to previously assessed needs, despite GOS agreement to the delivery of 10,000 MT of food into SPLM areas. Rather, proposals to deliver food to Juba and SPLM areas were rejected by the GOS as unbalanced (Janvid, 1991, March 20), and both

WFP Khartoum and GOS insisted on re-assessments in the Southern Sector. Later, the GOS would also impose a flight ban. It was not until mid-1991 that the GOS finally relaxed its pressure on OLS, when the rainy season made deliveries into the South difficult. 1991 was also the year when the GOS formulated its emergency relief policy, effectively making all relief entering the country the property of the government (RRC, 1991), and thereby gaining greater control over the relief allocation process.

Until 1993, food aid deliveries within Sectors were also determined by access. For example, in 1992, the Southern Sector has access to only seven locations, comprising mainly large concentrations of displaced people and returnees (Wilson, 1996, April 9). Many WFP staff working in these areas at the time believe that the way displaced people were concentrated was itself a function of centralized distributions due to limited access.

It has been difficult for the Review Team to analyze allocations between Northern and Southern Sectors since 1993, since data on NGO deliveries is incomplete, and demarcations between WFP and NGO allocations are not clear. For 1994 for WFP alone, it was possible to note that 57,057 MT of food was allocated to GOS areas, and 22,846 MT to non-GOS areas. No data on actual deliveries is available, however, for 1994. In 1995, information on actual quantities delivered to GOS and non-GOS areas is available, including both NGO and WFP. In that year, a roughly equal amount of food resources went to both areas - 49,294 MT to GOS areas and 45,063 MT to non-GOS areas. Notably, these allocations can be linked to needs assessments, which indicated roughly similar needs in both areas.

5.4.2.3 Information on Actual Deliveries: The Problem of Monitoring

A key reason why it is difficult to determine how much of allocations actually reached intended target groups is the absence of food monitors on the ground. In the Northern Sector, WFP food monitors did not have a permanent presence in any of the locations served by OLS until 1994. Prior to that, monitors could only obtain access for very short periods of time. Moreover, it was only in mid-1993 that WFP Khartoum introduced principles according to which distributions should take place. Before that time, numbers actually receiving food were estimated on the basis of "gut feeling" of monitors, or were provided by local relief committees (Adly, 1996, March 31).

As noted in previous chapters, the monitoring situation has greatly

improved since 1995. WFP now has 12 food monitors with a permanent presence in Wau, Juba, Malakal, and Bor. These monitors make regular visits to South and West Kordofan, Aweil, Yei, Gogrial, and Pibor (Adly, 1996, March 31). However, monitoring is still uneven across the Northern Sector. For example, there are no full time food monitors for Ed Da'ein or the Khartoum displaced. In addition, although monitors try to be present at distributions, and claim food is distributed for only those present, their authority is to some extent undermined by the local relief committees, and little is known about what happens after the distribution. Guidelines for monitoring and reporting have only just been introduced.

In the Southern Sector, food monitors established a permanent presence within South Sudan from the start of OLS, although not necessarily in areas of greatest need. By 1994, for example, there were regional bases for monitoring in Waat and Akon. At the end of 1994, however, this was no longer possible due to increased insecurity. At present, there is a pool of monitors based in Lokichokkio (Coutts, 1996, April 9). Monitoring food distributions has thus become more difficult in the Southern Sector, not least because military attacks frequently coincide with food distributions (see chapter 6 for more discussion on this issue). The risk of attack, especially in Bahr el Ghazal, also means that distributions have to be conducted relatively quickly, thereby possibly limiting access to food aid for populations living far from distribution points.

5.4.2.4 Needs Assessments and Allocations

The proliferation in assessments from 1993 forward, following greater and more flexible access, has meant more information is available on which to base food aid allocations and deliveries. In the Southern Sector, the introduction of the food economy approach was specifically intended as a tool for better geographic targeting of food aid according to need. More assessments has also enabled the UN to refute GOS charges of inequity in allocations, since allocations are said to be made strictly on the basis of needs assessments (Traxler, 1995, August 2).

This section compares the extent to which needs assessments and food aid allocations correspond.

A detailed database exists for 1995 relief food deliveries, as well as for assessed needs. Similar data for 1994 is much less complete; as noted above, for example, the data available does not provide

clarity regarding NGO food aid deliveries, nor do needs assessments allow GOS and non-GOS areas to be disaggregated. Consequently, comparisons between the two programme years focuses on WFP allocations only, as well as the extent to which needs projected for 1995 were met by both WFP and NGOs. WFP deliveries are grouped into 18 different location clusters, as shown in Figure 5.3, that each have a particular history of need and humanitarian access, whereas NGO deliveries can be grouped for regions only.

Figure 5.3

(Insert "WFP Relief Food Deliveries (MT)" here. Filename = food2.doc).

Between 1994 and 1995, a major change in food aid programming occurred. The total relief food to be distributed was drastically reduced, not only as a result of perceptions of reduced need and a shrunken funding base, but also as a result of access problems that frustrated work in such clusters as the Sobat-Chotbura area. WFP responded to these conditions by concentrating deliveries on a small number of problem areas, and by effectively withdrawing from displaced camps in Khartoum, which were being supplied by ADRA. Within the 18 clusters, six areas received approximately 78% of the entire WFP deliveries for 1995, up from their 32% share in 1994. Figure 5.4 indicates the ranking of location clusters in terms of prioritization of food aid for 1995. The arrows of the six highest-ranking clusters all point in the same direction of increased priority:

Figure 5.4

(Insert "WFP Focus Areas, 1994-1995" here. Filename = food3.doc)

The question arises as to whether or not WFP's increasing focus on a smaller number of areas corresponds to a prioritization of areas according to greatest need. Figure 5.1 and 5.2, provided earlier in the chapter, indicate the relationship between needs for 1995 as estimated from the OLS annual assessment conducted at the end of 1994, and the ranking of WFP food deliveries made in 1995.

What is evident is striking is that the ranking of needs rarely corresponded to the ranking of actual deliveries. With the exception of Northern Bahr el Ghazal, the remaining five priority areas for WFP in 1995 all ranked higher in terms of deliveries than in terms of projected needs. Within these, the higher ranking of deliveries versus needs for areas covered by the Southern Sector (Northern Jonglei factional fighting zone, Eastern Equatoria drought zone, and

Jonglei war zone) was mainly due to increased access in early 1995, following periods of disruption and insecurity.

In the Northern sector, the high ranking of South Darfur and Kordofan for food deliveries versus assessed needs tells a different story. The prioritization of South Darfur for food was in part based on a re-assessment in 1995 (Jackson, 1995, April 23), but also on the fact that food originally intended for Wau was off-loaded in Ed Da'ein due to the presence of a military train (Painter, 1996, April 27). The high ranking of food deliveries to Kordofan was the result of the first joint assessment to peace villages there in April 1995 (WFP, 1995, April). This mission followed requests for food aid by SRC and IARA, and was endorsed by the RRC and the Kordofan State Peace and Resettlement Administration. The mission recommended the provision of food aid to peace villages, despite the failure of DHA to obtain a formal agreement with the GOS for OLS access, and despite earlier misgivings within WFP itself concerning the politicization of food aid to these areas:

Before one starts dealing with the technical issues of such a request...one should consider the political implications of a WFP involvement and under which conditions such an involvement could materialize. In order to do so, one should have clear answers to the following questions: Are the displaced offered a fair chance to settle themselves and cultivate for themselves, or will they stay under the patronage of the local inhabitants of the area? Why are the displaced, after being moved involuntarily to North Kordofan, brought back to an insecure area in South Kordofan, and will they have freedom of movement? (WFP, 1992, November 15).

The fact that some areas indicate a lower level of food deliveries compared with assessed needs is due to a combination of factors, including insecurity or GOS refusal of access, as was the case for Eastern Equatoria and Sobat-Chotbura, respectively, or because NGOs were already supplying food, as in the Khartoum, Lakes, and Western Equatoria displaced camps.

Given the above, the Review Team concluded that, in the Southern Sector, WFP is able to prioritize food deliveries on a geographical basis, and roughly according to the results of needs assessments. In the Northern Sector, however, while needs assessments have responded to technical assessments of need, the political dimensions of food aid allocations, especially to populations outside of the OLS framework, were not addressed, and decisions concerning allocations

were influenced by the broader politico-military context.

5.4.2.5 Food Aid Deliveries by NGOs

The relationship between food aid deliveries and needs assessment is further complicated by the inclusion of the substantial share of deliveries provided by NGOs. The data available for NGO allocations is less clear than for WFP, however, and cannot be completely broken down into all 18 clusters discussed above. It also includes deliveries by NPA in the South, an NGO that is outside of OLS, but nevertheless a big supplier of relief food (10,559 MT in 1995).

In Figure 5.5 below, the importance of WFP and NGO contributions is illustrated.

Figure 5.5

(Insert "WFP and NGO relief food deliveries 1995" here. Filename=food4.doc).

As can be seen in the Figure, WFP's share of food aid is highest in regions most distant from Khartoum and Lokichokio, whereas NGOs tend to cluster into areas that tend to be logistically closer, and also secure.

By including NGO deliveries, needs and deliveries can be compared. Figure 5.6 compares needs as assessed for 1995, with combined NGO and WFP deliveries by region:

Figure 5.6

Needs and Relief Food Deliveries in 1995

Region	Needs (MT)	Deliveries (MT)	% of Needs Met
Bahr el Ghazal	33,498	6,462	19 %
Equatoria	27,615	32,721	118 %
Upper Nile	28,531	11,057	39 %
South Darfur	6,511	4,507	69 %
South Kordofan	1,148	9,313	812 %
Central State	---	484	--
Khartoum	16,819	29,565	176 %
Total	114,121	94,109	82 %

As can be seen from the Figure, there are considerable imbalances between needs and deliveries. In particular, needs in Khartoum, Kordofan, and Equatoria were oversubscribed with food aid. Khartoum and Equatoria were both accessible by surface transport in this year, and NGOs chose to work there to a greater extent than in other regions. The prioritization of Kordofan has already been described above.

On the other hand, although WFP prioritized Bahr el Ghazal and Upper Nile regions with regard to needs, these were the least well-supplied regions in terms of the percentage of needs actually met by food aid deliveries. Unfortunately, available information will not tell us to what extent the failure to meet the needs in these regions was due to logistical reasons, insecurity, denial of access, or a reduction in resources in 1995. The same applies to the failure to meet needs in South Darfur.

The Figure also indicates the inability of WFP to influence the prioritization of NGO deliveries. This may be partly for logistical reasons, since some of the most in need are also the most difficult to access. However, it must also reflect the fact that there are no formal agreements between WFP and NGOs regarding the delivery of non-WFP food aid. In the Southern Sector, WFP is merely informed by NGOs such as CRS and NPA about how much food they are intending to deliver to the displaced camps (Oberle, 1996, April 15). WFP has no influence over NGOs strategy in food distribution in the Southern Sector, however. This same is true for the Northern Sector, where, for example, ADRA took over food distribution for the Khartoum displaced, without any formal agreement, or apparently even discussion concerning who was to receive food.

The apparent overfulfilment of the needs in Khartoum according to Figure 5.6 is misleading. Although OLS needs assessment only include the official displaced camps, ADRA supplies food to all displaced settlements (Teller et al., 1996, April 1). Without any formal agreement between ADRA and WFP, ADRA is able to implement a targeting strategy at odds with the actual food security and nutritional situation. Not only were needs of the displaced in the official camps not met, food to the displaced was distributed according to an entirely different policy to that of WFP, and without the awareness of WFP itself.

5.5 Programming to Promote Food Security

5.5.1 Small Rations, Great Expectations

Since 1993, there has been an increasing emphasis on supporting livelihoods, including coping strategies, within OLS agencies. This is part of an overall strategy to improve self-reliance and discourage relief dependency, which includes the reduction of food aid provision and increased targeting of food aid.

However, available information indicates that there has been no gradual improvement from an emergency situation associated with high levels of malnutrition and excess mortality, to a situation of improved food security or increasing self-reliance. Large populations continue to suffer high malnutrition rates, and displacement of populations within the South, and between non-GOS held and GOS held areas continues. In the Southern Sector, pockets of insecurity, and localized crises continue to exist. Evidence of improved self-reliance in the Northern Sector is limited to an improved food supply situation. However, all populations, even those in temporarily stable areas, continue to be extremely vulnerable.

Recommendations for food security interventions, such as the provision of seeds and tools, fishing equipment, and veterinary care, are not new in OLS; they were recommended in the first Plan of Action. Supporting coping mechanisms has been an objective of OLS Southern Sector since 1992, while seeds and tools distributions, as well as veterinary programmes, were part of the Southern Sector operation as early as 1989. Indeed, early assessments in the Southern Sector noted that people themselves identified the need for production support:

...the most important and effective input as requested by the majority of those interviewed by international staff, would be items that will help increase food production: basic veterinary services, seeds, tools, and fishing equipment (WFP/OLS, 1989, November 13).

In all areas, it was made clear to us that support to indigenous production, where possible, was greatly preferred to receiving free handouts except in cases of urgent food need; we found that people were prepared to walk great distances to collect seeds and tools (UNICEF/OLS, 1990, October).

What these statements indicate is that nothing has changed; there

always has been, and will continue to be, a need to respond with both emergency relief and support for coping mechanisms and livelihoods.

While needs have not changed, however, OLS objectives have, and this has led to changes in both ideas concerning the role of food aid, and in the amount of food aid provided. As noted earlier, food aid is still recommended in OLS, but for a different purpose than was originally the case. Rather than being a direct nutritional intervention, food aid is now seen variously as agricultural support, support for resettlement, as a safety net, and other related concepts. What this has meant in practice is that the same free food rations are given as in the earlier years in OLS, but for a different purpose, in smaller quantities, to fewer people; even the ration composition has not changed according to new objectives.

WFP in both Khartoum and Nairobi agree that the objective of providing food aid has changed. Reduced amounts of food aid are seen in recent assessment reports as a means to assist people through unusually severe hungry seasons, or, as more commonly expressed by WFP, as a means of "filling the hunger gap". In the Southern Sector, smaller amounts of food aid is viewed more as a means of preventing the sale of remaining assets, and preventing the adoption of strategies that might conflict with cultivation, whereas in the Northern Sector, smaller amounts of food are viewed as a "safety net":

If food aid is not given in lean season, people's resilience will be depleted. They have no assets, and would go into debt. Food aid should not be limited to saving lives (Adly, 1996, March 31).

In terms of how much food aid people actually receive, greater amounts of information have led to increasingly complex recommendations concerning partial rations for certain proportions of populations. Aside from the problem of understanding how such recommendations are derived from available information, it is also the case that logistical constraints, as well as local authority interventions, mean that recommended quantities are not necessarily delivered in a timely manner.

For example, WFP Southern Sector monitoring, which recently focused on end use, found that if the already reduced rations provided were distributed over the entire population in the affected area, it would have met only 2.5% of food needs for the two month period the distribution was intended to cover (Kauffeld & Matus, 1996, January). One might what use such small quantities of food aid could possibly have. In the period 1994 to 1995, when the role of food aid as an

agricultural support was gaining prominence, although deliveries were timely, food aid provided covered only 40-60% of identified needs. (Timeliness of food aid deliveries is considered further in Chapter 8).

In the Northern Sector, less information is available on the timeliness of distribution. However, the Review Team found that in Ed Da'ein, agricultural support rations in 1995 were late due to late reassessments of the need. In Wau, while half rations had been recommended for 3 months to cover the cultivation period, this was changed by local decision to quarter rations for 6 months, thereby reducing the amount available during the hungry season.

5.5.2 Lack of Coordination of Food Security Assessments

Given the changed emphasis on the role of food aid, and especially the reduction in general rations, the Review Team was concerned to know food aid reductions have been matched by a corresponding increase in food security interventions. The Review Team also examined the extent to which UN OLS agencies coordinate both assessments and interventions with regard to food security.

For OLS as a whole, the only quantitative information on food security interventions other than food aid is UNICEF's Household Food Security expenditure. While no information on expenditure is available in the Northern Sector until 1994, information after that time indicates that expenditures on food security interventions were lower in 1995 than in 1994. From this data at least, it would appear that the policy of reduced rations and increased targeting of food aid in the North has not been balanced by an increase in production support. It is not possible to say to what extent this is due to lack of resources on the part of UNICEF, or on a failure to develop a coordinated strategy for food security interventions. Expenditure in the Southern Sector is available from 1989 forward, and this data reflects increased expenditure on production support, especially in 1990 and 1994.

In both Sectors of OLS, WFP is responsible for food aid, and UNICEF is the agency mainly responsible for other food security interventions, such as the distribution of seeds and tools, fishing equipment, and the provision of veterinary care. Like WFP, UNICEF has its own assessment and monitoring system. Household food security officers were appointed by UNICEF to both OLS Sectors in 1993.

However, UNICEF and WFP's assessment systems appear to be in contradiction to the respective responsibilities of each agency.

While the food security information system in WFP aims to provide an overall picture, the ultimate purpose of the system is to identify food deficits in order to target food aid. At the same time, WFP assessments have increasingly identified the need for other food security interventions, a move that has brought it into conflict with UNICEF Southern Sector, to the extent that WFP Southern Sector no longer provides such recommendations in its reports.

Although UNICEF is responsible for household food security, household food security officers focus almost exclusively on production, and the need for seeds and tools, in their assessments and monitoring activities. Further, an evaluation of the food security programme in the Northern Sector noted that field monitors saw distribution as their principle function (Goodbody, 1996, February). In the Southern Sector, rather than concentrating on their impact vis a vis food security issues, evaluations of seeds and tools programmes have tended to focus on the cost-effectiveness of seeds and tools as compared with food aid:

In general, for all locations assessed, the provision of seed was 14 times cheaper than providing the equivalent to that produced in food aid. Seed multiplication rate: 40. In total, spent USD 2 million on seed, instead of USD 25 million on food (UNICEF/OLS, 1990, October).

In terms of inputs provided to a very wide area, this has been the most successful year ever (OLS Southern Sector, 1994, August).

These evaluations make little mention of the war in South Sudan, its impact on production systems, and the effect this has on people's ability to achieve food security. The only food security-oriented evaluation carried out in the Northern Sector describes traditional agricultural practices in South Sudan before the war, but does not describe the food security situation for displaced populations that have moved to the North or are in GOS-held towns in the South (Goodbody, 1996, February).

Separate assessments for production support and food aid need not conflict, as long as WFP and UNICEF share a common approach and adequate coordination mechanisms exist. Judging from their respective household food security assessments, however, UNICEF and WFP's concept of food security appears to differ. UNICEF assessments include indicators such as the number of health centres, water supply, type of containers used for collecting water, and even in some cases guinea worm infection, although the rationale for including these indicators

is not explained (Hughes, 1995, August). UNICEF also applies a more quantitative approach than WFP. WFP food monitors, while they may be able to gain a broad overview of the food security situation, are not qualified to give more sector specific recommendations.

While the OLS Annual Assessment could provide the opportunity to establish a common strategy regarding food security, WFP and UNICEF in Khartoum analyze the results of the food security aspects of their respective assessments separately. For example, UNICEF Southern Sector made use of the vulnerability index in the OLS assessment conducted in 1993, to estimate the need for seeds and tools. By 1995, however, even though a crop assessment formed a major part of the annual assessment exercise, this was planned by WFP rather than by UNICEF, and was mostly used to estimate food aid needs (Hughes, 1996, April 19).

The lack of communication on food security issues between WFP and UNICEF, as well as contradictions between agency responsibilities and information systems, was highlighted in a recent evaluation of the food economy approach. Importantly, the evaluation identified a lack of focus on food security issues within OLS (Holt, 1995, June 6). A food security forum was recommended to discuss food security issues among all relevant OLS agencies. This has proved largely unsuccessful in practice, however, due to differences that had already developed between WFP and UNICEF. The evaluation also suggested a common database for food security information, but at the time of the Review, both WFP and UNICEF were involved in establishing separate databases. At present, the Review Team is not aware of any formal mechanism for communication on food security issues in Khartoum between WFP and UNICEF, either at policy or operational levels.

The lack of communication between WFP and UNICEF extends to the field. In the Southern Sector, this is at least partly because WFP and UNICEF cover different areas; whereas WFP food monitors works mostly in deficit areas, UNICEF household food security officers work mainly in surplus areas. Joint assessments are limited because of the limited number of household food security officers, and the extent of these officers other responsibilities. Even when WFP food monitors and UNICEF household food security officers are assessing, the same area, there is little communication between the two. During a visit to Akobo for example, the Review Team found that WFP and UNICEF officers had carried out assessments at the same time, but that the WFP monitor was unaware of what the UNICEF officer was going to recommend, and vice versa (Kauffeld, 1996, April 4).

With regard to food security interventions, there are also contradictions apparent within the various programmes of UNICEF. The UNICEF livestock programme, for example, appears to be entirely separate from the agricultural and fishing support programmes, since it is not incorporated within the overall food security strategy. According to the Southern Sector food security officer, this can be justified because livestock and agricultural interventions have different target groups; whereas livestock programme target the rich, agricultural programmes target the poor (Hughes, 1996, April 17). This is the case despite the fact that crop production has been shown to be a traditional mechanism of restocking (UNICEF/OLS, 1994, September). This traditional strategy does not appear anywhere in the objectives of the agricultural programme, however.

5.5.3 Limitations of Technical Solutions to Improving Food Security

Globally, food security programmes are aimed at increasing self-reliance, and are often judged on their effectiveness in terms of sustainability. However, food security programmes in OLS have, in practice, focused mainly on production, and within this, on the delivery of production-related inputs. This narrow focus fails to take into account both the importance of social and economic networks in achieving food security in South Sudan, and deliberate attempts to undermine subsistence livelihoods in the context of internal warfare. The Review Team found the notion that people might become self-reliant in such a context through the provision of production inputs deeply flawed.

Attempts have been made by some OLS agencies, however, to go beyond the distribution of production inputs. In particular, there have been attempts to re-establish economic networks and markets, through bartering schemes and local purchases. These programmes, although extremely popular in terms of the items brought into South Sudan for trading, have largely been unsuccessful because of logistical constraints in transporting locally traded commodities. In the case of the PISCES project, this includes fish. Fish are delivered to feeding centres by air, to hospitals, or used in public kitchens in the location where the project operates. Hence, the sustainability of this project effectively relies on a the continued presence of aid facilities that are addressing malnutrition and disease.

The livestock programme in the Southern Sector also aims to operate on a cost recovery basis through bartering. Cattle owners pay for drugs in grain or other commodities. Community animal health workers take

a percentage of these payments as salary, and local relief committees, elders, and village development committees decide how to distribute the rest. Usually, schools, hospitals, or FFW programmes are the recipients (Leyland, 1996, April 14). However, the cost of drug supply cannot be fully recoverable, as long as supplies have to be flown in by air.

Both the agricultural and livestock programme have incorporated more developmental aspects into their programmes over the years, with uneven success. For example, UNICEF's seed swapping programmes clearly lead to the distribution of more appropriate seeds. Some NGOs have also been able to incorporate extension services in their agricultural programmes in more stable areas, such as Western Equatoria. The attempted introduction of demonstration farms to encourage improved agricultural practices is more questionable, however. Projects were disrupted because of insecurity, but plots were also neglected through lack of continuous follow-up (Nyangor, 1996, April 13).

These criticisms of current food security programmes do not imply that such programmes are unnecessary. Continued distribution of seeds and tools will clearly be needed, because disaster producing activities will continue. This was recognized with the establishment of a contingency stock in the Southern Sector (Hughes, 1995, January), and would be equally necessary in the Northern Sector. Production assistance can undoubtedly assist populations in improving food security in the short term, especially when based on local knowledge of how people have adapted to overcome periods of acute shortage. Further, agencies have found that the distribution of production inputs are more likely to reach intended recipients, and are easier to target than food aid. Community based programmes can also be justified because they are more adapted to a context where a permanent presence of international staff is not possible, and bartering schemes can be seen in the light of bringing in much needed inputs, and overcoming some of the complexities of direct distribution.

However, the Review Team was deeply concerned at the way in which UN OLS agencies appear to believe that food security programming, especially as it is presently practised, will lead to self-reliance and sustainability in the long term. As will be seen further in Chapters 6 and 7, long term food security is not possible in most of the contexts that OLS operates in, as a result of the continuation of disaster producing policies of the warring parties. Moreover, such thinking has led to a shift in the role of food aid, and a reduction in food aid support over time, in a situation where the emergency needs

of beneficiary populations have not changed. In this regard, it is difficult for the Review Team to avoid the conclusion that programming around food is linked not to information about the realities faced by populations in need, but on trends and pressures in the policy arena.

5.6 Conclusion

The assessment exercise of OLS is at present inadequate to the task of understanding food security issues for beneficiary populations in the Sudanese context. Among other things, this is a result of the failure to take account of the politico-military constraints that accrue for displaced and war-affected populations. Although important advances have been made in incorporating socio-economic data into the assessment process, and this is true for the Southern Sector far more than the Northern Sector, the issue of political vulnerability to food insecurity has not been adequately addressed. The present assessment exercise, especially in the Northern Sector, is unsuited to understanding actual constraints in people's access to food in the midst of a chronic political emergency.

Analytical leadership in needs assessments has come almost exclusively from the Southern Sector. Here, at least since 1994, there has been a clear vision and a common framework for assessments, made possible largely by the incorporation of the food economy approach. While limited, the food economy approach has at least enabled Southern Sector agencies and partners to formulate a clear theoretical framework with regard to food issues.

In the Northern Sector, there are a number of factors that render the assessment exercise highly problematic both within the Northern Sector, and for the production of joint assessments between both Sectors of OLS. For OLS as a whole, UNEU does not have the technical capacity to coordinate assessments, nor are the current organizational structures between UNICEF and WFP, and within UNICEF, conducive to the formulation of joint assessments based on common understandings. Within the Northern Sector itself, the extent of GOS control over the assessment process has led to the inability of UN OLS agencies to enforce good practice and professional methods in the assessment exercise. This is a key issue, not only from the point of view of formulating adequate programmatic responses, but also because lack of rigorous assessment practice renders OLS Northern Sector more vulnerable to manipulation by political interests in the context of internal warfare.

The failure to adequately assess the causes of food insecurity, malnutrition, and mortality in the Northern Sector has made it possible for programming to be based on assumptions of increasing self-reliance as the operation has progressed. However, although a belief in the continuum and in increasing self-sufficiency is manifest within OLS Northern Sector, this is contradicted by some of the UN's own Northern Sector programming. For example, the Northern Sector still places great emphasis on supplementary feeding programmes, with the general aim of reducing excess mortality. However, it would appear to be contradictory to simultaneously implement life-saving interventions such as supplementary feeding, and programmes that assume a degree of self-reliance. Moreover, if people are indeed becoming increasingly self-reliant, one could seriously question why it was necessary to have over 100 feeding centres in GOS-held areas in 1995 (DHA, 1996, February).

The annual assessment process has also failed to provide the basis for a coordinated strategy for OLS as a whole. This is both due to the difference in assessment objectives and methods between Northern and Southern sectors, and to the failure to develop a coordinated planning and follow up process involving all OLS agencies. Although it is essential for both Sectors to adopt a common framework for assessments, it is difficult to see how the same assessment methods could be used in the Northern and Southern sectors under current operating conditions. Without better quality of access, for example, it would be difficult for the Northern Sector to adopt the food economy approach.

Current organizational structures in UNICEF and WFP also hinder the development of a coordinated strategy for improving food security. These two agencies are each responsible for aspects of food security, but essentially carry out separate food security assessments and programming. In the Northern Sector, UN OLS agencies are largely unaware of each other's food security activities, while in the Southern Sector attempts to coordinate food security programming both at policy and operational level have largely failed.

The same holds true for nutrition, which has had in the past and still has an extremely marginal role within OLS. Although food aid, and more recently food security, is the major focus of OLS activities, neither Sector has had a permanent nutritionist on their staff until recently. At present, nutrition is limited to nutritional surveillance and supplementary feeding programmes, rather than serving as the unifying

principle for a programme which was - and still is - largely nutritional in its objectives. There is little contact, for example, between the UNICEF and WFP nutritionists, in terms of planning rations, coordinating general and supplementary feeding programmes, or responding to nutritional problems.

Consequently, issues such as planning rations have rarely been considered in OLS. Had nutrition formed a more integral part of OLS strategy, with clearly defined responsibilities between UNICEF and WFP as to how to respond to nutritional problems, it could be argued that it would never have been possible to reduce rations in the face of nutritional crisis, such as the one among war-displaced in Khartoum. In this regard, the Review Team was especially alarmed at the way in which standards for what constitutes a nutritional crisis appear to have eroded. In effect, it appears that OLS agencies are accepting ever higher levels of malnutrition as acceptable among war-displaced populations.

There is little or no involvement of NGOs in the assessment process, although the Southern Sector is relatively better on this issue than the Northern Sector. In the Northern sector, although assessments are coordinated by UNHCU, NGOs rarely get to see assessment reports. In the Southern Sector, NGOs receive assessment reports, but they do not constitute an integral part of the process of assessment plans of actions. The lack of NGO involvement is a key issue, considering that NGOs provide a major part of food aid and food security resources, as well as having a wealth of information from their own assessment and monitoring systems. The failure to include NGOs in OLS programme planning is also evident from lack of agreements between UN OLS agencies and NGOs in some cases, and ineffective sectoral coordination mechanisms. WFP, for example, has no agreements with NGOs that provide their own-resourced food aid, which means that food aid cannot be adequately prioritized to areas most in need. It also means that food may be distributed according to different principles throughout OLS.

The development of an appropriate strategy is further hindered by limited information on the effectiveness of past interventions. This includes both the effectiveness of the provision of assistance according to OLS principles, and the impact in terms of improving people's condition.

For most programmes little is known of programme delivery, let alone impact. Systems for monitoring food distribution have only just been established by WFP. However, even the most basic form of monitoring, such as what percentage of the of the estimated needs were met, was

done for the first time by the Review Team. Without such monitoring, there can also be no meaningful analysis within OLS concerning the principle constraints in meeting needs. Even less is known about what people actually receive, who receives it, or about the coverage and utilization of services. While several evaluations of aspects of the Household Food Security Programme have been carried out, these tend to focus on the delivery of programme inputs and cost effectiveness, rather than the impact of programmes on improving food security as a whole.

Considering these basic limitations in information, it has been difficult for the Review Team to comment on the extent to which OLS has been able to meet its objectives of preventing unnecessary hunger and starvation through the timely delivery of food aid, of lowering unacceptably high levels of morbidity and mortality, and of support traditional coping and survival mechanisms. Indeed, the Review Team had questions concerning the validity of some OLS objectives themselves. The objective of promoting self-reliance, for example, fails to take into account the structural constraints that vulnerable populations actually face in achieving food security. The use of food aid as a mechanism for promoting what is seen to be a gradual movement towards self-reliance through production support is also questionable. The Review Team found it hard to understand how the small rations provided, assuming that people actually receive these reduced rations, will indeed contribute to improving food security in the longer term. Similarly, the provision of production inputs will address only a small part of the underlying causes of food insecurity in a context where disaster producing activities continue.

Further, it is widely assumed that if, in cases where OLS has failed to provide the recommended food interventions, there has been no starvation, then these interventions were not necessary. For example, a 50% deficit was predicted in Paluer during July/August of 1995, based on an expected failure of the maize harvest and limited access to other food sources. Due to logistical difficulties, however, food was delivered late, and for a much shorter period than recommended. A later assessment concluded:

Within the two months, there were no reports of displacement or death.... Therefore, it can be extrapolated that there was no nutritional deficit during this time frame (Kauffeld and Matus, 1996, January).

This kind of thinking results from a lack of clarity in the objectives

of providing food aid, combined with a lack of information from assessments on actual conditions of affected populations. For example, if food aid is provided as a livelihood support, it follows that a lack of food aid provision should result in an erosion of peoples coping strategies and the probable adoption of strategies damaging to future livelihood, rather than excess mortality. However, within UN OLS agencies there is a continued confusion over the difference between seasonal hunger that is part of a chronic emergency, and mortality as a result of an acute emergency:

Food is given during hungry season because otherwise people would die. 25% ration given at start of hungry season, then 50% ration during hunger gap (Owusu-Tieku, 1996, April 13).

In reality, it has rarely been known what the actual effects of a lack of food aid for affected populations are for OLS beneficiaries (Oberle, 1996, April 15). The incorporation of food aid into the dynamics of internal conflict means that not providing food aid may have extremely serious implications for local populations, even where starvation and death is not evident in a measurable way.

6. PROGRAMMING AND SOCIAL IMPACT IN THE SOUTHERN SECTOR

6.1 Introduction

The shift in OLS programmes in the Southern Sector since 1989 has been from pure, relief-oriented interventions, to programmes that aim to rehabilitate rural production systems and social services in the context of protracted warfare.

In this regard, the focus of programmes in the Southern Sector diverges from those in the North. In the Northern Sector, "development" is seen to involve a transformation of the subsistence economy of rural areas, and pressure on the war-displaced to become part of a large, agricultural labour reserve. In the Southern Sector, programmes are aimed at reinforcement of rural subsistence economies, and "development" has been defined in terms of rehabilitation. Further, whereas in the Northern Sector there has been a tendency to ignore the war in the advocacy of a move away from relief to development, events in the Southern Sector have confronted OLS with the stark realities of war on an almost daily basis.

OLS programmes in the Southern Sector differ in both content and modalities of implementation, depending on the different locations where they are implemented. In Akon and Panthou in Northern Bahr el-Ghazal, for example, the presence of INGOs is both sporadic and ad hoc, due to the insecurity of the area and to periodic flight bans, and aid programme structures are either temporary or non-existent. Consequently, there is a heavy reliance on the use of mobile teams to deliver emergency services. There has also been lack of continuity in programmes due to interruptions necessitated by insecurity, and the evacuation of relief staff. The two INGOs in Akon and Panthou - SCF (UK) and MSF Belgium - have only recently returned to these areas after an interruption of activities in 1995.

Ler and Labone in Western Upper Nile and Eastern Equatoria present a very different picture. Here, relatively stable environments have enabled a continuous INGO presence on the ground, supporting more permanent assistance structures. Programmes in these two places have been less interrupted by insecurity during the war, and tend to be geared toward the rehabilitation of production systems and social services. Gender-related programmes, particularly income generation projects, are also prominent. Labone also benefits from relief food because of its status as a camp for internally displaced persons.

Despite the shift in emphasis from relief to rehabilitation and support for subsistence economies, the public perception of OLS, produced largely by its own publicity, is still that it exists to prevent famine. OLS thus faces criticism when mass starvation does not follow the denial of access in the Southern Sector. For this criticism to be met, there must be a greater understanding of the impact of the war on rural economies, and the incremental rehabilitative effect of different types of relief interventions on those economies. At present, the level of understanding remains relatively poor. As will be seen later, basic concepts such as "the household" are founded more on superficial impressions and imported concepts, than on solid empirical research or understanding of the social aspects of the civil society. As a result, programme interventions have unexpected consequences, and many of the benefits that have accrued through OLS interventions have been inadvertent, rather than planned.

This chapter considers OLS programming in the Southern Sector generally, as well as in the different environments of two case areas, Northern Bahr el-Ghazal, and Western Upper Nile; the livestock programme is also considered, as well as various programmes implemented among the internally displaced, programming for social services, and programmes included under the broad category of "capacity building".

6.2 Programme Trends: From Food Aid to Production Support

6.2.1 Food Aid Distributions

The original goal of OLS I was to avert an anticipated famine in the South. The main strategies employed to achieve this in both OLS I and II were distributions of grain, and the establishment of feeding centres for specific populations deemed vulnerable.

However, accessibility, rather than reported needs, determined OLS food aid distributions in 1989. WFP and Norwegian People's Aid food convoys delivered supplies by road mainly to locations in Eastern Equatoria, a region suffering relatively less than more inaccessible areas such as Jonglei, Western Upper Nile, and Northern Bahr el-Ghazal. The high cost and risks of air transport meant that many locations unreachable by road received disproportionately lower amounts of food aid. For example, road-accessible Bor received over 1,400 MT of food from WFP, while Ayod and Waat, supplied by air, received six and 53

MT, respectively (UN/OLS, 1990, June). The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), which was not part of OLS, also airlifted food aid to these locations in 1989, but again in quantities insufficient to meet reported needs. Distributions in these locations were also restricted to areas immediately surrounding relief centres.

In 1990, the GOS failed to participate in the joint technical committee set up to decide final relief needs. OLS Southern Sector instead implemented its own 3-month plan up to the end of the year. Generally, food was delivered to areas rather more according to assessed needs, but there were still areas, including Northern Bahr el-Ghazal, Western Upper Nile, northern Jonglei, and the Sobat basin, which received little food from either WFP or from INGOs.

In December 1990, the GOS declared OLS II at an end, and announced that a further phase was not to resume until "technical discussions" reviewed modalities. Thus, approval was withheld from WFP's logistical plan for 1991. INGOs were not affected, however, and food deliveries to Eastern Equatoria continued by Norwegian Peoples Aid and World Vision International.

During the early part of 1991, the growing famine crisis in the North diverted attention from OLS, and both the WFP office and the OLS Special Coordinator in Khartoum confirmed the GOS's ban both on WFP convoys into South Sudan, and on the distribution of WFP food stocks already in the South (Page, 1991, March 15). Food stockpiled in the North, earmarked for delivery to the South, was instead diverted to Kordofan, where the need was felt to be greater. The GOS finally gave its consent to deliveries and distributions in the South, based on the 1990 assessments, only after the rainy season had begun, when overland transportation to the most urgent areas was impossible.

The result of this delay was that OLS Southern Sector (especially WFP) was unable to prepare for the food crisis triggered by the evacuation of refugee camps in Ethiopia in May 1991, though it had been anticipated in many ways. When Itang, Funyido, and Dima were emptied in May/June, OLS and ICRC were forced to attempt airdrops of food and other emergency items for some 200,000 returnees confined to remote areas along the Sudan-Ethiopian border. Subsequently, ICRC managed to secure a comprehensive agreement to supply some 90,000 persons at Pochalla. The agreement between OLS and the GOS was far less comprehensive, however, and OLS was restricted in flights, tonnages of food, and types of relief items that could be provided for some 125,000 to 150,000 returnees in the Sobat basin.

Not only did OLS find itself unable to adequately serve returnees from Ethiopia, it was also unable to gain sufficient access to those parts of Bahr el-Ghazal, Western Upper Nile, and Jonglei to which most of the returnees were ultimately headed. The split in the SPLA in August 1991, which drew an internal battle line across Jonglei, further inhibited OLS's ability to meet the needs of the majority of Southern Sudanese throughout 1992.

For much of 1992 OLS was effectively in abeyance. With expanded access in 1993, the operation resumed. The discussion that follows on programming thus focuses on the impact of OLS since 1993.

6.2.2A Shift to Production Support

The claim frequently made that OLS I averted famine and saved people from starvation (O'Reilly, quoted in Minear, 1991: 63) was not substantiated in the first general survey of the South carried out in 1990, which concluded:

1988 was the year of the worst food crisis in the southern Sudan, with areas in Northern Bahr el-Ghazal, Western Upper Nile, and Jonglei suffering from famine, while many other regions experienced severe food shortages. No international assistance went to the worst affected areas that year. By the time Operation Lifeline Sudan got underway in 1989, those who had survived the previous year were attempting to revive their local economies by relying on traditional networks of support and mutual assistance. In 1990 we found that most people were still recovering from the devastation experienced in 1988, and they were relying on their own networks of kinship and exchange. Food produced is distributed mainly through these networks, but lack of transportation restricts their range (UN/OLS, 1990, June: 5).

In light of this finding, the 1990 report recommended a shift from food aid to more sustained support for local production and distribution:

The needs of the Southern Sudan will not be met by food assistance alone. Greater attention must be paid to increasing local production through the revival of the fishing industry and the distribution of seeds and tools. Attention must also be focused on means of re-distributing local surpluses. Here existing exchange and kinship networks will have to be encouraged and supported. At the same time other means of barter through local markets and co-operatives can distribute food and seed over a

wider area (UN/OLS, 1990, June: 6).

During OLS II, a beginning was made on to support food production, initiated by SCF (UK)'s distribution of fishing equipment in the Sobat basin, and UNICEF's first seeds and tools programme. Throughout 1990, WFP also tried to improve its information on likely food deficit areas, and to time more accurately its food distributions to arrive during the "hunger gap" at the end of the dry season. This strategy was thwarted, however, by the ban on food convoys and food distributions.

Since 1994, there has been a more sustained attempt by UNICEF, WFP and a number of INGOs to focus support on food production. There has also been an attempt to refine understandings of food security and the food economy. In general, OLS programming has moved away from a concern exclusively with nutrition, and toward tackling high mortality more generally, through a combined approach of food and health security (OLS, 1995, November: iii).

Presently, non-food programmes in the Southern Sector cover a broad range of areas, including: food security, community health, water, and sanitation, veterinary services and animal health, emergency education, and capacity building. Figure 6.1 gives a sense of the range of programming by indicating OLS activities in the case study areas visited by the Review Team.

(Insert File "Figure-6.1" here).

In the following two sections, OLS programming is considered in more detail in two very different contexts: the unstable and inaccessible region of Northern Bahr el-Ghazal, and the relatively stable environment of Western Upper Nile.

6.3 Food Security in an Insecure Environment: Northern Bahr el-Ghazal

6.3.1 Overview

The case of Northern Bahr el-Ghazal highlights the complexity of the relationship between food aid and food security. It also reveals an evolution of ideas about relief among international agencies since the pre-OLS famine in the region.

6.3.2 Emphasis on Food Aid, But Few Distributions

Agencies involved in the relief operation for displaced people from Northern Bahr el-Ghazal prior to 1989 approached the emergency as a natural catastrophe, which could be alleviated by the provision of food and the establishment of feeding centres. This approach diverged sharply from those of the Dinka, however, who saw food aid primarily as a means to enable them to return to their homes, and reinvest in the subsistence economy (Keen, 1994).

Despite this, and despite recommendations contained in an evaluation of the emergency response, OLS failed to provide agricultural support to Northern Bahr el-Ghazal from 1989 forward. It should be noted that this was also due to the flight ban on the area imposed by the GOS from early 1990 to December 1992. Nevertheless, when OLS did gain access to the area in 1992/93, it gave initial priority to food inputs, and only gradually came around to the Dinka way of thinking.

The present policy of OLS, which aims at supporting the food economy, is in marked contrast to the approach of the late 1980's and early 1990's. It is also in sharp contrast to the approach in the Northern Sector, where the size of food aid rations for displaced populations living in camps continues to be a major preoccupation for international agencies.

Although the emphasis of OLS in Northern Nahr el-Ghazal has historically been on food aid inputs, the region has never been served adequately by food aid distributions. During the first year of OLS, when the SPLA and the GOS agreed to the use of the railway for food deliveries, only 17 MT of food were delivered to stations under SPLA control north of Wau. No further overland deliveries took place until early 1992, when SCF (UK) sent a convoy from Uganda, which reached only to Thiet (Ryle, 1992, December 17-31).

After 1992, overland access became even more problematic with the resumption of government offensives. Since that time, the railroad has presented more dangers than benefits to the rural populace, as it is used more often to resupply government garrisons than to deliver relief supplies, as well as by Popular Defence Force units who accompany GOS trains and regularly raid villages and cattle (Food Economy Analysis Unit, 1996, January: 12-13).

Air access to the remoter areas of Northern Bahr el-Ghazal has also been problematic. A blanket flight ban from the second to the fourth year of OLS effectively inhibited the development of any relief programmes. Since 1993, air access has been irregular. The withdrawal of permission to fly to certain locations, often following attacks by

GOS troops or allies, and restrictions on the size of aircraft, have exacerbated the impact of disruptions on the ground in the renewal of insecurity since 1994. This has measurably affected the quality of relief offered to local populations.

The cumulative effect has been that the people of Northern Bahr el-Ghazal have not been receiving the amount of relief food that OLS assessments suggest they need. As will be seen further in chapter 8, the entire region of Bahr el-Ghazal received only 19% of its assessed needs for food aid in 1995. In this regard, the comment by Save the Children (UK) that "most people in South Sudan survive chiefly by their own efforts and are not dependent on OLS" (SCF (UK), 1993, December) merits further examination, since it points to the complexity of the role of food aid in the overall food economy in the midst of an internal war.

6.3.3 Labour Flight and Rural Povertization

Given the failure of OLS to adequately access Northern Bahr el-Ghazal during its first four years, and the irregularity of access during the past three and a half years, questions have been raised about the need of OLS itself, since Northern Bahr el-Ghazal has experienced no return to "famine". These questions indicate that the evolution of OLS's approach to food aid, and an improved understanding about the nature of the emergency, have not yet been appreciated by donors, or indeed by various levels in the UN.

The case of Northern Bahr el-Ghazal illustrates some of the complexities of rural economies under stress of civil war. Earlier predictions of widespread starvation have not come to pass, in large part because early needs assessments failed to take into account how a variety of food sources, including food aid, might be balanced during periods of severe shortage. (It should be noted, however, that, since 1995, the Food Economy Analysis Unit of WFP has done considerable research on the availability and nutritional value of wild foods). There has also been a tendency to underestimate how, over a period of years, households may be forced to survive through resource depletion, or, especially in the case of Northern Bahr el-Ghazal, by out-migration. In this regard, the effectiveness of both food and non-food interventions can be measured best not by the extent to which they prevent outright starvation, but by the extent to which their cumulative effect stabilizes populations, and retains productive labor within the rural subsistence economy.

The exodus of people out of Northern Bahr el-Ghazal during the late 1980's was a direct product of the raiding tactics of the Murhalin, who targeted resources as well as persons. Families divided themselves up, some going to look for work and refuge in the North, to refugee camps in Ethiopia, or to remoter farming and grazing areas of Bahr el-Ghazal itself. With the uneven harvest of 1989, the heavy dependence on a few agriculturally productive areas continued, and there was an internal circulation of people from stricken areas in search of food or work in other parts of the region (UN/OLS, 1990, June). In 1990, there was an influx of returnees from the North, as internally displaced persons from as far away as Khartoum and Sennar were encouraged by the GOS to return to their homes (UN/OLS, 1990, June). The government ban on flights to Northern Bahr el-Ghazal, however, which remained in effect for most of the period from 1990 to 1992, effectively prevented the delivery of either food or production inputs to these returnees, thereby increasing the burden on a rural economy already in contraction.

The truce along the border between the SPLA and Missiriya and Rizeigat, which began in 1990 and continued intermittently to 1996, allowed for freer movement between Northern Bahr el-Ghazal and the Transitional Zone. This enabled people to circulate between their home areas, and relief centres or agricultural schemes in government-held areas, as circumstances required. This, in turn, enabled people to gain access to relief aid and income in the Transitional Zone during certain times of the year, without necessarily having to necessarily deplete their own resources (UN/OLS Southern Sector, 1993, February; WFP, 1993; Food Economy Analysis Unit, 1996, January). The extent to which the people of Northern Bahr el-Ghazal used migration to the North as a temporary coping strategy was discovered, however, only after WFP began airdrops of food into the area in 1993 and 1994.

While the exodus of part of the population may have prevented large scale starvation, by conserving scarce local food stocks, it also reduced further the area under cultivation. The combined effect of denial of relief access and labour exodus during the period 1990 to 1992 was that, by early 1993 when access was resumed, there were instances of high malnutrition and mortality (MacAskill, 1994, April), and evidence of a much contracted agricultural base (WFP, 1993). A major contributing factor to high levels of mortality was also the long term lack of any health care (MacAskill, 1994, April). The recognition of this combined nutritional and health crisis prompted food interventions by WFP, and health interventions by MSF Belgium, AICF, and ICRC.

Food drops by air began in April 1993, with Akon becoming the main distribution centre in Gogrial County. This quickly produced "relief centre syndrome", where the existence of a single centre attracted persons from a wide radius, and where the effective distribution of food diminished the further one moved from Akon itself (WFP, 1993). Attempts at decentralisation, by increasing the number of drop sites, began later in the year with the inclusion of Malual Kon (Wanyjok Payam) in July, and Thiek Thou (Lietnhom Payam), in September. Further attempts to expand the area of access in 1994 were hindered, however, by refusals from the GOS. By July of 1994, WFP was airdropping food to eight locations in Bahr el-Ghazal (Food Coordination Minutes, 1994, July 29). Flight clearance to Akon was once again denied from December 1994 to November 1995, just at the time when Kerubino was most active in the northeastern and central areas of Northern Bahr el-Ghazal, and food deliveries were diverted to Panliet (Akon Payam), Akak (Wunrok Payam), and Panthou (Wathmuok Payam, Aweil East County) (Food Economy Analysis Unit, 1996, January).

While access caused chronic problems in distribution, limitations in air cargo capacity were also a constant problem. In early 1994, WFP was able to meet only 45% of Bahr el-Ghazal's assessed needs (Food Coordination Minutes, 1994, February 25/March 11). It was later estimated that, even if all food reached its intended target populations, it would be sufficient to cover only 7% to 9% of estimated needs (Food Economy Analysis Unit, 1996, January). Once on the ground, food aid was subject to taxation and other diversions by the SPLA, further reducing the amount going directly to the civilian population.

Seeds and tool distributions were also made in 1993 and toward the end of 1994, with mixed results. In 1993, very few of these items were distributed beyond Akon, and recipients considered the tool distributions to be too late to be effective (WFP, 1993). In 1994 and 1995, most farmers still obtained their supplies of both seeds and tools either from local markets, or from kin (Hughes, 1995, January).

6.3.4 The Role of Food Aid in Reducing Labor Flight

Given these constraints, why then did food security improve in 1994/5, as food economy and household food security reports clearly indicate? The main reason appears to be that not only did food aid keep people in their home areas during the cultivation season, it began to attract people back who had migrated to the North.

By October 1993, significant numbers of people were returning from Ed

Da'ein, Meiram, Nyala, En-Nahud, Babanusa, Abyei, and even Khartoum to Malual Kon, Mayen Abun, and Akon - all centres of food distribution. The effect of this return migration was not so evident in 1993, when the lack of labour and the lack of food were still reported to be the main constraints on cultivation. The restricted number of distribution centres contributed to this, as many of the strongest members in a community traveled long distances during critical periods in the agricultural cycle to obtain relief food for weaker people who could not travel (WFP, 1993).

The effects of return migration began to be seen in 1994. By that year, food distributions had been relatively decentralised, and the rains were good. By the rainy season of 1995, the pattern of labour return and labour retention was clear. While many families still remained divided, with some members living and working in the North, and while there was still some outmigration, the numbers leaving were declining, and the numbers returning increasing. Many informants attributed this reversal directly to the presence of food aid. In Maper, for example:

Those who we met who had recently returned were saying that conditions in the north had deteriorated and that there was a general trend for people to return to their home areas despite local insecurity. There was also an emphasis on food aid being one of the influencing factors for people's return to the area (Food Economy Analysis Unit, 1996, January: 59).

Further south in Panthou, it was reported that food aid reduced the amount of time spent on other food gathering activities:

The food input received in Panthou this year has had an effect of bringing back this area to a normal situation. After 3 consecutive years it seems to have increased the labour available to households for cultivation by reducing the need to go to out in search of food through fishing, collection of wild foods and working in other areas for food/cash. In addition, competition for these options has diminished (Food Economy Analysis Unit, 1996, January: 97).

Although increased food production did not reduce the need for sale of labour, people moving North were now tending to seek short-term work, and labour migration to the North was increasingly seen as a last resort, when all other alternatives had failed (Food Economy Analysis Unit, 1996, January).

The improvement in subsistence cultivation in Dinka areas also helped redirect seasonal labour movements, and strengthen the labour-crop exchange both within Dinka districts, and between Dinka and Luo districts to the south. In some traditional surplus areas, cultivation was expanded in part by employing persons from deficit areas. Within Dinka communities:

...these exchanges are very important for building up kinship ties and supporting community cohesion. It continues to be an important option in addition to loans or begging, especially for poorer families or families in crisis (Food Economy Analysis Unit, 1966, January: 42).

The different harvest seasons in northern Dinka districts and southern Jur-Luo districts also facilitated this reciprocal labour exchange. The Luo came north to work on Dinka farms during the September harvest, but also employed Dinka labour for the harvest of late-maturing sorghum in December to February.

Thus, the real value of OLS food and food production inputs, small as they were, was to keep household labour forces intact, reduce the amount of time spent on alternative sources of food, and re-enforce networks of kinship exchange and exchange between nearby communities.

6.3.5 The Present Situation - A Reversal Back to Labor Flight?

The current disruption caused by the attacks of Kerubino, units of the Popular Defence Force (PDF), and Nuer raiders under the control of SSIM commanders, would appear to be aimed at this modest recovery of the rural economy. Between 1994 and 1996, Kerubino's forces targeted relief food, food stocks, and standing crops, and a correlation can be made between relief deliveries and these attacks (Food Economy Analysis Unit, 1996, January). Increased PDF activity along the railway line to Wau in 1994/5 also appears to have been timed to cause maximum disruption to dry season cattle movements and late dry season/early wet season clearing and planting cycles. Raids out of Western Upper Nile into the northeastern and eastern grazing grounds have also disturbed seasonal cattle movements, forcing cattle owners to send their livestock farther away to more secure pastures.

The pattern of the last two years' raiding has led WFP to conclude that:

The overall broad scope of fighting in northern Bahr el Ghazal appears to have particularly affected the known surplus areas (Food

Economy Analysis Unit, 1996, January: 44).

As in the early 1980s, so now the people of Northern Bahr el-Ghazal have become vulnerable not because of their poverty, but because of their potential (if not actual) economic strengths. As a result, there is the potential for renewed labour out-migration, as well as a renewed threat that households who choose to remain in the area will once again have to survive through resource depletion.

6.4 Food Security in a Stable Environment: Western Upper Nile

6.4.1 Overview

Liech State in Western Upper Nile has been relatively undisturbed throughout much of the war; most fighting has been confined to the area around and to the north of Bentiu. Like Northern Bahr el-Ghazal, the remoteness of the area has meant that substantial deliveries of food aid have not occurred. Unlike Northern Bahr el-Ghazal, however, the resuscitation of the rural economy has been assisted by both relative stability, and by growing commercial links with the North, which have expanded considerably since 1992. The relatively secure environment of Ler in Western Upper Nile has offered long-term programme opportunities to OLS agencies.

6.4.2 Food Production Support

While relief food has not been a significant component of OLS programmes in Ler, food still plays a role in OLS programmes there. For example, food has been used in food for work projects, including brick making, school reconstruction, and well digging, and as part of the package of incentives for community workers and RASS counterparts in lieu of wages. The amount of food provided in these ways is less than would have been the case in regular relief distributions, however.

Given the relatively conflict-free environment of Ler, OLS programme strategies have focused on the provision of inputs to support crop production, fishing, and livestock - the three main components of the food economy.

UNICEF is the main agency providing support to agricultural production in Ler. This takes two forms: a seeds and tools programme prior to planting, and a seed swap programme during the harvest period in

October. With regard to the latter, surplus seeds are exchanged for items such as salt, sugar, jerry cans, and clothing that are otherwise difficult to obtain locally. The aim of this project is to help revive local markets. UNICEF also supplies seeds and tools in support of a gardening project run by Healthnet International, the produce of which goes to the Ler hospital, and to the community (Paar, 1996, April 5).

Fishing is a key component of the food economy of Ler. Fishing has received the support of some OLS agencies who provide fishing equipment, which is otherwise difficult to obtain locally due to war-induced market interruptions. Until 1994, two NGOs - Pisces Aid and NCA - both ran projects for fishing support. Whereas the NCA project focused on women, the Pisces Aid project sought to:

...ease the malnutrition and hunger among the people...(in South Sudan) by harvesting the fish available in the water ways of south Sudan, while harnessing and directing the self-help spirit of the people themselves (Eyrich, 1994, April).

The project established a bush shop where fishermen traded their dry fish for various items; these fish were then distributed to feeding centres in Ler and other villages in Western Upper Nile, as well as to the Ler hospital. In 1994, the Pisces Aid project was closed as a result of misunderstanding between Pisces and UNICEF.

6.4.3 Expanding Commercial Networks

Food production in Western Upper Nile has always been precarious. Although some parts of the region have benefited in security terms from isolation in the midst of the central swamps, this also means that subsistence production is vulnerable to flooding. During 1988 and 1989, food production was disrupted by flooding, a situation made worse by the lack of health and veterinary services due to isolation.

There has been a long history of interdependence between different areas and different communities within Western Upper Nile. Prior to OLS, people survived largely by seeking food from local surplus areas; support to agricultural production has tended to strengthen this interdependence. At the same time, there has been a parallel strengthening of commercial ties with the North since 1992. This has gone largely unrecognised by OLS agencies, however, despite the fact that it is this trade that provides much of the currency on which local income generating projects depend. Failure to fully appreciate the scope of local commerce has inhibited appropriate planning and

development of some of food security programmes in the region.

The market in Ler is linked to other markets in the region, the most significant being Rupnyagai on the Bahr el-Ghazal, which serves as the main trading link between Western Upper Nile and Southern Kordofan. Ler and Rupnyagai are mainly cattle market centres, where commodities are also brought in for sale. Ler is also fed by smaller subsidiary cattle markets; it was also connected, though somewhat tenuously, with the cattle auction at Yirol before the SPLA split in 1991.

In 1990, Ler was a busy market, although not as big as Yirol or Milo in Northern Bahr el-Ghazal. By 1996, however, with Yirol in government hands, and Milo and other markets in Northern Bahr el-Ghazal regularly destroyed by the PDF and Kerubino, Ler had grown enormously. Many more shops had opened, and a greater range of commodities, including clothing, cloth, salt, sugar, soap, medicines, and manufactured goods were available. Dried fish were also available in the market, and a regular cattle auction took place.

Most shops and traders in Western Upper Nile are licensed by the SSIM Department of Commerce and Trade. Although the market is supplied with goods obtained from Northern traders, no Northern traders have been allowed to come further south than Rupnyagai. Southern traders have thus kept control of the internal market, and have even organised themselves into a Traders' Union.

Commerce in Western Upper Nile has become big business. In 1994, it was estimated that some LS 30 to 40 million worth of currency entered from the North to Western Upper Nile and Jonglei through the cattle trade (EPAG, 1994, July). Rupnyagai, where the highest prices for cattle are paid, is now the centre of a considerable network, and the local Bul Nuer have been able to maximise their mediating position between Kordofan and the rest of Western Upper Nile. They are able to cultivate a surplus of sorghum, which is sold or exchanged within the interior of Western Upper Nile, and to obtain regular military supplies from the government through their militia leader, Paulino Mathip (who is also the SSIM governor of Liech State). The Bul Nuer also engage in cattle trade with Northern Sudanese counterparts, sometimes as merchants, and sometimes as suppliers of cattle through raids into Northern Bahr el-Ghazal.

Commerce between Western Upper Nile and Kordofan has definitely benefited from improved contact between the GOS and SSIM over the years. While trading networks in Bahr el-Ghazal have suffered from attacks in recent years, they are still an important, if

under-reported, aspect of the local economy. The Northern Bahr el-Ghazal markets are important cattle auction centres, but people also use them to buy grain, brought in by Missiriya herders and traders. In this regard, periodic government bans on the export of grain to Bahr el-Ghazal can be interpreted as an attempts to limit the supply of grain to South Sudan. It may also have contributed to driving up the price of imported grain in the Northern Bahr el-Ghazal marketplaces.

Commerce between Northern Bahr el-Ghazal and Kordofan contributes to local household economies in a number of ways: in the buying and selling of cattle and grain, in the sale of handicrafts such as grass mats, and in the hiring out of labour. Kordofan is not the only source of commodities for the Bahr el-Ghazal markets; the Review Team visiting Wau found a similar pattern of trade between that town and SPLA held areas, with sugar, medicine, clothing, and soap going out, in return for livestock, grain, honey, charcoal, and firewood coming in. The trade networks of Bahr el-Ghazal link up with a further export market to Uganda. Just as SSIM soldiers do in Western Upper Nile, in Bahr el-Ghazal SPLA soldiers play a part as "protectors", escorting traders and their cattle, and extracting their own duty.

6.4.4 Income-Generating Projects in the Midst of Commercial Expansion

It is against this background of an independent, often expanding commercial network in livestock, grain, other natural products, handicrafts, and manufactured goods, that the income generating projects of OLS in Western Upper Nile should be judged.

The sun-dried fish trade was an important source of income for Western Upper Nile and parts of Jonglei before the war. By 1983, it was largely in the hands of local fishermen and traders, supplying fish not only to various Sudanese towns, but to Zaire as well. Lack of access to markets in the early years of the war caused the collapse of the fish trade, however.

The Pisces Aid programme appears to have made no study of this earlier fish trade, prior to establishing its own project to revive the fishing industry. One of the key weaknesses of this project was the lack of attention to distribution; apparently, it was assumed that fish would be best used supplying relief agency feeding centres, hospitals, and food-for-work projects.

Pisces did make some adjustments to local conditons, however, during the course of the project. In Ler, it switched from the production of

salt fish (which requires heavily subsidised quantities of salt), to locally produced dried fish, and also began to accept for barter local handicrafts such as mats and rope. With the exception of limited local demand for rope, however, the project was unable to distribute the mats for sale or exchange (Eyrich, 1994, April).

The Pisces project was also troubled with competition from local traders, who wanted to obtain Pisces barter items for resale. These traders would sometimes buy fish from local fishermen with cash, and then barter the fish directly at Pisces bush shops. Later, traders hired fishermen to act as a front, and to obtain commodities for sale in the market. The obvious irony here is that Pisces, as a relief project, was working on the assumption that barter and food-for-work were necessary in the absence of a cash economy, whereas those involved in the cash economy were able to use cash to siphon Pisces goods their way.

Despite its obvious problems of planning and implementation, Pisces is remembered positively by local people, mainly because it provided a convenient supply of manufactured goods. There also appears to be a greater supply of fish on market than was previously the case, and some attribute this to the higher volume of fishing inputs brought in by Pisces as opposed to UNICEF.

A slightly different problem has developed over the income-generating projects of women's groups, supported by NCA. NCA's fishing project is targeted at women who operate income generating fish shops; however, women still have to contract men to do the actual fishing. NCA also supported women's tea shops. However, the local Regional Coordinator of Commerce and Trade has questioned whether these projects are in deed humanitarian assistance, or businesses. In this regard, the Regional Coordinator of Commerce and Trade has proposed that women's tea shops be licensed and taxed like any other business. The existence of rival tea shops, which are licensed, and which sell tea at the same price as NCA-supported shops, calls into question the claim that women are unable to obtain supplies of sugar and tea locally. On the other hand, it is also reported that they are supplying the independent shops.

6.5 Programming for Livestock Support

This section provides a brief overview of veterinary programmes in the Southern Sector. In a context where livestock forms an essential part of the rural subsistence economy, the approach of OLS programming to livestock is important to consider. Here, the evolution of veterinary

programming is discussed. In the following section, the extent of OLS understanding of the livestock sector is considered in more detail.

Veterinary assistance to South Sudan under OLS was originally confined to the re-establishment of anti-rinderpest vaccination teams. Widespread anti-rinderpest vaccination in the first two years of OLS by UNICEF and ICRC had a pronounced effect on reducing outbreaks, but as neither of the implementing agencies normally supported full-scale veterinary programmes, there was reluctance to expand the programme. An outbreak of trypanosomiasis in southern Bor late in 1991 thus went unchecked, in spite of urgent appeals from stockowners. It is only recently, with the establishment of other veterinary projects under NGOs with experience in the field that a more comprehensive veterinary support programme has begun.

The main element of this more comprehensive programme is the control of animal diseases through community animal health programmes. While it is envisaged that the programme will be increasingly controlled by at the local level, vaccines and drugs will need to be provided by UNICEF and NGOs. The stated objective of the programme is economic -to support livestock as an important way of improving food security in South Sudan.

While UNICEF is the main co-ordinating agency in the veterinary programme, specific projects are undertaken by NGOs, and UNICEF becomes directly involved when NGOs are absent. For instance, SCF (UK) expanded its programme in Akon and other places to include livestock in 1994 (SCF (UK), 1996, April). In Western Upper Nile, ICRC began supporting a veterinary vaccination programme from 1989 to 1991, and was subsequently replaced by ACROSS. ACROSS put together a curative drug package, and deployed veterinary coordinators to Ler from other parts of Western Upper Nile. At the same time, ACROSS requested UNICEF to extend its rinderpest vaccination programme to Western Upper Nile. A crash training programme for veterinary workers did not yield the expected results, however, because trainees were selected from towns instead of cattle camps, livestock owners were not involved in treatments, and trainees did not receive adequate supervision from the veterinary coordinators (ACROSS/UNICEF, 1995).

The lessons from the crash programme led to a change of strategy, from one that was externally-driven to a community-based animal health delivery service with the active participation of community leaders. From 1995 UNICEF, handed over the running of the veterinary programme to ACROSS, with UNICEF still providing free rinderpest vaccine. Unlike other NGOs, however, ACROSS has no staff based in Ler; instead, it has

trained a local team of 10 Community Animal Health Workers who run the programme. According to the local RASS coordinator, about 70,000 cattle were vaccinated against rinderpest between January and April 1996.

The principle of cost recovery in the veterinary services was adopted by OLS at the end of 1994, and was introduced in 1995. Rinderpest vaccination continued to be free, but charges were introduced for other curative drugs. The rationale for introducing charges was laudable - to prevent livestock owners from expecting unsustainable free services. Cattle owners pay LS 10 per treatment per cattle. However, this is inappropriately called a cost recovery measure. Money realised from the charges are not ploughed back to into the veterinary programme, but are held by the NGOs for use in community development projects. In practice, charging fees for veterinary services is not cost recovery, as those involved in the programme openly acknowledge (Blakeway, 1995, April; Leyland, 1996, April 26; Fison, 1996, April 12). However, there is little resistance to the idea of paying for treatment, and community leaders in Akon and Panthou confirmed that they were satisfied with the payment of the LS 10 charge. The main problem for OLS agencies in the veterinary programme is what to do with the Sudanese pounds, since imported drugs must be bought in hard currency.

6.6 Knowledge of Civil Society: Problems and Issues

The consideration of OLS programmes presented above leads directly to an issue that came to the attention of the Review Team; namely, the extent to which programming has relied less on systematic research and a corresponding understanding of social organization and socio-economic trends, and more on assumptions and pre-existing models.

The casual attitude toward data collection and analysis that plagued OLS from the early years has made it difficult to tackle the gap in knowledge of civil society. A start made on accumulating solid data in 1990 to 1992, for example, was frittered away by subsequent headquarters staff, resulting in a loss of publications, pre-war economic and demographic data, assessment mission notes, and even assessment reports. As a result, the present Food Economy Analysis Unit of WFP and the UNICEF Household Food Security Unit have had to make an almost completely new start.

Moreover, because of continued pressure to identify "beneficiaries"

and produce figures for "target groups", as well as staff and time shortages, these units have yet to develop comprehensive analyses of local groups and local/regional contexts. Had OLS been committed to this kind of investigation from the outset, the level of understanding would be far in advance of what it is now. As the case of Northern Bahr el-Ghazal illustrates, OLS inputs have supported local subsistence economies in some cases more by accident than by design.

This section considers the environment of social investigation in OLS Southern Sector, with particular focus on UN agencies.

6.6.1 Imported Assumptions and Models

While there is a much greater awareness now than at the start of OLS about dealing with the consequences of ongoing warfare, few OLS personnel have acquired a clear understanding of the working of local societies, especially in the midst of conflict. This stems, in part, from frequent breaks in programme and personnel continuity, and from a shallow institutional memory. It is also the result of a tendency to make assumptions and apply models about "society" and "social breakdown" as a substitute for detailed ethnographic knowledge.

There is concern within OLS agencies about the social costs of the war: the "breakdown" of "traditional" society, the increased burden on women, and the rise in numbers of the "female-headed households". The fear that societies are no longer able to cope, and that an increasing number of "vulnerable groups" are being created has led many agencies to search for ways to support "the community". While laudable, such concepts appear to derive more from Western social welfare theory than from an informed analysis of field conditions.

6.6.2 Female-Headed Households

Many agencies throughout OLS are now focusing their attention on household food security, with particular emphasis on the problems faced by female-headed households. There are two problems with this strategy, however.

First, there is no agreed working definition of a "household" in the Southern Sector on which to base inquiries and quantitative analysis. The Household Food Security Unit of UNICEF has shied away from a standard definition. NGO staff who have participated in their surveys also note that the working definition has changed from year to year.

The current minimum definition of a "household" is people who eat from the same pot (Hughes, 1996, April 17). Since women frequently feed the children of their co-wives, and since there are great seasonal variations in combinations of who shares food with whom, this definition is useless in identifying a discrete unit on which a consistent analysis can be built.

The second problem follows from the first. If there is no reliable and consistent definition of a "household", the identification of female-headed households become problematic. There is an assumption that since war creates widows and abandoned wives, war also makes female-headed households. However, since a married woman in rural South Sudan expects to have her own house within her husband's homestead, by the current definition, all Southern Sudanese households are female-headed, regardless of the war.

Confusion on this concept is evidenced from conflicting findings concerning numbers of female-headed households. In 1993, for example, a WFP assessment found 30% of households in Bahr el-Ghazal were female-headed (WFP, 1993), while the UNICEF 1994 seeds and tools survey concluded that 13.61% of all households throughout Bahr el-Ghazal were female-headed (Hughes, 1995, January). A similar survey of Northern Bahr el-Ghazal carried out by the SINGO SUPRAID in 1995 concluded that almost all household heads were male (Hughes, 1995, August: 5).

Assumptions about the fate of widows and abandoned wives, which are sometimes stated starkly in OLS field reports, do not seem borne out by more detailed questioning. Evidence from a very brief survey in Eastern Bahr el-Ghazal tended to confirm what has been described in more detailed ethnography of the pre-war period - that widows do not normally remain on their own, but are absorbed into the households of their kin, be they in-laws, parents, siblings, or their own children, and that widowed women may expect to move from one kin group to another over a long period of time (Johnson & MacAskill, 1995, May).

It is true that women are subjected to a number of pressures on the death of their husbands; it is also possible that such pressures have increased during the war. As yet, however, there is no OLS-sponsored research which reliably identifies a trend one way or another. There has also been no real examination of divorce, a potentially serious threat to women's economic position, and whether or not divorces are being instigated by men to claim back cattle or limit obligations to extended kin. Admittedly, such investigations would be difficult to undertake in the current circumstances.

The OLS focus on the plight of female heads of households is an example of the tendency of aid agencies to focus on "vulnerable" individuals or groups, rather than societies. Further, the search for most "vulnerable" groups or individuals has not been conducted according to local definitions of poverty, destitution, or vulnerability. Rather, the female-headed household has become the ideal vulnerable group who can be targeted without political repercussions - in effect, they are South Sudan's version of a beleaguered "single parent family" in the West.

In fact, evidence from the Food Economy Analysis Unit's own reports suggest that the weakest in society benefit when the strongest are able to stay in their locations to cultivate. OXFAM reports of 1995 also indicate that the erosion of resources within a community has a direct bearing on the efficiency of the indigenous social welfare system. After years of war, the scale of social welfare demands has increased just at the time when the rural economy has contracted (Johnson & MacAskill, 1995, May).

6.6.3 Understanding the Role of Livestock in Society

The veterinary programme demonstrates both the strengths and weaknesses of OLS. The coordination between UNICEF and other NGOs in the veterinary sector is better than in any other food security sector. There is a serious effort to come up with consistent principles on which policy can be based, at the same time to take into account local conditions and variations. The veterinary programme has taken into account its own experience during the war, and has expanded beyond rinderpest vaccination to include treatment of other diseases, the training of Community Animal Health Workers, and support for the revival of a veterinary service throughout South Sudan.

The programme's weakness, however, is its basis on a surprisingly small amount of reliable information on stock-keeping practices, the social role of livestock, and interlocking networks of the cattle trade. Given that the current justification for the expansion of veterinary services is an economic one - to bring stockowners into the cash economy, and to revive the economy of South Sudan, these omissions are serious. Although access problems are important, the poor knowledge base is a consequence of lack of staff time, and lack of funding. For example, donors were initially reluctant to provide funds for a restocking study in 1994, and an ethno-medicine study to commence in 1996 (Leyland, 1996, April 26).

While a certain amount of lipservice is given to recognising the social role of cattle, it has been assumed, rather than demonstrated, that the absence of cattle must mean social disintegration (Blakeway, 1995, April). The standard OLS response to declining cattle numbers is to improve livestock health.

The restocking report commissioned by UNICEF in 1994 was a serious attempt at addressing the restocking question, but it is in many ways unsatisfactory. It was not, for example, preceded by a thorough review of the substantial body of literature that exists on cattle rearing, bridewealth and divorce, cattle trading, and other relevant aspects of pastoralist life in South Sudan. It also shows considerable confusion about social and kinship organisation and terms, and it proposes a doubtful distinction between "traditional" methods of restocking, and cash or market economy methods. Although its focus was on the displaced, its conclusions have been applied to other communities who retain cattle but have experienced serious stock loss. Its recommendations against restocking before the end of the war, on the assumption that restocking requires providing each household with a "viable herd", have inhibited the development of restocking programmes by NGOs.

In fact, the experience of a successful restocking scheme in Somlia indicates that the provision of small numbers of animals, at an early stage, can assist people to re-enter networks of livestock circulation and redistribution, and thus enable them to kickstart traditional restocking mechanisms. Such mechanisms of redistribution include the loaning of animals to maximize their use; indeed, the experience of this project has been that loaning becomes more important than marriage as a means to redistribute livestock use during times of massive stock loss. Hence, the provision of a full viable herd is not necessary if restocking is integrated into customary livestock distribution mechanisms (Scott-Villiers, 1996, April).

The approach of OLS agencies to the question of traditional means of restocking has focused on grain-smallstock-cattle exchanges, or the distribution of bridewealth in marriage. This ignores, however, the evidence of long-term resource depletion among Southern Sudanese stock owners, and what effect the repeated decimation of herds may have had on the ability of communities to redistribute livestock through such "traditional" methods. In fact, the impact of livestock slaughter for food can be seen in an almost universal decline in marriage payments. In some cases, marriage payments are being deferred on anticipation of a revival of livestock numbers at some future time, but this can be done only between families who trust one another, and hence is

increasingly restricted to a smaller circle of kin (Awan Dinka Elders, 1996, April 6).

Because of the focus of OLS attention on marriage and grain-livestock exchanges, there is presently very little known about the nature of livestock loans in South Sudan. Further, while it is known that cattle markets are currently an important means of restocking herds (WFP, 1996, January), because cattle purchases are made with cash and hence not considered "traditional", the role of the market has not been seriously investigated as a restocking option. There are many segments of South Sudanese cattle owners who have been using cattle auctions since they were first introduced in the 1930s, and the buying and selling of cattle has steadily increased since the 1950s (Burton, 1978; Hutchinson, 1992). However, the tendency to think along the lines of categories such as "traditional" has inhibited real investigation about the potential in this sphere.

There is a case to be made for reconsidering the restocking issue in South Sudan. The present focus on the most destitute, and on widows, may not in the end prove to be the most efficient way to revive livestock redistribution, which should be seen as an essential goal in any restocking project.

6.7 Programming for the Internally Displaced

6.7.1 Displaced Living Among Host Populations

The Southern Sector's first experience of dealing with large numbers of displaced followed the evacuation of the Ethiopian refugee camps in 1991, when nearly a quarter of a million persons re-entered the South. Returnees either camped near hastily prepared distribution centres, or moved as far into the countryside as possible to live with "host" populations.

Attempts by OLS to target returnees were strongly opposed by host communities, and the concentration of populations at large feeding centres created health and sanitation-related problems. As a result, OLS made a conscious decision to avoid differential provision of aid for returnees as opposed to host populations, and to move towards decentralised relief distribution points.

This section briefly considers the response of OLS agencies and NGOs to internally displaced living in Labone in Eastern Equatoria.

6.7.2 The Internally Displaced at Labone

The people in Labone represent a population which has been displaced and on the move for the last four to five years. Most come from Kongor and Bor Counties, through there are some local Acoli as well. Labone was the largest of those camps established to receive the displaced population coming from the Triple A camps in 1994.

Labone, as a camp for internally displaced persons, has been largely dependent on food aid. CRS took over supplying relief food to the camp from NPA in 1993. At that time CRS based its rationale for distributing food on the fact that the population was displaced, and hence completely dependent. With dwindling resources, increasing cost of relief operations, and the challenge of dealing with internal displacement in a chronic war situation, this perception has changed. Food aid rations have been reduced, and the number of beneficiaries targeted has been narrowed. The present CRS policy is that if the food harvest is good, then there will be no ration of sorghum and beans from July to September (first harvest), and from November to January (second harvest).

CRS is also involved in encouraging the displaced at Labone to produce at least part of their own food, with the aim of improving their food security and developing self-reliance (CRS, 1995, April/June). This involves the distribution of seeds and hand tools, agricultural extension services, and encouragement for the development of communal farms and vegetable gardens.

CRS has faced a number of problems in implementing this programme, including the expectation of incentives by SRRA staff seconded to the programme, and the weak training of the agricultural extension officers seconded from the SRRA to work on the project. In addition, and perhaps more significantly, the programme has faced difficulties in working with a displaced population whose traditional subsistence practices are agro-pastoral, rather than sedentary agricultural. Whether or not displaced Dinka will be able or interested to shift the basis of their livelihoods toward greater reliance on crop production, and less reliance on cattle, is open to question. While the idea of encouraging food production in the context of internal displacement has legitimacy, it should not be forced, nor should it be assumed that this is an economic practice that the Dinka will adopt for the long term.

6.7.3 Issues for Consideration

As in the Northern Sector, the relief-to-development continuum appears to inform much programme thinking for the displaced in Labone. The idea has been expressed that, because the Dinka of Bor and Kongor have lost their cattle and presumably will never get them back, their displacement represents a good opportunity for "modernising" them. The organisation of agricultural extension workers is designed to teach the Dinka to cultivate like the Acholi, something that is probably desirable in their new environment. However, it is also assumed that these more modern and efficient methods of farming will be transferable from the hill country near the Uganda border back to the clay plains and swamps of Jonglei. The lack of enthusiasm the Dinka appear to show at being turned into farmers is taken, not as a sign of the inappropriateness of this activity for the long term, but as a sign of relief dependency.

For the displaced themselves, there is much unhappiness at the prospect of long term settlement in the Labone area. A sense of insecurity is also present, more so for the Acholi than the Dinka. Displaced Acholi note that they are reluctant to expand their area of cultivation for fear of offending the local Acholi.

The displaced also express a fear of being attacked. This fear is not unreasonable; throughout 1995, Labone was bombed by the Sudanese airforce, attacked by GOS allies, and its line of supply from Uganda threatened by the Lords Resistance Army, a rebel group fighting the Ugandan government. UN planes attempting to land there have also been fired on. During the time the Review Team visited, there was continued insecurity along the border.

The feelings of insecurity among the displaced in Labone may be increased, rather than reduced, by the presence of the SPLA. The SPLA has used the medical facilities at Labone for the treatment of their battle wounded, has diverted food from the camp during times of military buildup, and there are persistent rumours that the separate camp of unaccompanied minors are regularly recruited into the army. From the GOS's point of view, Labone is a military camp, even if civilians are present, and hence it is considered a legitimate target for attack.

For these reasons, the majority of the displaced are eager to return home, and have even requested OLS assistance to return them. There are no plans as yet for such a return, however, mainly because the

security in Jonglei itself remains uncertain. Instead, the SRRA is cooperating with CRS in a new hut count, and has plans to increase the area under cultivation.

6.8 Food Aid Versus Food Security: A Look at WFP's Air Cargo Prioritization

Before moving on to a discussion of OLS programmes in the area of social services and capacity building, which form the second part of this chapter, it is worth briefly considering the way in which WFP approaches the administration of its food aid programme, especially in terms of air transport, and the effect of this on the balance between food aid and food security.

A great deal of effort is still expended by WFP in determining suitable populations for the targeting of relief food, and the calculation of rations. It is, however, an effort which never meets its self-appointed goals. Restrictions on air access and irregularities in transport mean that WFP is constantly scaling back its actual deliveries from assessed needs. As has been seen in the case study material on Northern Bahr el-Ghazal, food needs have been very poorly addressed by food deliveries. At the same time, the case study material indicates how even small amounts of relief food, if consistently delivered, can have a beneficial effect on reviving and strengthening local food production.

The question which is increasingly asked, especially by non-food delivering INGOs, is why - given that only a small percentage of food sources are provided by airlifted deliveries - does relief food still receive priority over other food security or health inputs in terms of air cargo space? A subsidiary question is whether the effort expended in airlifting food from East Africa would be better employed in finding ways of redistributing food and seeds from surplus producing areas of South Sudan itself.

Relief food continues to be a salient issue in the Southern Sector, not least because of the priority placed on it by the parties to the conflict. Beneficiary numbers continue to be manipulated, and diversions to the military are made by various means, whether indirectly by taxing beneficiaries, or directly by interdiction and raiding. There is an ambivalence within the Southern movements about any shift of emphasis towards food security, as opposed to food aid, and there is still a tendency for counterpart organizations to frame requests in terms of food. As one INGO report put it, the humanitarian

wings of the Southern movements have a vested interest in maintaining the "food supply momentum" (Boyle & Shearer, 1994, April).

Nevertheless, there is still a tendency within WFP to define problems in terms of food aid tonnages, and to assume that control of transportation is a given. WFP is also accused of giving preference to the food delivery side of food security over food production, which is the responsibility of other agencies. This has created an imbalance in the food security strategies, with food deliveries still being made, for instance, during harvest time when they are not necessarily needed, and when fewer people show up for food distributions. Some INGOs have also criticised WFP for attracting the attention of raiding militia, such as Kerubino, by continuing to deliver food to Northern Bahr el-Ghazal during the harvest. They allege that these deliveries continued mainly because both transport and flight clearance were available.

Despite clear statements of policy within OLS Southern Sector on the need to maintain a balance between the sectors of food, food production, health, and water, the pattern and timing of cargo priorities suggests that this goal has yet to be met. In this regard, there is a need to rethink priorities within OLS as they are expressed through air cargo prioritization.

One way of doing this is to look more closely at what is needed to improve local distributions between areas, rather than just within them. At present, for example, there has been qualified success in moving seed surpluses from one area to another, such as from Western Upper Nile to Jonglei. SCF (UK), however, has been unable to move groundnut seeds from Tembura in Western Equatoria to Northern Bahr el-Ghazal because of a lack of scheduling for backloading cargo planes between the two locations. Uncertain access has meant that WFP was still giving cargo priority to food in April, when preparations for the planting season had to be made. Without the ability to move local surpluses, or to make use of markets and commercial networks, all discussions of greater cost effectiveness in the Southern Sector will remain largely theoretical.

6.9 Delivering Social Services and Programmes that Support Women

6.9.1 Introduction

The absence of a functioning civil administration, and disruptions by

the war, mean that social services in rural South Sudan are either absent, or in severe jeopardy. Under the umbrella of OLS, UNICEF and NGOs are providing various forms of support to enable people to access basic social services. This section presents a brief overview of health and education programmes, as well as income generating projects for women.

6.9.2 Delivering Primary Health Care in a Conflict Situation

Sudan is said to have been at the forefront of developing primary health delivery systems in the pre-war period. The protracted civil war has, however, wreaked great havoc to primary health care (PHC), and worsened the health status of Southern Sudanese. International agencies operating under the umbrella of OLS, and other agencies outside of OLS, are helping to deliver emergency health services, and to rehabilitate PHC services. The different experiences of support to the health sector in Northern Bahr el-Ghazal and in Western Upper Nile illustrate again the very different operational contexts that pertain in different parts of South Sudan.

In Northern Bahr el-Ghazal, effective PHC programmes are hampered by insecurity. The delivery of health services in Akon and Panthou - and indeed in most of Northern Bahr el-Ghazal - was disrupted first by the withdrawal of ICRC in 1990, and more recently by widespread militia attacks. After humanitarian access to Akon was resumed in 1992, significant levels of severe malnutrition and disease were reported. This prompted the intervention of MSF France, one of the few NGOs willing to work in the region. MSF France was instrumental in identifying and responding to the nutritional crisis in Akon, which in turn prompted WFP to respond by targeting increased food distributions.

MSF France established a feeding centre in Akon and provided hospital-based services. MSF Belgium also started a large programme in Lietnhom. The health facilities in Lietnhom were destroyed in December 1994, however, and those in Akon were destroyed in January 1996. The increased level of insecurity led both agencies to suspend services; they returned, however, in February and March. MSF Belgium has yet to fully re-establish facilities in Akon, however, since they were all destroyed, and the agency must start again from scratch.

In response to the problems of attacks and insecurity, and to the looting and destruction of resources, MSF Belgium has changed its strategy from stationary field bases to small mobile teams, and from

and permanent structures to temporary structures providing basic curative and preventive health care. It has a permanent presence only in more secure areas. Another strategy adopted along with mobile teams is that, in insecure and access-restricted areas, the prescription and administration of drugs have been left to trained Sudanese health workers.

In contrast, support to health in Western Upper Nile exhibits a much greater continuity of programming, and longer term planning is possible. Implementation of sustainable services is hampered here not by insecurity, but more by managerial, administrative, and staff problems. In Ler, health programme activities include EPI, which is administered by a local team trained and supported by UNICEF, and the training of Community Health Workers, in addition to support for primary health care facilities.

The Ler hospital is expected to play a crucial role as a complementary component of the PHC programme. Its functioning has been problematic for the past two years, however, due to management problems. Currently, there is an agreement between MSF Holland and RASS which allows MSF Holland to continue to run the TB and kalar azar clinics separately from the hospital, while the RASS Health Coordinator/Medical Officer runs the hospital (Kong, 1996, April 4). Some independent sources in Ler, however, complained about mismanagement in the hospital. MSF Holland sources say they are insisting that the use of drugs be properly accounted for before new supplies will be made available.

Ler also illustrates the practice of NGO succession in programme areas. The transition period during when a new NGO arrives to take over from a departing NGO tends to interrupt the flow of services for some time. In the case of Ler, Healthnet, a sister organisation of MSF Holland, is taking over responsibility for training health workers, and for supporting the PHC centres and units. Like its sister NGO, it has also declined to support the hospital. At the time of the Review Team's visit, no NGO has been identified to provide the required support for rehabilitation and management of the hospital.

6.9.3 Support to Education

Education in South Sudan today is a highly political issue; the Southern movements and the GOS each see education as a key in determining the future character of South Sudan. The GOS has consistently opposed OLS support to schools in non-government areas because they do not follow the Arabic pattern and the Sudan school

syllabus. SRRA and RASS, on the other hand, agree with each other on the need to develop a school curriculum in English that follows the East African syllabus; indeed, this is the only area where they have collaborated together.

Like other social services, basic education in South Sudan has been disrupted by the war for over a decade. The lack of educational opportunities is said to be partly responsible for pushing many children to seek education outside Sudan, in Kenya and Uganda (Ibrahim, 1996, April 2).

Until recently, donors saw education as developmental activity, and hence were reluctant to provide funding. The linkage of education to the Rights of the Child, however, and the psycho-social needs of children, is helping to change this attitude.

The level of support to education possible in any given region depends largely on the level of education achieved in the region before the war. In Western Equatoria, for example, there is a more solid base on which to rebuild the education system, due to the relative abundance of former intermediate and secondary school students, and unemployed teachers. This is not the case in Western Upper Nile, Jonglei, or much of Bahr el-Ghazal, however.

In Ler, the primary School was closed for several years until 1989, when some teachers re-opened the school. The relative freedom from insecurity in the area has enabled primary schools to continue to operate for the past few years, and there is a well-organised inspection and coordination system at community level. The quality of the teaching remains low, however. In Ler primary school, for example, only four out of the 12 teachers have received any form of training, and the highest qualification is secondary school year two. One problem facing the NGOs involved in training is that those trained are easily "poached" by other NGOs who offer better incentives, sometimes with the recommendation of RASS.

Unlike Ler, education in Akon and most parts of Northern Bahr el-Ghazal has been at a standstill for many years. Children have not been able to attend school continuously without some form of military interruption during the academic year. As a result of these disruptions, teachers trained by SCF (UK) have largely been scattered. School buildings have also been burned down by militia raids; wherever classes are held, they are held under trees.

6.9.4 Income Generating Projects for Women

OLS projects designed specifically to benefit women have been inspired by two premises: first, that women have the main responsibility for the management of household food, and second, that women constituted as a group are subject to a particular type of vulnerability in the midst of war.

In Ler and Labone, income generating projects for women are operating. These included teashops, tailoring, and fish shops (in Ler only). In Ler, income generating projects were initiated by church-based women's groups, and are supported by NCA, while in Labonne, projects were initiated by SRRA's Family Affairs Office and are supported by CRS.

In general, the projects appear to be managed in a participatory manner by women, who take turns to run shops on a daily basis. They also appear to be providing some income to women. In Ler, women noted that they had been able to purchase cows for their children as a result. In Labone, teashop operators plan to invest their profits in community development activities, and in other income generating enterprises such as selling used clothing.

However, the projects suffer from a problem of sustainability. NGOs admit that the original idea to make the projects self-supporting is difficult to achieve. Women's groups are unable to make independent arrangements for supplies, and still have to depend on NGOs to bring in supplies at subsidized prices that otherwise would not reach the local market due to insecurity, or would reach it at too high prices. It is therefore not surprising that CRS and NCA are finding it difficult to extricate themselves without causing a collapse. Project sustainability is also affected by insecurity. In February 1995, for example, when the population of Labone was forced to evacuate due to insecurity, the assets of the tea shops were looted, and CRS had to intervene with free supplies for two months before the project was able to re-start.

The focus on women, and especially on widows and female heads of households, has sometimes distorted understanding of local realities, and the extent to which it is possible to target programmes for specific types of women in isolation from their broader socio-economic context. The attempt to support women's tailoring projects in Ler, for example, met with opposition from the tailors in the local market, who saw their livelihoods threatened by unfair competition. In Eastern Bahr el-Ghazal, OXFAM attempted to improve the lot of widows by distributing fishing equipment directly to them. As it is men, rather than women,

who fish in deeper waters with lines, nets, and hooks, the fishing inputs soon ended up with the men, who put them to use. Having learned something from that experience, OXFAM then undertook to distribute malodas (iron digging blades) to all women in two counties, rather than only widows or the most "vulnerable". This was highly successful, involving civil administration and community leaders alike, and was accepted by both men and women since it assisted women in one of their primary duties - cultivation.6.10Capacity Bulding in a Complex Emergency

6.10.1 Background to Capacity Building

The emergence of capacity building as a distinct OLS project was initiated in June 1993, when UNICEF commissioned an exploratory investigation into the possibilities of institutional development for SRRA, RASS, and CUSH. This was later modified into an assessment of appropriate ways UNICEF could strengthen the capacity of indigenous agencies participating in humanitarian activities in South Sudan.

The rationale for capacity building in the early 1990's was the general recognition of the need for stronger and more effective local structures to support the delivery of humanitarian services. The weak capacity of Sudanese counterparts was seen as a hindrance to the implementation and coordination of OLS programmes. This led to UNICEF taking on roles normally played by indigenous civil/political institutions.

However, working out the details of what capacity building would entail, and how to go about it, was greeted with both scepticism and lack of consensus among international agencies in the Southern Sector. Some agencies felt that capacity building was inappropriate in an unstable environment, while others saw capacity building as "developmental", and hence a deviation from the main priority of emergency relief. Concerns over the neutrality of international agencies in the South were also raised, as well as the problems posed by the factional split within the SPLM/A.

In 1993, USAID made a grant to UNICEF for an institutional capacity building project. This grant signaled the inclusion of capacity building as part of the Southern Sector's programme, based on an:

...increasing recognition at all levels of the humanitarian community that capacity building in complex emergencies is a sine qua non for moves away from relief to rehabilitation and development (O'Brien, 1996, January 3: 2).

6.10.2 Capacity Building - A Slippery Concept

Capacity building is one of the slippery concepts which has become fashionable among development agencies. Its imprecision helps explain the lack of consensus among OLS agencies on how it can best be carried out.

Within UNICEF, the first serious attempt at defining the term was at the Capacity Building Workshop in June 1995, which produced what has become known as "The Nairobi Joint Statement II". The Statement, produced by representatives of 15 OLS agencies, two donor agencies, and non-OLS NGOs, endorsed the definition of capacity building as:

An explicit intervention that aims to improve an organisation's effectiveness and sustainability in relation to its mission and context...

In their document "The Way Forward", the SRRA implicitly adopts the Joint Statement definition, and describes capacity building as human resource development and institutional support. The document then goes on to propose the type of training it would require for development of its personnel, and the type of material and financial support it would need in order to be:

...an effective and efficient facilitator of relief and rehabilitation programmes in the new Sudan.

The document notes that the support required ranges from payment of staff salaries and office rents, to equipment and means of transportation.

Despite the Joint Statement, there has yet to emerge a precise agreement between the major actors in the Southern Sector of exactly what capacity building involves, and how it should be implemented. As one key official associated with the capacity building project has noted, perceptions vary from:

...those who consider the support to Sudanese agencies to be in terms of merely improving the delivery of humanitarian assistance, to those who see capacity building interventions to be aimed at influencing policy and institutional levels, promoting good governance, community empowerment, etc... (Ayers, 1995 July 30: 2).

Given the lack of a common definition and agreement on implementation, OLS agencies engage in different activities according to their own ideas. Some NGOs consider the training of local people in water, health, and education to be capacity building, while others concentrate on the provision of technical, financial, administrative, and material support to counterpart organisations, RASS and SRRA, and to SINGOs.

6.10.3 Modalities of Capacity Building in OLS

6.10.3.1 Support to Counterparts from Opposition Movements

UNICEF combines the above two orientations toward capacity building in its programmes. It provides technical advice to counterpart organisations through consultants; both SRRA and RASS have UNICEF-seconded advisors in their Nairobi Offices, paid by UNICEF. It also provides grants to SRRA and RASS to pay salaries, rents, and office expenses. The level of this support is not insignificant. SRRA, for example, receives cash support from UNICEF of USD 10,000 per month (UNICEF/OLS, 1995, November 11; Pace International; 1995, November 21). Approximately five INGOs also provide support to SRRA in the form of capital equipment, training, and support to Joint Relief Committees. This NGO support could not be quantified for lack of information.

Cash payments to RASS and SRRA have raised protests, notably from UNDP and WFP Khartoum. They have led to calls for either scrapping the programme, or designing a similar programme for counterparts in the Northern Sector. Such calls were noticeable during the preparations for the 1996 Appeal, when UNICEF's budget of USD 220,000 for direct financial support to RASS and SRRA - and to SINGOs - became the subject of controversy. The main concern expressed was that such payments could be misinterpreted as support to the rebel movements themselves, and were susceptible to abuse (Jaeger, 1995, December 21). It was also suggested that cash grants would encourage factionalisation in opposition movements, with any new faction laying claim to OLS capacity building support (Adly, 1995, December 19).

Despite the controversy over cash grants, there is a broad consensus among UN agencies and NGOs on the need for institutional support to the humanitarian wings of the rebel movements, if the implementation and coordination of Southern Sector programmes is to be improved. As a compromise, two capacity building projects were presented in the 1996

Appeal, one for each OLS Sector. UNICEF has also accepted the need to reform its mode of financial support to RASS and SRRA in a way that encourages greater financial accountability from these organizations.

6.10.3.2 Support to Sudanese Indigenous NGOs (SINGOs)

OLS agencies are also helping to build the service delivery capacity of Sudanese organizations. These include church-based agencies such as the New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC) and the Diocese of Torit (DOT), and various indigenous NGOs, who have registered under the OLS umbrella and signed Letters of Understanding. SINGOs receive logistical and financial support from UNICEF, and also benefit from UNICEF-sponsored training workshops.

As part of its strategy, UNICEF encourages INGOs to establish partnership relations with SINGOs of their choice. These partnerships are, almost by definition, unequal however. While INGOs help their partner SINGOs to identify sources of funding, this funding is channelled through the INGO, who also supervises the activities of, and receive quarterly and annual reports from, the SINGO partner. SINGOs therefore have no direct access to donors. Some SINGOs also operate as sub-contractors, implementing programmes on behalf of INGOs in parts of South Sudan. The expectation is that such partnerships will enable SINGOs to learn from their more experienced INGO counterparts.

A noticeable impact of UNICEF financial support to SINGOs is the rapid growth in their numbers. In mid-1993, there were only two SINGOs - the Cush Relief and Rehabilitation Society (CRRS) and Sudan Medical Care (SMC). By late 1994, this number had increased to over 25, and by mid-1995 it reached 30. Many of these organizations existed only on paper, and were aimed at obtaining OLS financial and other resources. This triggered the need to establish a criteria for recognition and registration of SINGOs, with the responsibility for screening them given to RASS and SRRA, depending on where the SINGO proposes to work in South Sudan. As a consequence, many of the less genuine SINGOs disappeared (Dak, 1996, April 12). At present, there are six SINGOs registered with UNICEF and signatories to Letters of Understanding. There are also moves to form an umbrella association of all SINGOs - the Sudan Association of Voluntary Agencies (SAVA) - with the support of UNICEF, but this is yet to be consolidated.

As an extension of the capacity building work of UNICEF, efforts are being made to train Southern Sudanese NGO staff in the application of humanitarian principles to aid work. To facilitate this, UNICEF's

Humanitarian Principles Unit is involved in an intensive programme of dissemination of the Ground Rules and their principles (Levine, 1996, April). The Review Team found this an especially important and appropriate programme for the lead agency of OLS Southern Sector to be involved in.

6.10.3.3 Project Related and Community-Based Capacity Building

Apart from organizational capacity building, OLS agencies also support project-specific capacity building activities, mostly in the form of training for the acquisition of skills for community workers in various sectors, with candidates selected by local SRRA/RASS officials, sometimes in consultation with traditional leaders.

The dominant mode of training is short-term exposure in workshops or seminars. While these may be suitable for emergency situations, Sudanese counterparts informed the Review Team that they do not consider workshops and seminars an adequate means of training, and would prefer longer term training that provides both skills and qualifications. Although training is important, it should not be seen as a substitute for the creation of enabling conditions for the use of the those trained.

The issue of incentives for community workers, and field staff of counterpart organizations, is becoming an obstacle to capacity building in some cases, especially since practices vary from one international agency to another. A task force on salaries and incentives for Sudanese personnel working with, or funded by, INGOs has discussed the issue, but no uniform policy has yet emerged. In the opinion of one senior INGO official, the issue of employment of Southern Sudanese in relief work is a burning one, and should have been resolved by now.

6.10.4 Achievements of the Capacity Building Project

There is now a broad consensus on the need for capacity building for South Sudanese organisations. The debate is no longer "why capacity building?" but "how capacity building?". Whatever the weaknesses of the institutional capacity building initiative, it has made significant contributions.

Notably, resources for capacity building provided by UNICEF in the

context of acceptance of the Ground Rules has provided a degree of leverage over the humanitarian wings of the rebel movements. The most significant achievement here is to get the movements to discuss humanitarian principles, though much still needs to be done in this area. Given that OLS is operating in an ongoing conflict situation, without any protection force, getting the warring parties to agree on Ground Rules is a key achievement. Capacity building support is also widely believed to have pressed SRRA to make significant organizational improvements over the several years, although RASS is seen to remain less effective due to internal problems.

Further, despite the proliferation of SINGOs triggered by the expectation of UNICEF support, the institutional capacity building project has contributed to the growth and integration of Sudanese NGOs into OLS, and is playing a key role in building intermediary aid organisations in South Sudan. SINGOs are gaining acceptance not only as operational agencies under OLS, but as part of an emerging civil society.

7. PROGRAMMING AND SOCIAL IMPACT IN THE NORTHERN SECTOR

7.1 Introduction

This chapter considers the programmes and social impact of OLS Northern Sector. In so doing, it focuses on the situation of war-displaced populations in three case study areas in government-controlled territory: Greater Khartoum, Ed Da'ein Province in South Darfur, and Wau in Western Bahr el Ghazal. The Review Team felt that a focus on war-displaced populations is justified by the scale and significance of these populations in Sudan generally, and in OLS Northern Sector specifically; a majority of OLS resources, for example, have been targeted at this group since 1989. Further, most of the war-displaced in the case study areas are from Bahr el Ghazal Region, where famine and mass starvation in 1987/88 initially gave rise to OLS. The case studies provide an opportunity to examine the response of OLS to war-displacement over time in three different contexts: a major urban area, a rural resettlement area, and a garrison town.

7.2 Issues to Consider Regarding the War-Displaced

The existence of large displaced populations in Sudan is not necessarily only a byproduct of internal warfare; there is also evidence to suggest that it constitutes part of a strategy aimed at controlling territory, resources, and peoples (Keen, 1992, November). The dynamics of population movements in the South have been described in Chapter 6. Here, it is important to emphasize several points concerning these populations in the Northern Sector:

First, war-displaced populations are frequently moved to areas where they live under the authority of the same groups responsible for their original displacement. This has important implications for the role of humanitarian operations in protecting war-displaced from violence and other abuses. In Ed Da'ein, for example, Dinka from Northern Bahr el-Ghazal were displaced into areas inhabited primarily by the Rizeigat, from whom the GOS-supported Murahaliin militia have been drawn. In Wau, Fertit militia armed by the government were responsible for both the displacement of Dinka from their home areas, and for violence against them in the town. As noted earlier, massacres of Dinka civilians took place in both Ed Da'ein and Wau in the late 1980s.

Second, war-induced displacement is continuing. In Wau, evidence from UN and GOS annual needs assessments, and interviews by the Review Team, suggest that since 1992 the number of war-displaced has risen every

year. There have been periodic increases in numbers of war-displaced in Khartoum since 1989, and large-scale war displacement continues in areas of the Transition Zone, particularly the Nuba Mountains. This raises important questions concerning the extent to which present humanitarian operations are addressing the underlying causes of displacement.

Third, those people who have moved into government-held areas as a result of raiding and other forms of military activity have typically lost the bulk of their assets, most importantly cattle. Thus, war-induced migration differs markedly from traditional seasonal migrations of rural people to participate in the labour economy in the North. Indeed, wage labour - once a seasonal activity in the subsistence economy - has now become a survival strategy of the war-displaced.

In this regard, the Review Team found an uncomfortable connection between the GOS's economic development policies with regard to agriculture, its policies concerning the war-displaced, and its assertion of control over land in the context of internal warfare. Economic policy in Sudan since the late 1970's has emphasized the replacement of subsistence production with capital-intensive, mechanized farming for export, and this policy continues today. For example, The Peace and Development Foundation, created in 1992, and later reconstituted as the National Development Foundation (NDF), has as one of its objectives the consolidation of government control over land through the expansion of mechanised farming (NDF, 1996, March 28; Lino Rol, 1996, March 28). The emphasis that the GOS has placed on mechanized agriculture as opposed to subsistence production fits well with the creation of "peace villages", where war-displaced populations are moved to mechanized farming schemes to act as either producers or wage-labourers. These policies are justified by the GOS on the basis of promoting self-sufficiency among the war-displaced, and of promoting a policy of "Salaam min al Dakhal" or "peace from within". It is in the context of this kind of "development" agenda by the GOS, which has been accommodated by OLS agencies, that the use of humanitarian relief to promote self-reliance needs to be analyzed.

7.3 Responding to the Displaced: Government Welfare Policy

Since the late 1980s, GOS welfare policy for the war-displaced has combined the provision of relief with programmes to facilitate rural integration and resettlement, and the upgrading of informal urban settlements (GOS, 1988, September 22). This section describes the

origins and rationale behind these strategies in the three case study areas.

7.3.1 Ed Da'ein: Paired Villages

GOS and UN policy toward the war-displaced in North Sudan was formulated in response to internal displacement from Bahr el Ghazal in 1988. In South Darfur, the GOS, with the support of the UN, developed what was considered at the time to be an innovative response to internal displacement, by creating "paired villages" next to existing villages.

This initiative built on a response by OXFAM in March of 1988 to the presence of several thousand displaced Dinka at Sahafa, a crossing point on the Bahr el Arab. Having crossed the river, which traditionally demarcates Dinka and Rizegat territory, many displaced were unable to travel further northwards. As the rainy season approached, OXFAM recognised the vulnerability of this group both to flooding of the river and to violence from the Rizegat. They subsequently negotiated with a neighbouring group to the north - the Maalia - to provide land for the displaced. The displaced were then settled in seven settlements, and supported by a consortium of NGOs, comprising OXFAM, SCF UK, and MSF Belgium. Upgrading water supplies was seen to be imperative in order to avert water shortages for both the displaced and host communities.

By September, the paired village scheme had been incorporated into GOS policy for the resettlement of displaced in agriculturally productive, but labour deficit areas (GOS, 1988, September 22). By the end of 1988, both the UN and GOS had transformed what was originally a moderately successful response to a specific incident of displacement into a development philosophy; indeed, paired villages were presented as a model for managing internal displacement in Sudan. Thus, the November 1988 Emergency Appeal for Sudan stated:

This approach is not simply a relief programme but an innovative initiative in problem resolution and nation-building" (UN, 1988, November 10: paragraph 162).

The villages would help to preserve traditional rural life patterns (UN, 1988, November 10: paragraph 157). Acceptance of the Dinka by the host community was linked to improvements in water supply and other services, while the presence of relief agencies would help establish a relationship of parity between the host villages and displaced

populations (UN, 1988, November 10: paragraph 155). In this respect, the provision of humanitarian aid was linked to conflict reduction.

In 1992, internal divisions within SPLA, and a government military offensive in Bahr el Ghazal, led to another mass exodus of Dinka from Bahr el Ghazal to South Darfur. At the request of local authorities, the UN intervened to evacuate approximately 40,000 people from the Bahr el Arab (UNEU, 1992, June 8/9). On this occasion, the displaced were disbursed to camps next to Rizegat as well as Maalia villages from a central transition camp in Abu Matariq, according to guidelines laid down by the Provincial Commissioner.

The critical difference between the 1988 and 1992 responses is that, whereas during the first influx the priority was to move the Dinka out of Rizegat areas, in 1992 this was not seen to be a central issue in planning movements. Given the role of Rizegat militia in displacement of the Dinka and in the massacre of 1987, the failure to incorporate mechanisms for protection of the war-displaced was a critical omission, and one that characterises OLS programmes in the Northern Sector today.

Underpinning both responses was an attempt to stem further migration to Kostis and Khartoum, and to provide the displaced with opportunities for income-generation and agricultural production. Subsequent relief policies have continued to encourage self-sufficiency through food support during the farming season, and through the provision of seeds and tools. However, the paired villages scheme has come under considerable strain since 1988 in both Rizegat and Maalia areas. The capacity of the UN and NGOs to sustain even minimal services has been eroded by a reduction of relief supplies to the area, and by a declining resource base for humanitarian operations. The implications of this, and the extent to which the displaced have indeed achieved self-sufficiency as well as parity with host communities, is considered further below.

At present, there appears to be a shift in GOS policy towards paired villages, whereby the camp structure is to be dismantled and the Dinka fully integrated into the host community. Underpinning this shift seems to be an attempt to normalise the situation of the displaced. A Member of the State Parliament resident in Adila reported that:

When we met with the Secretary-General of the Supreme Peace Council, he said we were not to call them "displaced" any more. Why are people trying to make the displaced special? Government policy is for them to be integrated into the population. A policy was

passed at a conference in 1993 when the Secretary-General of the Supreme Peace Council said that services had to be uniform [for] displaced and host communities (1996, April 4).

There is little indication, however, that paired villages will be dismantled. On the other hand, evidence from Wau suggests that normalization may involve reducing people's entitlements to relief, but not necessarily expanding their access to land. Given the importance to the host community of cheap labour for agriculture, a reduction in relief needs to be assessed in relation to the state of the labour market in the province.

7.3.2Wau: Peace Villages

As government-held territory has expanded, government strategy has involved the relocation and settlement of war-displaced into "peace villages". Although settlement of war-displaced near their area of origin was an explicit objective of the 1989 OLS Plan of Action, "peace villages" involved the physical separation of the war-displaced from other kinds of populations.

The idea of peace villages has been developed most systematically since 1991, as part of the Government's idea of promoting "peace from within", and from the Comprehensive National Strategy aimed at achieving self-sufficiency in food production (UNICEF, 1996, March). In Wau, the idea of peace villages stretches back to 1989, when the Governor of Bahr el-Ghazal stated that the displaced should be camped in:

...model peace villages...where security could be provided to enable these people to cultivate for themselves (GOS, 1989, November: 8).

Although proposals to establish five satellite camps in and around Wau were discussed in 1990 (Wagner, 1990, August 13), the idea of establishing distinct areas for the war-displaced did not become explicit government policy until 1992. Prior to this, war-displaced people were accommodated within Wau town, which was besieged on three sides by the SPLA. A distinction was made, however, between displaced people "with shelter" and those "without shelter"; those "with shelter" had relatives in the town with whom they could be accommodated, while those "without shelter" were mainly, but not exclusively, Dinka from the rural areas.

In 1991, weakened by their loss of bases in Ethiopia and by internal divisions, the SPLA began losing ground to the government in the South. In 1991, a new Governor was appointed to the region; his arrival in Wau signalled a change in government military strategy, and government policy toward the relief programme in Wau.

In October, the new Governor informed those displaced "without shelter" to prepare for relocation, and not to expect further relief flights (Deng, 1991, October 10). In February 1992, the GOS launched a military offensive out of Wau; in April, those displaced "without shelter" were relocated to camps in Eastern Bank to the east of the town, and to Marial Ajith to the north.

The relocation of war-displaced populations in Wau to the camps was presented by the GOS as strategy to promote self-sufficiency and reduce dependency on external assistance. However, the decision was taken without consultation with the UN, NGOs, RRC, or the war-displaced themselves. The fact that these bodies in Wau were told about the plan by a military officer suggests that security concerns were also important. Security aspects of the proposed plan were not discussed with UN/NGOs on the grounds that security of the displaced was not their concern (Deng, 1991, October 10). In effect, the relocation of war-displaced to camps on the periphery of the town served to consolidate the security zone around Wau.

In the town, free distribution of food was stopped and replaced by food sold at subsidised prices. By separating those "without shelter" from the town population, the Governor effectively reduced the total displaced population qualifying for relief assistance from an estimated 80,000 (Wagner, 1990, February 20) to 5,000. As the focus of the relief operation moved from the town to the war-displaced camps, the visibility of OLS declined. Consequently, there is a perception in Wau today that the emergency ended in 1992 (Apai Bal, 1996, April 10). Since then, only those war-displaced located in the camps are included in OLS annual assessments. This is despite the fact that grain prices in Wau remain the highest in the country, and that nutritional surveys indicate that malnutrition rates in the town are high.

In addition to the two peace camps, the villages of Bagaria and Abushaka were also named as "peace villages". Being indigenous villages to which the original population would return, they are distinguished from the camps. Consequently, the distinction between "displaced camps" and "peace villages" has become confused, and the terms are often used interchangeably depending on the interests of different departments and agencies. For example, the Local Relief Committee refers to

settlements for the displaced as "displaced camps" (Akon, 1996, April 12), while the local Ministry of Peace and Development refers to them as "peace villages" (Apai Bal, 1996, April 10). Similarly, WFP and UNICEF refer to the sites as "displaced camps"; UNDP, on the other hand, refers to them as "peace villages". The distinction is important because "displaced camps" are perceived as temporary, and therefore eligible for relief, while "peace villages" are targeted for rehabilitation.

The December 1992 needs assessment report is interesting in this respect. By December, the security zone around Wau had been extended to 30 kilometres, and the State authorities had reported their readiness to receive returnees from other parts of the country into 35 "peace villages" to be established along the railway (RRC, 1992, December 22/23). This arrangement was intended to promote self-reliance through agricultural production, provide the returnees with basic needs, and help in securing the strategic railway line. Despite early concerns raised by the UN, the same 1992 report recommended that:

The plans to be prepared for establishing displaced camps (7) and peace villages (35) should be comprehensively approached and all concerned parties, including the UN, NGOs, and potential donors should participate in the planning process (RRC, 1992, December 22/23).

The report also recommended "...the prompt and adequate supply of seeds and tools to encourage farmers to cultivate more land" (RRC, 1992, December 22/23). This strategy has been supported by UNICEF through its Household Food Security programme, by WFP through food for agricultural work, and by UNDP through its Area Rehabilitation Schemes.

7.3.3 War-Displaced in Khartoum: Relocation and Resettlement

Greater Khartoum has the single largest concentration of war-displaced in Sudan. In 1994, there were an estimated 800,000 people displaced by war living in the three cities which comprise the capital (UNCERO, 1996, January).

Since the late 1980s, government policy towards the war-displaced has involved the demolition of informal settlements, and their relocation to temporary camps on the outskirts of the city. This policy has been implemented with special vigour since February 1990 when, following

a National Displaced Conference, the government announced its intention to clear the city of all unauthorised settlements; the displaced were to be relocated to temporary camps, to paired villages, or to agricultural production sites (see 7.3.4. below).

Relocations of war-displaced are forced, and have typically taken place without warning; they have also been accompanied by violence and the destruction of property. Since 1990, for example, some 39 people are reported to have been killed during the demolition of shelters (UNHCU, 1996, February). New locations have also not been prepared in advance, and have lacked water supply, sanitation, and housing. The distance of many camps from areas of employment also means that opportunities for income-generation are limited. As a result, high levels of malnutrition have been a feature of camp populations (UN, 1994, September 12).

The scale of the demolition and relocation programme is large. By May 1992, the Ministry of Housing reported that 105,569 families (over 600,000 people) had their homes demolished, and had been moved to newly-planned "peace cities", or to temporary displaced camps. Although the GOS suggested in 1995 that the programme of demolitions was 90% complete, demolition and forced relocation continues, with an average of 850 houses per month being destroyed (UNICEF, 1996, March).

The government's stated rationale for forced relocation of war-displaced populations is that illegal spontaneous settlements are an environmental hazard, that they create socio-economic problems, and that they threaten the security of the general population (Eldin Ibrahim Bannaga, 1992). Relocations are also justified as part of an urban renewal programme, and a solution to the problem of urbanisation (Eldin Ibrahim Bannaga, 1992).

This rationale, however, does not account for the physical separation of the war-displaced, or legislation that distinguishes their legal and political rights from those of economic and drought migrants, and from the general population of Khartoum. The current legislative framework used by the GOS is an amendment to legislation introduced by the government of Sadiq el Mahadi. In 1987, the GOS drew a legal distinction between "squatters" and "displaced" persons. "Squatters" were defined as those persons who had arrived in the city before 1984, and who in theory had the right to settle in Khartoum. Three resettlement areas - known as "Dar es Salaam" or "peace cities" - were created in Khartoum, Khartoum North, and Omdurman to accommodate relocated squatters. In contrast, the "displaced" were defined as those persons who arrived after 1984. They were given no right of

residence in Khartoum, no right to own land, and no right to construct permanent shelters. For this group, displaced camps - later referred to as "peace camps" - were created (Eldin Ibrahim Bannaga, 1992). In May 1990, Decree 941 of GOS redefined the "displaced" as those persons who had arrived in Khartoum after 1990.

7.3.4 Moving the War-Displaced to Production Sites

A major impact of war-induced displacement has been the creation of an expanded pool of labour in the North. Since 1989, one element of GOS policy has been the resettlement of war-displaced in "production" sites (RRC, 1989, September 12). In August 1990, the Council of Ministers, announced in Resolution 56 its determination to eliminate the problem of displacement within one year. This was to be accomplished both through repatriation of over 800,000 displaced to "areas of origin", and through their relocation to "areas of production" in Upper Nile, Bahr el Ghazal, Darfur, Kordofan, and Central State (GOS, 1990). The stated rationale behind relocation was to reduce dependency on relief. The displaced were expected to work as labourers on production projects, including mechanised farming schemes.

The number of war-displaced people who have been repatriated or relocated to production sites outside Khartoum are unknown. However, organised relocations were recorded in 1990, 1991, and 1994 (UNHCU, 1996, February). Repatriation programmes have also appeared to move war-displaced to displaced camps, to peace villages in rural areas, or to nearby agricultural schemes with substantial labour requirements (UNEU, 1994).

Upper Nile State in particular has been a destination for relocated peoples. This is likely linked to the fact that, following the signing of a peace charter with the Shilluk, the GOS and the National Development Foundation have invested in the development of Upper Nile, and especially in the area of commercial agriculture.

The GOS has attempted to enlist support from the UN and international NGOs. In 1993, UNDP considered a proposal to support integrated rural development programmes in "Zones of Peace", or production sites which were to be designated as demilitarized areas, monitored by UN civilian agencies (UNDP, 1993). The proposal did not come to fruition, however.

More generally, the UN and INGOs have refused to cooperate with the GOS on such resettlement programmes, due to concerns over the voluntary nature of relocations, and concerns that such programmes were intended to utilise the war-displaced as a cheap agricultural labour force (Akram, 1992, March 23). In October 1991, for example, the GOS unsuccessfully tried to enlist donors to provide food for the transport of some 60,000 able-bodied men to participate in a harvest campaign, which was intended to alleviate labour shortages in the mechanised and irrigated agricultural sector in Upper Nile. Despite pressure from the COD, INGOs also refused to assist. One donor concluded that the project was not a voluntary relocation effort, but a "profit-making venture", and as such humanitarian relief should not be provided in support (US Embassy, 1991, October 22).

Again in June, 1995, the GOS, through the Supreme Council of Peace, sought to elicit the support of the UN and INGOs for the repatriation and relocation of war-displaced from Khartoum, to agricultural production sites (UNDP, 1995, June 7); UNHCR support was particularly sought for the relocation of displaced to areas that had vacated by Ethiopian refugees. UNCERO responded with a set of conditions, agreed by an informal UN and INGO task force. These conditions included: that relocations were voluntary, that appropriate employment conditions and basic services would exist at each site, that labourers would be granted land if required, and that UN staff would be able to monitor the process of relocation (Jaeger, 1995, July 20). The GOS rejected these proposals, however, on the grounds that any attempt by the UN to impose conditionalities represented a violation of Sudanese sovereignty (Ibrahim, 1995, July 30).

7.3.5 Issues and Implications of GOS Policy

The Review Team noted a number of issues concerning GOS policy toward the war-displaced. First, because GOS definitions of populations in need determine OLS coverage in the Northern Sector, only those displaced who live in the four formally recognised displaced camps in Greater Khartoum are included in OLS operations, while the larger population of war-displaced outside the camps are excluded. Similarly, war-displaced in Wau who have been relocated to camps have, since 1992, been the primary focus of OLS interventions; inputs to the rest of the town population lie outside of OLS, within the framework of standard UN country programmes. Consequently, the ability of OLS to deliver relief assistance "to all needy populations regardless of their locations" has effectively been compromised (GOK, 1994, March 23).

Second, the Review Team noted the highly problematic connection between GOS welfare policies concerning the war-displaced, and the pursuit of broader military agendas. As noted above, the creation of displaced camps on the outskirts of Wau enabled the government to secure its military position around the town; in 1990, the government stated with regard to the move of war-displaced to agricultural production sites, that the "return of citizens to (those) sites will safeguard the Armed Forces itself" (GOS, 1990). This has extremely serious implications, in terms of the violation of another key principle of OLS, namely that "Humanitarian assistance shall benefit only civilians, and shall not be used by warring parties" (GOK, 1994, March 23).

Third, GOS welfare policy has been premised on the shift from relief to development, and the GOS has asserted that OLS should move from relief to rehabilitation and development. However, this has in some cases implied that development resources should be used to translate the war-displaced into an agricultural labour force, or to justify urban renewal programmes that involve forced relocation and destruction of property, within the context of the government's overall economic agenda. As will be seen further below, in many cases this agenda is in direct conflict with OLS principles, and has served at local level to undermine the long-term food security of the very populations OLS aims to assist.

7.4 The UN Response to War-Displaced in Khartoum

The continuing crisis among war-displaced populations in Greater Khartoum, the largest concentration of internally displaced people in Sudan, represents the greatest failure of OLS in the Northern Sector. The incorporation of the Khartoum displaced under OLS has had little observable beneficial impact. Indeed, in 1995, three years after their formal incorporation, the nutritional status of displaced populations in the Khartoum was reported to be deteriorating (Dysinger et. al, 1995, April/May).

The UN response to the needs of war-displaced in Khartoum has involved a three-pronged strategy: the provision of emergency relief assistance, technical support to the government for urban planning, and attempts to increase access and assistance. The latter two approaches are considered below, while the provision of emergency relief assistance is considered for OLS Northern Sector more generally in Section 7.5.

7.4.1 Support for Urban Planning

The UN's commitment to working with the GOS on the issue of the displaced in Khartoum was established in the 1988 GOS/UN Appeal, following the devastating floods of 1988. Since then, the UN has participated in various working groups with the government. In 1990, UNDP was a member of the Displaced Persons Working Group, chaired by COD (UNDP, 1990, May), which reviewed past strategies, including OLS 1. It has also participated in the Khartoum Relocation Working Group (1991), and the Squatter Settlement Abolishment Committee (1991).

More specifically, the UN had produced a number of proposals to assist the GOS with its programme of urban renewal, which it considers will have a positive impact on conditions for the displaced in Khartoum.

In May 1992, for example, the UN embarked on a process with the Ministry of Housing and Public Utilities (MOHPU) to "...re-examine the problems and propose solutions which fall within the parameters of government policy" (Janvid, 1992, May 20: 2). This led to the Urban Displaced Squatter Settlement Project, which proposed USD 11.5 million in assistance for upgrading basic social services for the displaced and squatter settlements in Khartoum, and for enhancing the Ministry of Housing's planning capacity (UNDP, 1994).

In negotiating the UNDP/OPS Urban Displaced and Squatter Settlement Project, the UN attempted to build certain conditionalities into the project framework. These included monitoring and evaluation of relocation plans by the UN, the GOS, and members of the affected community; security of tenure to be guaranteed to relocated families; and NGOs to have the option to participate in the project. These conditionalities were agreed at a meeting between the Minister Housing and Public Utilities, the Dutch Minister for Development, and UNEU (Janvid, 1994, July 18). The Dutch Minister offered his government's partial funding of the project if the conditions were met, but cautioned that donor confidence in the project would be dependent on an end to demolitions of war-displaced settlements for a six month period. Two weeks later, however, demolitions restarted, shattering donor confidence (Painter, 1996, April 16).

Having failed to obtain donor funding for the Urban Displaced project, UNDP, in collaboration with UNHCS, developed a less ambitious proposal - Project Amal - which also comprised a service upgrading element, and a capacity-building component for the MOHPU (Kramel, et al., 1995). Importantly, neither of these project documents include an analysis

of the legal framework governing rights to land and security of tenure for displaced as opposed to resident populations.

Together with the 1988 World Bank Urban Renewal Project (which was not implemented, however), these UN initiatives have been used by the GOS as an endorsement of its strategy for the displaced in Khartoum. Answering the UN Secretary General's report on humanitarian assistance in Sudan, the GOS noted:

The truth is that the government is in a process of implementing a policy aimed at improving these unauthorised settlements through a city planning programme. To that end, the Government sought the expertise of a European planner in order to provide those citizens with suitable housing... (GOS, 1994, November 23).

Presently, UNDP continues to work with the GOS on urban planning and renewal strategies, including the future of war-displaced settlements (Jaeger, 1996, April 17; UNDP, 1996).

7.4.2 Attempts to Increase Access and Assistance

In addition to UNDP's work, UNHCU has since 1992 sought to increase its monitoring capacity with regard to the war-displaced in Khartoum, and to advocate a reduction in forced relocations and an increase in humanitarian assistance.

Following the demolition of the Kurmuta settlement in December 1991, and the destruction of a UNICEF water project valued at USD 2 million, the UN began to assert itself more forcefully on the issue of the displaced. Although the UN was able to observe some demolitions, many were not reported ahead of time. The lack of notification and joint planning also meant the UN could provide relief assistance only after demolitions and relocations had occurred, which raised concerns over the program and cost effectiveness of such assistance (Akram, 1992, March 23). It was thus proposed that the UN use the leverage it had by virtue of its aid resources to influence GOS policy (UNEU, 1992, February).

In 1995, following demolitions in Angola which resulted in forced relocations to Wad El Bashier, UNHCU encouraged NGOs to withhold assistance until the GOS clarified its plans for the affected population. The UN's ability to influence NGOs was constrained, however, by its limited contributions to NGO resources; rather, the bulk of NGO resources was obtained direct from donors. NGOs also felt the UN had legitimacy to coordinate their policies, as a consequence

of what NGOs perceived to be the UN's poor visibility and lack of coherent strategy with regard to the war-displaced (Cohn, 1996, March 25; Higgins, 1996, March 27).

The UN has also attempted to increase the access of international NGOs to the war-displaced, through OLS. This has been a particular focus, for example, of the missions of Ambassador Traxler of the UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs. In 1994, a portion of the Khartoum war-displaced population were finally included in OLS, although UNICEF and WFP has been providing assistance throughout the early 1990s. At the same time, the war-displaced included in OLS assessments are only those peoples living in formally-recognized camps.

At present, the UN appears to have reached an impasse on the issue of war-displaced, which has prompted some international NGOs to act. In January 1995, eight INGOs wrote to the UNDP Resident Representative in Khartoum, expressing concern at continued relocations by the GOS, and calling for a revival of dialogue between the UN, NGOs, and donors on the issue (INGOs, 1995, January 24). Subsequently, an Internally Displaced Task Force was created under the auspices of the Inter-Agency Meeting (UN/INGOs, 1995, June 27).

Some common ground was achieved between the UN and INGOs as a result. However, the lack of UN progress in commissioning a study of government ministries responsible for the displaced led INGOs to seek funding from the European Union to commission their own study, the aim being to determine the main operational constraints faced by INGOs (Meadows, 1996). Further, the perceived lack of UN leadership has led INGOs to negotiate new projects directly with the MOHPU. Spearheaded by MSF France, for example, a group of INGOs have proposed an urban upgrading project, not dissimilar from the UNDP/UNHCS-funded proposal for Project Amal (Mohamed, 1996, March 27). A condition for the project is that war-displaced will be allocated plots of land with guaranteed security of tenure. Whether this condition will be met is as yet unclear.

7.4.3 UN Withdrawal from the Khartoum War-Displaced

Aside from the provision of emergency relief, the UN's approach to war-displaced in Khartoum appears to have been informed by two parallel approaches. First, the idea that urban renewal is necessary to improve the environment for the displaced, but that the demolitions and relocations of war-displaced peoples this involves should be pursued in as humane and rational a manner as possible. This idea has

underpinned various attempts by UNDP in particular to build the capacity of relevant GOS departments to implement urban development programmes. These attempts, however, have been hampered by a general decline in development assistance; more importantly, they have been compromised by the continued demolition of settlements by the GOS, involving the destruction of basic infrastructure such as water supply, sanitation, and schools. Also, the failure to impose conditions on the GOS regarding the cessation of demolitions has destroyed donor confidence in UN proposals to assist the government.

Others argue, however, that the internally displaced in Khartoum are not simply part of a problem of urban development. Certain populations of war-displaced - and especially the Dinka - have been identified as having suffered disproportionately from GOS policies as a result of the political dimensions of internal warfare. Evidence to support this is drawn from GOS legislation which differentiates the rights of different groups of people to settle in Khartoum, and from the pattern of demolitions and relocations; in the case of the Ishish Fellata squatter area of Khartoum, for example, people were moved "due to the economic and political base of the inhabitants" (UNHCU, 1996, February). Consequently, the UNHCU in particular has attempted to increase access to these populations, and to enhance the protection function of humanitarian assistance. This approach has been hampered, however, by a lack of organizational capacity, by the absence of a regular field presence of UNICEF and WFP for monitoring, and by the limited coordination function the UN is able to assert over NGOs working in the displaced camps. More broadly, it has been undermined by the failure of UN OLS agencies to collectively work to carve out a distinct neutral humanitarian space for OLS Northern sector responses to the needs of the war-displaced.

In the absence of a framework - both within Sudan and globally - to define solutions to the problem of internal displacement, the UN has effectively reached an impasse. This impasse has not been explicitly confronted; rather, there has been an implicit but steady withdrawal from, and down-grading of, the issue of war-displaced in Khartoum. For example, WFP has largely withdrawn from Khartoum, delegating responsibility for food aid to the international NGO ADRA. UNICEF no longer has an officer in place responsible for directly monitoring the situation of war-displaced, or for monitoring the implementation of projects UNICEF supports. The UNHCU post of Urban Displaced Officer has been filled in recent years by a UN volunteer who lacks the seniority required to engage the GOS, other UN agencies, or NGOs on the issue.

The Review Team is especially concerned at this apparent disengagement by the UN, in light of the persistence of some of the highest malnutrition rates among the Khartoum war-displaced as compared with other groups.

7.5 The Issue of Food Security in the Northern Sector

7.5.1 UN Food Policy: A Relief-to-Development Model

The initial response of the international community to the emergency in Sudan through OLS was a large infusion of food aid. With the creation of OLS II, the objectives of the programme were broadened. From that time forward, the role of food aid came to be seen increasingly as means to enable the displaced to become both productive and self-sufficient. Accordingly, there has been a reduction in the provision of emergency food aid, and a corresponding increase in food security and development-oriented programming in the Northern Sector.

In many disasters, it is assumed that once the acute phase of the emergency is over, people will diversify food sources through own production and other coping strategies. A reduction in food aid rations over time is therefore common practice. Such thinking has also been applied in the Northern Sector, and emergency food aid rations have been reduced. In Wau, for example, as early as 1990, the UN Field Adviser noted:

Wau should/could be the process of weaning itself from a purely relief operation which is almost exclusively dependent on outside material resources (Wagner, 1990, February 20).

Similarly, the 1994 assessment in Ed Da'ain suggested that:

It is high time to reconsider general food distribution, food should be targeted at vulnerable groups (UNCERO, 1996, January).

This thinking has been formulated, however, in the face of evidence of a continued deterioration in basic nutritional indicators among war-displaced, and in a context where the war continues to displace civilian populations. In the 1994 assessment, for example, in the paragraph preceding the above statement, it is noted that an SCF (UK) nutritional survey found that the nutritional status among war-displaced populations was actually worse than in 1992, when a major food intervention was on-going (UNCERO, 1996, January).

Consequently, the Review Team had deep concerns as to whether the standard relief-to-development approach, adopted by OLS agencies in the Northern Sector, which involves a reduction in emergency food aid distributions and an emphasis on the creation of self-sufficiency, is appropriate in the Sudanese context. Further, the Review Team felt that the adoption of this approach is a result, in part, of a failure by OLS policy-makers to understand the chronic nature of the political crisis in Sudan and its impact on food security. In line with the linear model of the relief-development continuum, policy-makers have assumed that the long duration of the emergency implies that new opportunities must have emerged for more developmental responses. However, this approach ignores the persistence of the war and associated policies which continue to threaten the food security of the war-displaced, and which require continued humanitarian support.

7.5.2 The Creation of Food Insecurity: Examples from Case Study Areas

7.5.2.1 Ed Da'ein Province

The economy of Ed Da'ein Province is based on pastoralism and sedentary agriculture. Ed Da'ein is one of the major cash crop markets in South Darfur. The main cash crops are groundnuts and watermelon seeds, and the main food crop is millet.

As noted above, the emphasis of government policy concerning the war-displaced in Ed Da'ein has been on increasing their self-sufficiency through agricultural production, and integrating them into host communities. According to local authorities, the war-displaced have access to land for agricultural production in three ways.

First, land may be given outright to the war-displaced by the land owner, or by the native chiefs. Second, land is made available to the war-displaced for cultivation on a sharecropping basis, wherein the land owner provides food, cash, seeds, and tools, in exchange for a share of the harvest. Third, land owners may allocate one "mukhamas" of land to be cultivated by war-displaced for themselves, in exchange for their labour on a second "mukhamas" of land for the land owner.

Confusingly, all of these systems of land use are referred to by Rural Councils as "land allocation", although they imply different degrees

of security of tenure and share of production for the war-displaced. Further, not all of these arrangements operate in practice as they are described by local authorities. In the case of sharecropping arrangements, for example, credit provided by land owners prior to cultivation often leads the war-displaced into a cycle of indebtedness (Interview with Adila Rural Council, 1996, April 4). In addition, the quality of land provided to the war-displaced for production is often of poor quality. The ability of war-displaced populations to obtain income from agricultural production has also been undermined by the late arrival of seed inputs and food aid to support consumption needs during the growing season.

The structural constraints thus created on agricultural production for the war-displaced are indicated by the comparative ability of farmers to repay seed credit provided by SCF (UK). For example, in 1995, while the host population in Ed Da'ein was able to repay 90% of seed costs provided on credit, the war-displaced were able to repay only 20% (Adam, 1996, April 3). Poor harvests in 1995 reduced the ability of war-displaced to obtain adequate food and agricultural inputs for cultivation in 1996, thereby forcing many people to rely increasingly on sharecropping arrangements.

In addition to sharecropping, the war-displaced use a range of other strategies to obtain a subsistence income. For example, wage labor to remove watermelon seeds is common. Although labor-intensive, the income that can be obtained from this work is low, especially when compared to the cost of food and other necessities. It takes at least two days to cover half a feddan of land, for which laborers receive LS 1000; in April 1995, the price of one sack of dura was LS 22,000, and the cost of one jerrycan of water was a minimum of LS 20.

The collection and sale of fuelwood has also been an important strategy for the war-displaced. However, because of its environmental impact, Rural Councils in Ed Da'ein have introduced new prohibitions on wood cutting, thereby limiting the ability of the war-displaced to utilise this option. Domestic labour is another strategy. There is also a seasonal movement of the war-displaced back to Bahr el Ghazal to fish, or to work as cattle herders.

The ability of war-displaced populations to achieve food security is undermined by their lack of secure land tenure, which creates dependence on wage labor, and leads to cycles of indebtedness to land owners. The war-displaced in Ed Da'ein, therefore, are being integrated into the economy of the Province not as independent subsistence producers, living in parity in paired settlements, but in effect as a cheap and tied agricultural labour force. Indeed, the

Provincial Commissioner has noted that the war-displaced now account for 85% of the agricultural labor force of the province (Interview in Ed Da'ain, 1996, April 7). Agricultural wage labor among the war-displaced Dinka, which has traditionally formed only one part in a complex system of subsistence, has now become the central means of survival. The structural vulnerability that this implies contrasts sharply with the GOS and UN policies objectives to promote self-sufficiency. In addition, the reduction in general food rations that is an integral part of the self-sufficiency approach, combined with untimely disbursement of seeds and tools, further undermines the food security of the war-displaced.

7.5.2.2 Western Bahr el Ghazal and Wau

Prior to the war, the economy of Bahr el Ghazal region was dominated by the great cattle economy of the agro-pastoralist Dinka. An essential feature of the regional economy was the articulation of the Dinka cattle economy with other production systems and with trading networks, that combined to form a complex system of economic interdependence (Johnson, 1994).

The economic policies of successive governments in Bahr el Ghazal have centred on a fundamental restructuring of the agro-pastoral subsistence economy of the region. The area was considered to be an economically under-developed and commercially unexploited resource base. The presence in the region of oil and water, as well as land, also became increasingly attractive to both government and commercial interests; in the 1970's and 1980's, international capital was obtained for oil extraction, and investments were made in large-scale agricultural and livestock production schemes, such as the Aweil rice project, commercial ranching at Marial Bai, and the Ajak, Amenheduol, and Aliab dura schemes.

Aside from political objectives, it has been suggested that the war in Bahr el Ghazal has been used by successive government to pursue economic policies for the region (Keen, 1992, November), including the expansion of the mechanized farming sector. The decimation of Dinka cattle herds by government-supported militia has served both to provide a source of wealth to these militia, and to disrupt the basis for the agro-pastoral subsistence economy. The destruction of the subsistence economy has been further advanced through fuelling inter-tribal conflict, which has in turn disrupted traditional trading networks and economic relations of interdependence between the Dinka and other groups.

Having been rendered destitute by the war, displaced Dinka have, in effect, become a large pool of wage labourers that can be exploited for the commercial development of the area, in particular on mechanized agricultural schemes. As part of this process, displaced agro-pastoralists are encouraged to become sedentary agriculturalists, and to change their traditional production and cultural practices, including through developmental programmes.

The appropriateness of OLS programming for the war-displaced in Wau must be seen within this broader economic context. It must also be seen in relation to the conduct of the war. Detailed research, for example, has established a strong correlation since the 1980's between population displacements and militia raiding, and this continues to be the case in Wau today. Nevertheless, displacement and food insecurity have been viewed as transitory problems, and concern has been expressed by UN OLS agencies that the provision of relief aid may be creating "aid dependence", and hence undermining the sustainability of subsistence livelihoods. However, this thinking represents a misconception of the underlying causes of chronic food insecurity in the region as a result of the war. Between January and April 1996, for example, there was an influx of between 1,200 and 2,300 newly displaced into Wau, in the wake of Murahaliin raids that brought 5,000 cattle to Wau for sale. In Ajiep, raiding by Kerubino's troops and the Murahaliin have frequently coincided with the harvest season. People have survived, but only "through partial displacement and an increased reliance on wild foods" (WFP, 1996, January: 106).

The reduction in food rations assumes that the war-displaced have other means of securing their food needs. The case of Ajiep suggests that the dispersal of household members through "partial displacement", or the temporary refuge in displaced camps around Wau, is one such survival strategy employed by rural populations. Those household members least able to fend for themselves may go to the camps. Many of the more permanent sections of the camp populations are the old, the infirm, women, and children. Women in particular often stay in the camps to earn income through the sale of wood, grass, and crafts, while men will return to rural areas to farm in the cultivation period. Income earned by the women may then be used to support farming activities (Watson, 1996, April 9). Other income sources include domestic and farm labour. In 1992, it was reported that prostitution among war-displaced women was also increasing as a "coping strategy" (Anderson, 1992, October 14). The rise of prostitution is indicative of the fact that coping strategies of the war-displaced are barely sufficient to ensure survival. A woman interviewed by the Review Team in Marial Ajith camp

reported going several days without food in order that her children could eat.

Under conditions of extreme stress, people are rarely passive. The ability of people to reduce their vulnerability and survive conditions of extreme stress is well documented in the literature on coping strategies. The employment of such strategies, however, can involve permanent losses, such as the sale of physical assets. Around Wau, wood cutting and charcoal making are causing environmental damage (Watson, 1996, April 9). Involvement in prostitution does not indicate "coping", but one of the few opportunities for women (and their children) to survive in a context where the range of options is severely limited. Hence, the idea that "relief operations cannot release people from their suffering" (RRC et al., 1993, September 22/24), and that the reduction of food aid will reduce their aid dependency, is deeply flawed. In the view of the Review Team, this approach is likely to drive the war-displaced into a dependence on unsustainable and inappropriate economic relations, which has profound implications for their future food security.

The war has also created a distinct economy in Wau town. The formal economy of the region has collapsed, although the government has managed to keep some resources flowing into the town to support civil and military administrations. Within the town, most land has been given over to agricultural production during the growing season. People's ability to obtain a subsistence income from this production has been undermined, however, by a cartel of traders and military officers who have combined to control the food market. With a monopoly on trucks and military protection, the cartel has been able to regulate the import of food to Wau from the Bagari loop to the west, North Sudan, and the Central African Republic (Wagner, 1990, February 20; Deng, 1990, July 4). Seasonally, food prices are subject to the manipulation of the cartel, and since 1989 they have consistently been among the highest in Sudan. Importantly, people living in the town do not have access to OLS food aid. They are therefore exposed to the direct effects of high food prices in the market. Nutritional surveys conducted in May and November of 1995 indicate a lower level of malnutrition among people in the camps compared with those in three health centres in Wau town (Ali Elzein, 1995).

Since 1990, the GOS and UN policies have sought to promote self-reliance among the war-displaced in Wau (Wagner, 1990, February 20). Since 1992, following the widening of the security zone around Wau and the formation of peace villages, this has increasingly taken the form supporting agricultural activities, through both food and

non-food inputs. In October 1992, WFP reported that, while it would be a mistake to think that the war-displaced do not need food aid, they were nevertheless on the path to self-reliance (Anderson, 1992, October 14). The fact that after four years, the war-displaced are no nearer self-reliance raises questions over the effectiveness of this policy. Few, if any, successful harvests have been reported in the years since 1989 (Deng, 1991, October 10; Deng, 1992, January; RRC et al., 1993, September 22/24). Delays in delivery of inputs such as seeds, as well as inappropriate choice of seeds, has been a consistent problem noted since 1990 by every annual assessment (Wagner, 1990, February 20; RRC et al., 1993 September 23/24; Gichigi, 1996, January/February). Significantly, what is given less prominence in OLS needs assessments are the non-technical constraints to production, such as access to land, and security of production and tenure. Regarding land, one Sudanese aid worker noted:

Land which is in secure zones is not enough to support people all year round. The word "relief" should continue until there is enough land (Wau, 1996, April 11).

7.5.2.3 Khartoum

As noted earlier, the war-displaced in Khartoum have been vulnerable to relocation to agricultural production sites, to effectively act as a wage labour force. More generally, the lack of secure land tenure for the Khartoum displaced undermines their ability to achieve food security in the long-term. In the short-term, a correlation has been shown between demolitions of informal settlements around the three cities, and food insecurity:

...demolitions have taken place since 1991 without stop and the malnutrition rates have shown a steady trend upwards since then (Dysinger et al., 1995, April/May: 20)

Such malnutrition rates include, in Jebel Awlia, 34% of the surveyed population below 80% weight-for-height in September 1994; and in el Salaam, 46% of the population below 80% weight-for-height (Dysinger et al., 1995, April/May). These figures are very alarming.

7.5.3 Implications of Reduced Rations

What the proceeding analysis suggests is that the aim of achieving food security for the war-displaced in the Northern Sector has been premised

on assumptions that do not take into account the actual constraints facing these populations. The image of the displaced as idly waiting for food aid to arrive stands in sharp contrast to their engagement in activities that place them in vulnerable and often risky positions in order to survive. Such "coping strategies" among the war-displaced do not form the basis for sustainable development, as is commonly assumed.

Nevertheless, the reduction in general food aid rations in the Northern Sector has been based on assumption that the emergency is over in government-held areas such as Khartoum, Ed Da'ein, and Wau. Donors are also sceptical about the continued need to provide substantial food aid, arguing that Sudan produces sufficient food surplus in most years to sustain its own population (Esmieu, 1996, March 30).

However, the nutritional status of the populations in government-held areas has not shown significant improvement, and in some cases has actually deteriorated in recent years. What this suggests is that for many of the displaced the emergency is not over. Rather, the war-displaced remain subject to military insecurity, and to insecurity in entitlements to land and employment. As one relief official in Wau explained to the Review Team:

WFPs policy is OK if there is peace and no further influxes. But the war continues. Destabilization is intensifying in some areas. To move away from relief to rehabilitation will mean people are left without assistance." (Wau, 1996, April).

Not only have food rations been reduced, but food aid has been increasingly repackaged as agricultural support or food-for-work (Watson, 1996, April 9; Fardino, 1996, April 11). Rather than promoting food security, however, the reduction in food aid rations appears to be forcing displaced populations to intensify other survival strategies. At the same time, analysis of food insecurity in the case study areas suggests that the rate at which rations have been reduced has outpaced the rate at which alternative sources of food and income-generation have expanded.

7.5.4 Targeting and Distributions

Pressure on the war-displaced to achieve self-sufficiency is thus taking place in a context where food security is being undermined, and where non-relief based strategies for survival are being eroded, as evidenced in continuing high rates of malnutrition. In such a context,

targeting of food aid necessarily becomes more problematic. It is interesting, therefore, to review how targeting mechanisms are being developed. The food aid policy of the NGO ADRA, now the lead agency for food aid in Khartoum, is instructive in this regard.

In 1995, ADRA undertook a review of a three year food aid programme in the Khartoum displaced camps. In the context of declining food aid, and the need to make less food go further, the report recommended better targeting and "incentives to graduate the malnourished child quicker and prevent future faltering" (Dysinger et. al, 1995, April/May: 25). Family dry rations sizes were reported to be generous, based on a family of seven people. There was concern that dry rations had become "an incentive to keep a child malnourished" (Pearson, 1995, May: 12). The proposed solution, which has subsequently been adopted as policy, was to reduce household food rations and place more emphasis on wet feeding.

Behind this policy is a widely-held view that people were manipulating the relief system at the expense of children:

We are refusing additional dry rations for supplementary feeding, because we felt that people were deliberately keeping their children malnourished in order to maintain access to rations (Teller & Staddon, 1996, April 1).

The premise for the new policy is that this problem can be resolved by providing incentives to parents to maintain the nutritional status of children. However, if the child continues to lose weight, then rations are withheld from children and parents.

This punitive approach to the issue of malnutrition raises a number of issues. First, it fails to recognize the contribution of other factors to malnutrition. As the ADRA report itself notes, lack of food is not the only cause; illiteracy and ill-health can also be factors in malnutrition. Illiteracy among mothers in Jebel Awlia displaced camp, for example, was found to be 88% (Pearson, 1995, May). Further, the approach fails to acknowledge the depth of the crisis facing the Khartoum war-displaced, which forces parents to utilise extreme measures as strategies for survival. For example, no surveys have been conducted among the war-displaced to determine why people are selling food, nor do household surveys form part of the joint assessment. As one aid worker commented to the Review Team:

The UN never opens the door of the displaced to see what is really happening (1996, April).

The notion that war-displaced abuse relief also assumes that they are aware of their entitlements to relief, and that they actually receive these entitlements. However, this has not always been the case. For example, a report on Al Salaam describes how lack of experience, "petty differences", and the lack of clearly defined roles of the COD and the four Sudanese NGOs responsible for the camp led to duplication of ration cards, meaning that the camp population did not know which cards were correct (CARE, 1992, May 5). Further, food aid distributions are reported to be random; they are also reported to be failing to take into consideration the size of the family; as a "coping strategy", larger families consequently attempted to register to receive food aid more than once (CARE, 1992, May 5: Annex 1). The report also notes that police providing security for the distribution were seen collecting jerry-cans and soap, with the permission of the site manager (CARE, 1992, May 5).

In Ed Da'ain, SRC has been assigned by the Local Relief Committee to distribute food, which is usually delivered to the camp by SCF (UK). The diversion of food aid supplies was reported to have become institutionalised, with complex alliances having been formed between merchants, politicians, rural authorities and the Dinka hierarchy; one confidential source informed the Review Team, for example, that he estimates "leakage" at approximately 25%. This, combined with the fact that 20% of food aid needs for the war-displaced have been allocated to host communities, suggests that the war-displaced actually receive only around half of their food needs. Efforts to introduce ration cards to overcome diversion of food aid have been rejected in three camps, apparently because these efforts were unacceptable to the local chiefs.

In Wau, where distributions until this year were conducted by the Local Relief Committee, the displaced have their own view of the effects of the reduction in food aid:

...when the Kawaja came here, he said 'we have to care for the poor'.
When we moved to the camp, the government and the NGOs did not continue to help us. Hunger is killing the strong, so the poor have not future. Let us go back to the old system, so the poor may survive.

It is important to note the reduction in food aid rations yields benefits to the commercial agricultural sector. The limited amount of food aid available during the agricultural season, combined with limited access to land and farm inputs, has forced the war-displaced

to become increasingly dependent on local labour markets. In some cases, there is an explicit linkage made between the reduction of food aid and the labour potential of the war-displaced. The Executive Manager of the NGO Muwafaq, for example, complained that it was difficult to get the displaced to work on their agricultural projects, and suggested that food should not be distributed during the period of land preparation and harvesting, on the grounds that people will not want to work if they receive food (El Din A. Bary, 1996, April 3).

In both Wau and Ed Da'ain, war-displaced people noted the lack of mechanisms available to them to raise concerns about distribution mechanisms:

We don't complain because we would be told it is none of our business, and that food will be withheld and we will die of hunger.

We cannot complain that there is cheating on food because we would be arrested.

In neither case did war-displaced people feel there were opportunities to raise their concerns directly with the UN, either because they perceived monitors to be unsympathetic as a result of their involvement in the organisation of distributions (Wau), or because they claimed that at no point had the UN systematically sought their views on distribution systems (Ed Da'ain). Moreover, the displaced are acutely aware of the particular set of local power relations that have emerged around the relief system, and their own place within this system:

The main issue is the stoppage of food rations. We did not complain. Now the rain is falling and we have no seeds and no food. We will agree to anything you say (Interview in Wau, 1996, April 10).

7.6 Information and Analysis in the Northern Sector

7.6.1 Lack of Analysis of the War Environment

Lack of information has frequently been cited as a constraint by UN agencies and NGOs in responding to the needs of the war-displaced. While this may be true, the above discussion also suggests that OLS programmes reflect a deficit of analysis as much as a deficit of information. As a result, OLS operations show a striking lack of innovation in response to working in a conflict environment. Indeed, with the shift in emphasis to development, some programmes that were

in place prior to the war as part of UN country programming have been resumed as though the war did not exist; for example, UNICEF's water programme in Bahr el Ghazal, and UNICEF's project for women's home gardens.

In a complex political emergency, the quality of the relationship between humanitarian agencies and affected populations is determined by quality of access and the extent to which a "humanitarian space" has been created (Minear & Weiss, 1995). In the Northern Sector, although access for international humanitarian agencies has increased geographically, the actual ability of war-affected populations to be in direct contact with these agencies has declined. Not only do state security concerns restrict access to local communities, but resources are increasingly channelled through local organizations that have not sufficiently demonstrated their autonomy from governmental and political agendas in the delivery of humanitarian assistance. The crisis in resources and management affecting government counterparts is also important here.

It is in this context that development activities have been resumed. However, the resumption of developmental activities has not responded to the specific new environment the war has created. Indeed, the only acknowledgements of this new environment that the Review Team is aware of within UNICEF are linked to more global concerns such as Children in Exceptionally Difficult Circumstances. Despite the fact that OLS resources account for a substantial amount of UNICEF's programme in the Northern Sector, the 1996 UNICEF Situation Analysis of Children and Women in Sudan devotes only 14 pages to the effects of war and displacement (UNICEF, 1996).

7.6.2 Assessments, Monitoring, and Evaluation

The lack of analysis among UN OLS agencies of the environment for developmental programming created by the war is, in part, a function of the scope and quality of OLS information. Although the issue of assessments, monitoring, and evaluation has been dealt with elsewhere, this section considers information with specific regard to the Northern Sector.

7.6.2.1 Access and Information

The poor quality of information on war-displaced populations in the Northern Sector is a reflection of the poor quality of access available to UN agencies and NGOs.

Since 1991, the GOS has permitted only two major socio-economic surveys of displaced and squatter settlements in Khartoum, in 1992 by CARE and in 1994 by OXFAM. Both surveys were coordinated by the National Population Committee (NPC). Only the CARE survey included some displaced camps, however - Al Salaam Omdurman and Jebel Awlia - and was aimed primarily at establishing a new registration system for the camps through a head count. The OXFAM survey of basic needs was conducted in the Dar es Salaam resettlement sites in Omdurman, Khartoum, and East Nile provinces. Since the NPC is not a research institution, both studies have been criticised for their methodological weaknesses (May et al., 1995, March). Importantly, the CARE survey noted that the unreliability of information on displacement all over the country means that each NGO conducts registration for the section of the population it alone is concerned with; as a result, there is an unequal distribution of ration cards (CARE, 1992, May 5).

7.6.2.2 Assessments

As noted earlier, assessments conducted by OLS in the Northern Sector do not themselves collect primary data, but rely mainly on government sources to determine the size, status, and needs of displaced populations. In this way, considerable control is exercised by Government in the definition of OLS responses to the needs of the displaced.

The UNHCU, together with the RRC, is responsible for coordinating the joint OLS assessments. These joint assessments are not systematically presented as OLS assessments, either at field level or in subsequent reports. The lack of clarity regarding the status of assessments contributes to the poor visibility of OLS in the case study areas. Hence, an important opportunity for dialogue with local authorities and beneficiaries concerning the identity and purpose of OLS is lost each year.

In Khartoum, the number of agencies participating in assessments grew from nine in 1993 to 17 in 1995. In Wau, some 15 people from 10 different agencies were involved in the 1995 assessment (RRC et al., 1995, October 1-8). Increased participation of agencies has not increased the quality of the assessments, however; for example, the degree of

beneficiary participation remains extremely limited. Consequently, the experience and priorities of beneficiaries is not reflected in assessment reports, nor do they build on an analysis of the impact of interventions in previous years. Importantly, this means that critical changes in policy, such as the reduction in food rations, or use of food for agricultural support, cannot be properly understood. In Ed Da'ein, for example, displaced people reported that their views on the effectiveness of distribution mechanisms had never been sought prior to the visit of the Review Team. In Khartoum, a recent report concluded that:

The Khartoum displaced must be the least consulted group in the history of humanitarian aid (Meadows, 1996).

Further, in both Ed Da'ein and Wau, there was a strong perception that those undertaking assessments arrived with a predetermined set of assumptions about what was required. As the perception of the emergency has changed, the focus of assessments has also shifted from relief needs to rehabilitation and basic services. Thus, in Ed Da'ein one Rural Council reported that:

In 1994 The Committee of the Displaced came with some organisations and said that relief for the displaced would stop. But then they saw the conditions in the camps, and so relief was extended for 1994. But it was emphasised that people must become self-sufficient in 1995 (Fardos, Rural Council).

Similarly in Wau, the Local Relief Committee chairman reported that assessments of needs of newly displaced people were not undertaken, because there were no additional resources likely to be available.

The Review Team was struck by the fact that assessment reports comprise little more than a description of services and organisations in the displaced camps, and do not provide a clear plan of action for different sites. They also do not assess the capacities and constraints facing different agencies involved in humanitarian response. Indeed, the Review Team felt that assessments in the Northern Sector are limited to an analysis of material needs, rather than the mechanisms by which a humanitarian programme could attempt to fulfil these needs. Consequently, there is no distinction made between the material content of relief operations, and the processes which determine its humanitarian impact and effectiveness.

The quality of assessment reports is also uneven. The Review Team found it unsatisfactory, for example, to read statements about the situation in Ed Da'ein such as the following in the 1995 assessment report:

...there were no medicines whatsoever in the camps. Generally the displaced looked very healthy, and there was no serious outbreak of disease, except in El Ghora where around 10 women died after giving birth. There is no midwife in the camps and therefore it could result in poor health.

This type of statement, unsubstantiated by analysis of data available on health centre utilization and morbidity patterns, or by rapid epidemiological surveys, does not provide sufficient empirical information to determine planning priorities, nor does it enable even a basic evaluation of existing health and nutritional status. Similar broad and unsubstantiated comments are found for other sectors in other years, and particularly in recommendations. Thus, the 1994 Ed Da'ein assessment concludes that there is a need to "find a long-term solution to the drug supply problems" without defining either what the problem is, or what strategies might be feasible. As a result, the same recommendations are repeated year after year, without reference to why earlier recommendations were not implemented.

The translation of assessed needs into allocation of resources is also opaque. Although field-based staff participate in the assessments, they do not participate in report writing. Poor information flows between field level and Khartoum, where final allocations are decided, results in local staff being confused as to how decisions regarding allocations are made. For example, the WFP monitor in Wau recommended a half ration for the three month cultivation period; this was subsequently amended in Khartoum to a quarter ration for six months without explanation to local WFP staff (Watson, 1996, April 9). Similarly, international NGOs reported little correlation between assessments and the allocation of drugs to displaced camps in Khartoum (Higgins, 1996, March 27). Local authorities also do not receive copies of assessment reports, again reducing the visibility of OLS and weakening its links with key local actors.

Substantial weaknesses in the assessment process combined to give an impression to the Review Team of an annual ritual of unclear function, delinked from both evaluation of previous interventions, and on-going operations and monitoring.

7.6.2.3 Monitoring

An innovation with regard to monitoring activities in the case study areas has been the re-establishment of UNICEF field offices. These are present in Wau and Ed Da'ain. The former was established in May 1993; the latter was only established in 1996 prior to the arrival of the Review Team.

With the opening of a sub-office in Wau, UNICEF has greatly expanded its activities. This expansion means that the target population of UNICEF is much wider than the war-displaced, and includes general war-affected populations. However, the expansion of UNICEF activities has not been matched with improved monitoring. For example, it was reported that supplies to Aweil were not accounted for as "it has been difficult to travel to Aweil for the whole of 1995" (Wani, 1995).

WFP has both an international monitor and a national monitor based in Wau. The international monitor, appointed in 1994, reported that he felt underutilized, particularly since there had been no distribution in Wau since September 1995. He was therefore unclear what his role should be during the dry season. Also, if a contract is signed with the Sudanese Red Crescent to distribute food aid, then the position of international monitor is likely to be closed, and instead a "roving" monitor will visit Wau regularly. Although likely to be more cost-efficient, the Review Team was concerned that WFP provides adequate monitoring and support to its contracting NGOs:

The presence and quality of international monitors is very important to us; they provide us with protection and enable us to resist the political pressures we face (Fardino, 1996, April 11).

In Ed Da'ain, a WFP monitor reportedly visits every 45 days during the period when relief aid is distributed. However, none of the displaced communities were aware that WFP monitors were sometimes present at distributions, nor were WFP aware of some of the problems reported by beneficiaries and by SCF (UK) (Adly & Bailey, 1996, April 20). SCF (UK) also felt that it was undersupported by WFP in its negotiations with the local authorities regarding food aid and food security issues.

In Khartoum, there is a WFP officer responsible for monitoring the food situation in the displaced camps, although his time is split with other duties. However, despite the continuing deterioration in the nutritional status of the displaced in Khartoum, WFP has virtually disappeared from the Khartoum displaced camps as an operational agency. In late 1995 responsibility for coordinating food aid interventions was effectively delegated by WFP to ADRA, an

international NGO. This followed from ADRA's predominant role in channelling USAID food aid into Sudan; ADRA's experience in establishing monitoring mechanisms to account for USAID food were seen to be better than the monitoring capacity of WFP (Fadl, 1996, April 16). At the time, ADRA had been proactive in establishing a dialogue with COVA, the KSRC, and RRC concerning food and supplementary feeding policies in the displaced camps. WFP reportedly did not participate in these discussions, despite the fact that in 1994 Khartoum was the primary focus of its operations. When the OLS assessment mission in 1995 revealed that ADRA had sufficient food in the pipeline to cover the needs of the officially-recognized camps, the WFP Director decided to handover responsibility for monitoring of the relatively small WFP allocation of food aid to ADRA.

Significantly, however, ADRA had no written contractual obligations to follow distributions as specified by the OLS assessment. It was simply assumed that ADRA would follow the same procedures for determining distributions as WFP (Belah, 1996, April 1). To the knowledge of the Review Team, the only written contract between WFP and ADRA with respect to the Khartoum displaced relates to the use of WFP supplies of materials to make Premix (Fadl, 16 April 1996).

The lack of a nutritionist working within WFP further compromises its monitoring capacity. In Wau, WFP depends on information from the UNICEF nutritionist; in Ed Da'ien, it is dependent on SCF (UK) to provide information on nutrition and the food economy. In Khartoum, UN OLS agencies depend on NGOs such as ADRA and SCC to monitor the nutritional status of populations that the UN supports through rations and supplementary feeding. The dependence on information that is generated outside of OLS funding and contractual frameworks is problematic for the ability of OLS Northern Sector to fulfil its monitoring obligations, and to ensure the appropriate allocation and use of food resources.

Given the size of the population and scale of resources allocated by OLS to displaced populations in Khartoum - estimated at USD 12 million in 1994 (Painter, 1996, March 26) - the lack of UN capacity to monitor the impact of its programmes was of concern to the Review Team. The Review Team was also concerned by WFP's effective withdrawal from the Khartoum displaced camps, and from future negotiations over food policy in Khartoum, especially given the current framework guiding ADRA's interventions in the displaced camps, considered further below.

7.7 The Implications of Contractual Obligations and Standards for OLS Northern Sector Programming

The establishment of a clear contractual framework is crucial to ensuring the accountability of UN partners, and to ensuring that operational modalities of partners are in line with OLS principles and UN standards. However, as described in Chapter 4, the definition of contracts within OLS remains poorly developed. The implications of this for programme activities are considered in this section.

In general, there are no particular contractual obligations for NGOs receiving OLS as opposed to non-OLS resources, or for NGOs working in OLS as opposed to non-OLS areas. For example, GOAL reported that:

We have a three year contract with UNICEF [to handle essential drugs]. Since the Khartoum displaced came under OLS there has been no amendment to that contract which has been in place since 1993. I hadn't thought about how transparency, neutrality, and accountability fit into our programming (Higgins, 1996, March 27).

The lack of attention to humanitarian principles, and to monitoring the capacity of NGOs, is illustrated by the kind of contractual situations that presently exist in the Northern Sector. An example from Ed Da'ein is revealing in this regard.

SCF (UK) is contracted by WFP to store and deliver food aid to the displaced camps in Ed Da'ein. The contract states that SCF (UK) "will be responsible for the receipt [of food aid] and the related secondary transport, monitoring and distribution" (WFP, 1995, June 6). Following the decision of the High Committee for the Displaced to make the Sudanese Red Crescent (SRC) responsible for camp management, however, SRC has been nominated to carry out distributions on the ground. SRC is not paid by WFP for its work, which is done by volunteers. Rather, it has received small grants from the Commissioner and from SCF (UK) over the years, but these have now ceased. The SRC office in Ed Da'ein lacks its own transport capacity to monitor the work of its volunteers in the ten camps. By 1996, the SRC funding situation had deteriorated to the point that it was unable to field its monitors, and to sustain its role in management of the camps (Idris Hassan, 1996, April 3).

In this case, WFP does not have the contractual framework to ensure the accountability of its implementing partner. Different interpretations of SCF (UK)'s role in distributions persist, and the decision of the Commissioner that SRC should play this role make it

unclear who should be responsible. In addition, although SRC is responsible for managing valuable WFP resources at the field level, it does not have the financial resources to enable it to properly fulfil this task. The view of WFP is that if the Commissioner wishes SRC to participate in the distributions, then he should pay them to do so (Adly, 1996, April 20). However, this stance fails to deal with situation as it exists. Because of the lack of clarity in the provision of overhead costs, it is unclear whether SCF (UK) was also being paid to physically conduct the distribution in the camps - if so, then a share of this overhead should be allocated to SRC automatically. If not, as SCF (UK) understand, then appropriate arrangements should be made to ensure that the NGO actually responsible for distributions has the resources to fulfil its responsibilities.

This example from Ed Da'ein also illustrates a more general concern; namely, the limited capacity of the UN to monitor the performance of its NGO partners. While the decentralization of UNICEF's operations in Wau, for example, has helped to address this issue, UNICEF's limited capacity in Khartoum and Ed Da'ein means that NGOs do not benefit from monitoring visits that ensure technical standards are in place. Thus:

There is no coordination to see who is doing the work, it is not organised around monitoring. UNICEF has not monitored our work on the ground, they only look at our reports. If they are not doing it for us, maybe they are not doing it for others and therefore are not in a position to see what impact they are having and therefore what need to be changed (Higgins, 1996, March 27).

The lack of a clear monitoring and coordination framework contributes to uneven standards in the implementation and coverage of OLS programmes. The importance of the UN in establishing a rigorous regulatory framework is heightened by the fact that it is NGOs, including those receiving OLS resources, who are primarily responsible for delivering services to the war-displaced. In the absence of government support for these services, the UN has an obligation to ensure that these services conform to agreed minimum international standards.

The absence of such standards is having serious implications for people's health. Different health centres provide different services, depending on the capacity of individual agencies, their interests, and the interests of donors. In Wad el Bashir, for example, MSF France and the Fellowship for African Relief (FAR) share the aim of reducing high levels of malnutrition, as reported by ADRA. However, neither agency can meet the needs of the whole population,

and they run different programmes. While FAR provides some dry rations and an MCH service, MSF France provides neither. In the feeding centres, there appears to be no clear admission and discharge criteria corresponding to national or international standards.

With regard to health coverage, Jebel Awlia displaced camp in Khartoum has 11 clinics for 14,000 people - or one clinic for every 1,272 families; in Wad el Bashir, however, there is only one clinic for every 2,938 families (Mohamed El Badawi, 1995, April). The absence of the Ministry of Health or UNICEF from the camps also means that no single agency takes responsibility for the coordination of health services. This has resulted in some serious problems for EPI coverage, reported to be less than 30%. Given the emphasis that UNICEF places on EPI, the problems of EPI coverage in the displaced camps in Khartoum, in close to the UNICEF national office, is disturbing. Similarly in Ed Da'ain, while UNICEF has provided essential drugs over a period of several years, and has had an EPI programme in the Province, no data is available showing the access of the displaced to either service.

In general, the Review Team felt that, while UN agencies in the Northern Sector are severely constrained in their choice of implementing partners, little effort has been made to develop mechanisms to ensure compliance with accepted professional and humanitarian standards, or to ensure that partners have sufficient resources to fulfil their operational responsibilities. Indeed, the Review Team felt that it was difficult to escape the conclusion that NGOs are seen primarily as means of distributing material supplies, rather than as part of an integrated humanitarian system, and able to use OLS supplies to realise clear policy objectives.

7.8 Public Welfare Provision in the Midst of Structural Crisis

In addition to a humanitarian crisis, Sudan is also experiencing an economic and financial crisis. The GOS is implementing financial stabilization and structural adjustment policies; unusually it is doing so in the absence of structural support from international financial institutions. Since the early 1980s, Sudan has been plagued by strongly fluctuating growth rates, high inflation, and severe balance of payments support problems. As a result, the economy has turned increasingly inward, with the share of exports of GDP at less than 8%, one of the lowest among developing countries in the world. By the end of 1994, Sudan's external debt stood at USD 18 billion, the equivalent of USD 800/capita. Attempts to reform the economy through

enhanced agricultural production, liberal marketing arrangements, and greater privatisation, have had little success. By the mid-1990s, there was increasing recognition that reforms could only be successful if they received appropriate support from regional and international financial organisations, particularly in minimising the negative social impact of stabilization policies.

However, the capacity of the GOS to attract development assistance has declined sharply. During the period 1980 to 1987, net annual official aid amounted to USD 40.4/capita, representing 63% of domestic investment. Capital inflow peaked in 1985 at USD 1,907 million, falling to USD 127 million in fiscal year 1993/4. In April 1994 the GOS set in motion policies to reverse this trend, and to pave the way towards resumption of external economic and technical assistance, by resuming payments to the International Monetary Fund. However, bilateral grants to finance commodity imports and development projects have not improved, and humanitarian aid now accounts for 37% of aid, almost half of which is provided through multilateral organisations.

The wider economic crisis in Sudan has important implications for humanitarian operations. First, there is considerable pressure for humanitarian aid to become more developmental, in order to bridge the growing gap in investment finance since the early 1990s (GOS, 1996, April). Second, in the absence of development assistance and adequate public welfare financing, there is increasing encroachment by other groups into humanitarian resources targeted at the war-displaced. In the case study areas, where there are no public services in the displaced camps, international agencies are increasingly substituting for government services. This raises the issue of how the international community can both protect the relief entitlements of target populations from external pressures, and sustain basic services for war-affected populations in the absence of government finance. Third, the absence of recurrent government finance begs the question as to whether or not developmental relief interventions can be - or indeed, should aim to be - sustainable.

Federalisation has been one response to the financial crisis, since it has delegated increased responsibility for financing from the centre to state, provincial, and Rural Council levels. UNICEF has recognised the potential problems this entails:

...(the) sudden delegation of responsibility for social services to the states and rural councils without adequate systems to finance these can be counterproductive (UNICEF, 1995, December).

The impact of the federalization policy on OLS programmes and beneficiaries is illustrated in the financing of drug supplies. The State Minister for Health, Western Bahr El-Ghazal, summarised the situation as follows:

GOS policy is for cost-recovery on drugs; they are not providing any free drugs any more. This has placed a good number of people in trouble. There are few exemptions on the grounds of destitution; the majority suffer because of the lack of drugs. The State has to buy drugs from the federal government; over the years there has been a decrease in the amount of drugs supplies and the flow is not regular. We used to receive huge quantities which went to the rural health centres. Now the quantities have reduced, and only a few centres are able to receive drugs. GOS drugs do not go to health centres. As security improves, we are reopening more PHC units and staff are going back. In 1995, six units reopened. UNICEF goes and checks, and drugs are distributed by UNICEF and security, the waybill is signed by the nurse. Theoretically States have more right to collect taxes than in the past, but this practice is limited by security, and therefore we can't collect taxes on cattle. We receive grant in aid from Khartoum (Michael, 1996, April 11).

What this example highlights is a contraction in public financing, at the same time that there is a planned expansion in service delivery. In this context, the government has become increasingly reliant on agencies such as UNICEF to provide basic inputs such as essential drugs.

In Khartoum, health centres in the displaced camps are under increased pressure due to the limited health services in the GOS hospitals and health centres (Mohamed El Badawi, 1995, April). During a visit to Wad el Bashir displaced camp, the Review Team interviewed several women from outside the camp who had travelled to the MSF France and FAR centres because they could not afford the cost of government health services. Indeed, at the MSF France centre, 33% of patients came from outside the camp. Hence, there is a hidden population in Khartoum being served by the international community.

In Ed Da'ain, UNICEF and SCF (UK) provide essential drugs to MOH-run clinics in both host villages and the displaced camps. These drugs are targeted primarily at the displaced, and therefore are provided free - a situation in contrast to UNICEF and GOS general policy in the North. An explicit assumption of the drugs programme is that, by providing equal benefits to the displaced and host populations, tensions between

the two can be reduced. However, the accessibility of health services and drugs differs markedly between the two populations. The displaced noted, for example, that when they go to the health centre there are frequently no drugs.

Similarly, the water shortage throughout South Darfur is reported to be reaching a critical level. In 1992, ten boreholes were built by the UN and NGOs to provide for the immediate needs of the displaced, and in the longer-term to contribute to the development of water supplies for the host community (Abdeen, 1996, April 3). Initially, the water was provided free to the displaced, with an assumption that charges would follow in subsequent years, and that the government would take over the running of the supplies. Over the years, however, as their own boreholes have dried up, the host community in Ed Da'ein has become increasingly dependent on water supplies planned to benefit the displaced. Responsibility for sustaining the supply has been shifted on to the host community. Several of the water yards are now divided in two - the host community drinking from one side, and the other side reserved for the cattle of the host community and the displaced. Moreover, the acute pressure on water is generating considerable fear among the displaced; in Adila, for example, one displaced Dinka commented to the Review team:

Water can be cut off at any time. If this happen our only choice will be to fight.

Similarly in Fardos:

Conflict with the host community over water is imminent here.

In effect, there has been a steady encroachment by the host population into resources supplied to the displaced. This is in large part driven by the fact that Rural Councils now have responsibility to buy drugs, since they are no longer provided free by the federal government. Relief resources targeted at the displaced are thus managed and controlled by the host community, who are themselves experiencing a decline in access to basic services. It is not surprising, therefore, that they claim priority access. Humanitarian aid in this context has become the fig leaf used to hide the structural crisis in public financing. Attempts to target resources at those most in need - the displaced - are eroded by a failure to protect their access to relief resources.

The UN humanitarian programme can do little to address the structural financial crisis in Sudan. Not only are the resources for

infrastructural development not there, at the same time that the funding base for OLS Northern Sector is declining, its coverage is reportedly expanding:

In 1994, we have managed to continue our assistance to 1.7 million affected people in 85 locations. Furthermore, we have managed to assist an additional population of 232,000 in 74 new locations. This does not include the 35 new locations this year covered by mobile medical teams on the barges with a total population of 500,000 (Tayarah, 1994, October 29).

Like the GOS, the UN is attempting to expand its operations in an environment of contracting finance. The shift towards capacity-building in UN programming in part reflects the lack of resources to develop new infrastructures. However, in the absence of effective mechanisms for remunerating and supervising public sector staff, the provision of material supplies or training will not of itself contribute to the effective functioning of public services.

7.9 Humanitarian Aid as a Conflict Reduction Strategy

In 1996, the UNDP Resident Representative stated:

We want to attempt to insert in our operations the notion of conflict resolution (Jaeger, 1996, January 30: 3).

Since its inception, OLS has been seen as a mechanism for reducing conflict and enhancing security. The idea of using humanitarian operations to enhance conflict resolution has gained momentum globally and within Sudan in recent years, as evidenced by programmes such as corridors of tranquillity, and attempts to secure cease-fire agreements to implement Guinea Worm eradication. The case studies, however, raise the question of whether or not humanitarian aid can and should be used as a tool for conflict reduction in the Northern Sector.

In Ed Da'ain, it has been argued that by providing relief to both host and displaced communities, the risks of violent conflict between the two can be reduced. Hence, the host community in Ed Da'ain has received a proportion of free food aid, seeds, and drugs over the years. These allocations have been deducted from the total allocation of resources to the displaced in Ed Da'ain.

However, although aware of the risks of violence, the international community has also relied on authorities to control access to relief

resources which are themselves implicated in the history of violence against the Dinka in Ed Da'ain. In the view of the Review team, this apparent paradox stems from a programmatic emphasis on material deprivation, to the exclusion of an analysis of broader political and economic relations of power in the context of internal warfare. Consequently, the role of humanitarian aid in protecting - rather than simply assisting - war-displaced populations has been neglected.

Unlike Ed Da'ain, little analysis appears to have been made of the implication UN relief provision to peace villages. In Wau and elsewhere - for example, the Nuba Mountains of South Kordofan - the formation of peace villages has been linked to political and military objectives. In Wau, for example, the creation of peace villages in 1992 was seen as a means of securing the strategic railway line (RRC et al., 1992, December 22/23). In such a context, the implications of UN assistance must be seen not just in terms of material need, but in terms of how such assistance may be implicated in the conduct of the war. As one aid worker commented to the Review Team on the Nuba Mountains:

We have to question whether our work is pulling people from the other side. It bothers me that we are only working on the government side. I know what we are doing is supporting a government programme, building up peace villages and supporting the Popular Defence Forces. There has to be a balance on the other side. We are doing good work, but there are bigger political issues that need addressing (Khartoum, 1996, April).

Among the UN and international NGOs, a common idea is that the presence of international agencies will somehow limit further abuses against the Nuba people. However, the continuing crisis among the war-displaced in Khartoum suggests that the presence of international agencies has actually done little to mitigate against abuses.

Further, the focus of some UN programmes suggests that there has been a fundamental failure to adopt programming to the fact of internal warfare and its associated risks for some populations. In this regard, it is difficult to understand how humanitarian assistance can be made to contribute to conflict reduction. UNICEF, for example, is supporting Child Friendly Village schemes in some 29 villages in South Kordofan. The fact that UNICEF is able to support such schemes, in a context where internal warfare has placed children at great risk, led the Review Team to question the extent of UN understanding of realities facing beneficiary populations, and the degree to which development initiatives have been explicitly delinked from the political context in which they operate.

Of particular concern are the three UNDP Area Rehabilitation Schemes (ARS) in Wau, Kadugli, and Juba. These projects, although funded outside of OLS, nevertheless utilise OLS resources provided through UNICEF and WFP. The ARS are an extension of the UNDP Area Development Schemes. Implemented together with the GOS, ARS support agricultural rehabilitation, and are intended to tackle the problem of inadequate food production, to "pave the road for sustainable development" (UNDP, 1995, March 12), and to "reduce dependence on emergency assistance in areas affected by civil strife" (UNDP, 1996, February 22: 1). They also form part of UNDP's strategy of linking peace and development, as currently being explored through the Barcelona Peace Process (UNDP, 1996 March 28).

The extent to which self-reliance is feasible at all is questionable, however, when, in the words of one aid worker:

The population in South Kordofan is primarily women and children and old people. The modern structure of government is breaking down, as are the traditional structures (Khartoum, 1996, April).

In South Kordofan the objectives of the ARS include supporting the Peace Administration to:

...resettle [returnees] in peace villages and then promote agricultural development to strengthen their attachment to land (UNDP, 1996, February 22: 10).

Given that the Nuba have been dispossessed of their land, this statement suggests a disturbing degree of ignorance of local realities. Moreover, the Review team was concerned that such programmes represent a de facto accommodation by the UN with disaster-producing policies of the government.

In general, given the highly politicised nature of the developmental agenda in Sudan, and its implications for access of the displaced to relief resources, much closer scrutiny of the application of the relief-to-development continuum, and of claims that aid can be used as a conflict management tool, is required.

7.10 Protection of the War-Displaced

The only clear attempt by OLS to address disaster-producing policies directly has been public advocacy regarding the war-displaced in Khartoum. The efficacy of this approach is nevertheless a subject of debate. The view of the UNDP Resident Representative is that the issue of war-displaced in Khartoum is not one of human rights, but a problem of poor management and coordination (Jaeger, 1996, April 17). The Review Team felt, however, that the provision of humanitarian assistance and the issue of protection are inseparable; as one report noted:

...almost by definition, the displaced's primary need is for security (Meadows, 1996: 4).

Security for the displaced, however, has to date primarily been defined in terms of security of land tenure, as a precondition for longer-term urban development projects that international NGOs and the UN are interested to support. Further, public advocacy has generally been limited to opposing demolitions of displaced settlements, or to addressing technical issues such as standards of health care and basic services. While not denying the importance of these, the failure to incorporate a rights-based analysis for protection of the war-displaced has meant that protection advocacy has been limited to addressing the symptoms of government policies, rather than the policies themselves. The need for a rights-based analysis is particularly important given evidence of human rights abuses that are beyond the realm of material deprivation. For example, various reports, including those prepared by the UN's Special Rapporteur, have documented the arbitrary arrest of men, women, and children (Biro, 1994, February 1; Africa Watch, 1992, July; Minority Rights Group 1995).

Perhaps the worst human rights abuses have to do with the abuses against children. The high percentage of children among the war-displaced population in Khartoum is recorded in a number of documents. One study in 1990 estimated the number of street children to be over 40,000, the majority from displaced or squatter settlements. In 1992, 50% percent of the population of the two official displaced camps in Khartoum were children under 14 years of age (National Population Committee, 1992, December); in 1994, 48% of the population in the squatter resettlements were children under 15 years of age. In 1992, the government launched a programme to remove vagrant children from the streets of Khartoum, ostensibly as a social welfare measure. However, many children rounded up were reportedly sent to camps where they received military training (African Rights, 1995, February).

The lack of public advocacy on abuses against children is particularly alarming given the UNICEF and the government's commitment to the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child. As one UNICEF staff member commented:

Government concerns continue to be security, rather than the needs of rights of the child (UNICEF, 1996, March 28).

While the 1996 UNICEF Situation Analysis of Women and Children in Sudan comments on the plight of unaccompanied minors in South Sudan and Kenya, and the abduction of children by rebel forces, no comment is made on similar abuses against children in North Sudan, which have been documented elsewhere (Human Rights Watch/Africa, 1995, September). This is a serious omission, but in line with the apparent lack of serious attention given to this issue by UN agencies in the Northern Sector. There is an apparent unwillingness to engage in debates concerning the Rights of the Child for fear that this will compromise UNICEF's operationality. However, the Review team felt that all UN agencies needed to more seriously confront the question of whether their material assistance can be effective without a framework that links the delivery of material supplies with wider principles of neutrality and protection.

In 1990, USAID identified protection and security as issues for the displaced (USAID, 1990, February 15). However, the strategy was to strengthen the presence of international NGOs as a means to preventing human rights abuses, rather than to engage in direct engagement with government policies. This strategy has contributed to the government's view that international NGOs are the implementors of Western government foreign policy in Sudan (El Amin Osman, 1996, April 4), which has led government authorities to restrict international NGO activity on the grounds that they are hostile to the present regime (Eldin Ibrahim Bannaga, 1992). Importantly, the Review team felt that international NGOs have neither the capacity nor the mandate for protection of the displaced; hence, the de facto assignment of responsibility for protection to international NGOs, as a result of the failure of bilateral and multi-lateral organizations to engage directly with the government on this issue, is highly problematic. This is especially the case since it is the responsibility of the UN to define the overall political framework for humanitarian operations.

International debate concerning the mandate of different UN agencies for protection continues, and some progress has been made in recent years. A recent report, for example, noted that the UNDP Resident Representative should "...bear in mind his or her responsibility for

representing the UN system as a whole which is bound by international human rights and humanitarian standards (Cohen & Cuenod, 1995, October: 38).

In July 1993, the Inter-Agency Task for Internally Displaced Persons, created by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, concluded that both protection and relief needs would have to be addressed in situations of internal displacement. It called upon the Emergency Relief Coordinator (the Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs) to actively use inter-agency consultative mechanisms to allocate "responsibilities to address the plight of internally displaced persons". The Task Force further recommended that Emergency Relief Coordinators should serve as a reference point for assistance and protection on actual or developing situations of internally displaced persons that might require a coordinated international response (UN, 1993, July 5). The Resident Representative in Sudan was notified of his responsibilities in this regard in July 1995 (Hansen, 1995, July 31).

Given the available instruments of the UN, the Review Team was deeply concerned by the UN's failure to develop an explicit framework for protection of the war-displaced in the Northern Sector. The importance of DHA in providing active leadership on the issue of the displaced cannot be overemphasised; indeed, Cohen and Cuenod concluded that DHA's performance in coordinating assistance to the displaced will be seen as the "litmus test" of its readiness to play a leadership role in UN responses to complex political emergencies (Cohen & Cuenod, 1995, October). In Sudan, however, the protection role of DHA to date has largely focused on negotiation of access. While negotiation of access constitutes an important part of a protection mandate, the quality of such access, and decisions about the type and quality of assistance, are also central.

At the OAU Coordination Conference on Assistance to the Displaced held in Khartoum in September 1995, the GOS confirmed their view that internally displaced populations could not be the subject of protection interventions by the UN or other bodies, as this infringed upon the state sovereignty. The GOS also rejected moves to extend the mandate of the UN to include the internally displaced. Mustafa Ismael of the DOD/KSRC noted that:

The internally displaced do not need protection, they only need assistance...If the UN nominated a special body for IDPS, the GOS will reject it (Colthoff, 1995, September 20).

For donors, the impasse that has been reached with regard to internal displacement in a chronic political emergency also has important implications. This relates both to the donors' central role in debates concerning the global mandate of the UN with respect to internally displaced persons, and the donors' central role in adequate financing to sustain humanitarian inputs in a chronic emergency. One UK aid official, consulted on the UK's position on the issue, suggested that the donor community is "sitting on its hands", and looking to the UN to negotiate the thorny path between the primacy of sovereignty and that of protection. Such an approach by donors does not support the UN in this difficult task.

7.11 Implications of UN Policy Failure

The analysis of OLS Northern Sector suggests that a major failure of international and UN policy has occurred, particularly with regard to the crisis of internal displacement. The fundamental issue of protection for the large, internally-displaced population within Sudan has remained unaddressed. The origins of this failure are linked to a number of factors, including the lack of clarity with regard to the mandates of different UN agencies in applying the existing international instruments for the protection of war-displaced populations globally, and the poorly-developed contractual framework which guides UN operations in the Northern Sector. In effect, the UN is constrained by the sovereignty of the Government of Sudan from confronting disaster-producing policies which create vulnerability among those displaced by the war.

While in part reflecting managerial and organisational problems, the UN policy failure in the Northern Sector represents a more fundamental flaw in the conceptualization of chronic political emergencies, and especially the contradiction of demanding that the UN ensure the neutrality of its operations in a context where a sovereign government is also a party to the conflict. In this regard, the policy failure of the Northern Sector does not just lie with the UN, but with the international community in general.

8. INFORMATION MANAGEMENT, FUNDING, LOGISTICS, AND COST EFFECTIVENESS

8.1 Information Management

8.1.1 Overview

In previous chapters of this report, the quality of information gathered by OLS has been considered. In this chapter, the Review Team considers the question of information management, and reviews the efficiency, coherence, and level of coordination of various information systems within UN OLS agencies.

With regard to information systems, the Review Team found a highly uneven and in many cases highly problematic situation.

This situation is the result of various factors, including some that are external to the UN OLS agencies. Over the past two years, for example, the shift to a food economy approach has intensified demands for different kinds of data. In some cases, this has created the need for coalitions with partner organisations, whose motivations and reliability in surveying and reporting cannot always be taken for granted. As will be seen further below, information collection and dissemination is sometimes hostage to the wider political framework within which OLS operates.

In addition, the Review Team heard frequent complaints from agency personnel that donors, while clamouring for more and better information, did little themselves to support the units and processes necessary to make this possible. For example, the UNHCU in Khartoum had five field monitors in 1993; it had to lay off all of them in 1994 as a result of funding shortages, and was able to hire only one in 1995. Moreover, as will be seen below, the orientation of some key information systems is toward producing data required to meet donor requirements, rather than maximizing the ability of field offices to understand the impact and coverage of their operations.

Within the UN agencies themselves, the information landscape is highly uneven. With the building of a stronger knowledge base over the past two years, quantitative as well as qualitative data has undoubtedly become richer. However, the Review Team found that the various information systems scattered throughout OLS were not sufficiently integrated to maximize the coherence (and hence analytic capability), efficiency, and transparency of this data. Rather, UN agencies -

captive as they are to turbulent environments, divergent interests, and crisis management - have never found time to develop Management Information Systems adequate to the size and complexity of OLS.

8.1.2 Information Systems at Different Sector Levels

The quality of information systems within UN OLS agencies differs according to sectors. Not surprisingly, the most efficient are found in logistics, and this is true for both UNICEF and WFP, and for both Northern and Southern Sectors. In large part, this is due to the nature of logistical information itself, where measurable variables are straightforward, and where measurement indicators have a common denominator (such as weight, or CIF value).

In general, the Review Team found the logistics sections to be operating in a relatively coherent and open manner with regard to information.

After logistics, the most efficient information systems reside with section heads, and here we refer specifically to UNICEF. At UNICEF, section heads manage sector-specific information systems that are internally relatively coherent. However, data from these systems could not be adequately understood by the Review Team without detailed explanations from section heads about format changes, discontinuities in staffing, changes in monitoring priorities, and other related issues. Consequently, the coherence of sector-specific information is highly dependent on the institutional memory of sector heads themselves. Moreover, while these systems may be internally efficient, they are sometimes impenetrable by, and resistant to, the needs of other sections.

Further, sector-specific information management is in some cases problematic as a consequence of the nature of the sector itself. With regard to UNICEF's health programme, for example, the complexity of health-related interventions, and the dependence of UNICEF on a large number of implementing organizations, make coherent documentation of this area extremely difficult.

Finally, information available for specific sectors is affected by the interests and procedures of partner organizations, and by technical and security-related problems in data collection and transmission. A measure of the difficulty can be seen in a recent survey that attempted to collect data on schools supported by UNICEF Southern Sector. Questionnaires were sent to 1,200 schools in 1995. By April 1996, only

200 had been returned, many of them filled in by SRRA and RASS secretaries, rather than the teachers who were targeted to provide information. It is therefore impossible to verify whether or not the majority of the 1,200 schools exist. Although training of local counterparts to OLS field monitors is underway, their contribution will not be realised for some time, and may in any case be conditioned by their own concerns and perspectives (Odido, 1996, April 10).

The most problematic area of information management, however, occurs in Monitoring and Evaluation. Information Officers, crushed by the task of documenting the performance of their agencies, and often poorly supported and trained, are expected to produce information upon which their agencies stake far-reaching claims to populations served. The discussion that follows is primarily concerned with information related to Monitoring and Evaluation.

8.1.3 Monitoring and Evaluation Information Systems

With regard to monitoring and evaluation information, the Review Team found that data varies greatly between the two UN agencies. Figure 8.1 below distinguishes major types of data to which the Review Team had access, according to the years for which they are consistently available.

Figure 8.1

(Insert Table "Years for which Key OLS Data is Available" here.
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While WFP has more detailed data on the geographic areas served by OLS, its information systems are not well-developed over time. For example, it was not possible from WFP's data to reconstruct global yearly tonnages of relief commodities delivered to South Sudan prior to 1993. UNICEF, on the other hand, does have figures for the early years of OLS. Conversely, WFP tracks data for its 1994 and 1995 deliveries down to specific geographic areas, whereas UNICEF has less detailed information about specific locations, as a result of a policy of handing over inputs to area offices.

Generally-speaking, the Review Team found that UN OLS agencies were not able to articulate a well-prioritized set of information objectives with regard to Monitoring and Evaluation. Indeed, for some key variables, it has become accepted that no information is available.

For example, WFP country directors do not know the annual expenditure of their OLS sector operations. As will be seen further in the section below on cost effectiveness, this is because WFP headquarters in Rome does not produce the relevant annual statements. UNICEF Northern Sector, on the other hand, produces large figures for numbers of beneficiaries, but has no established definition of what a person in the war-affected zones must receive in order to be counted a beneficiary. Further, in the context of a policy emphasis on decentralization and reliance on local implementing partners, the lack of detailed information on how access was used, how inputs were distributed, and the impact those inputs had, is scarcely felt by OLS staff to be a problem.

In the absence of clear information objectives, a proliferation of local initiatives have taken place, often dominated by strong personalities and limited by their individual skills and tenures. Some of these developments have produced interesting insights, or have shown directions in which future efforts can be extended. For example, the Household Food Security Section in UNICEF Khartoum produced a simple cost-benefit analysis for its seed distribution activities. Similar efforts were made in the Southern Sector, relating agricultural success to health problems such as guinea worm infection rates. In other areas, creative initiatives did not materialize due to funding cuts. For example, a plan to create profiles of all locations serviced by UNICEF Khartoum in 1995 was interrupted, because key staff positions could not be filled.

Other problems in monitoring and evaluation arise from the diversity and seemingly arbitrary succession of computer applications used for data administration and analysis. In some cases, several systems are used concurrently in the same agency, with little or no automated interfacing, requiring multiple entry of the same data, and severely limiting information management capacity and analytic capability.

The WFP logistics office in the Southern Sector is a case in point. WFP Lokichokio uses a programme written in Dbase to keep track of air operations. Dbase is used also by the WFP logistics office in Nairobi for air cargo reporting. However, data for commodity tracking is kept in a different programme. For the WFP regional operation, data is logged with the help of a WFP proprietary system introduced by the Transport Co-ordination Unit in Kampala, and differs from the one that WFP Khartoum uses. Neither of these systems is used for OLS Southern Sector, however. Instead, two entirely different applications are used side-by-side. For certain types food, fuel, and aircraft reports, the logistics officer relies on his own personal programme written in

Access. At the same time, charge codes for the same food commodities - known as Shipping Instructions (SIs), and necessary to satisfy donors requirements - are kept in Lotus 1-2-3, a spreadsheet application (Maj, 1996, April 17).

The problems posed by many different kinds of computer applications is exacerbated by the transfer of statistical information from tables in word processing programmes - which can be managed by administrative support staff - to spreadsheet programmes - which require specially trained personnel. Increasingly, statistical data is also being transferred to database applications, which require an even higher level of training and expertise. The Review Team noted that there is a lack of adequate support for this transition, in the form of personnel, computers, and training. Further, insufficient understanding of electronic information management (a consequence of poor technical and training support) is also creating a lack of motivation to follow proper procedures in maintaining and safeguarding data. For example, in several places vast amounts of data were lost because the practice of keeping back-up copies was not maintained.

In general, the Review Team felt that the root cause of problems in information systems is a weak leadership regarding the purpose of monitoring and evaluation activities. Only in areas where massive complaints were made does direction appear to be given; for example, the computerised information system which is under design for Lokichokio cargo handling. Hence, the Review Team felt a more proactive and coherently-planned leadership in information management is needed.

8.1.4 Special Issues of Concern: Populations on Either Side of the Conflict

Population figures in Sudan are a highly politicized matter. Relief flows are determined by, among other things, estimates of populations in need, and whether these populations live in government or rebel-controlled areas. At the same time, figures for needy populations tend to be seen as equivalent to the total population in any given area. As a result, UN OLS population figures are used as substitute indicators for the number of people living on either side of the conflict; as such, they have acquired enormous significance, and are highly contentious. As will be seen below, however, such a substitution is not valid.

Evidence of the politicization of OLS population data is seen in the

statement by the GOS that OLS "avoid inflating the number of the beneficiaries in areas where mutineer rebels are present, and conduct surveys all over the country with the participation of the Government, the United Nations and the Voluntary Organizations" GOS, 1996, April, point 10).

In addition to UN OLS figures, parties to the conflict have advanced their own population counts. For example, the SRRA, invoking its obligation under the SPLM Agreement on Ground Rules "to provide accurate and timely information regarding the needs and the situation of civilians in their areas", estimates a total population for Bahr El Ghazal, Equatoria, Upper Nile and Southern Kordofan Regions of 6.8 million (SRRA, 1996, November 10). While SRRA does not explicitly state that this population lives exclusively in rebel areas, SPLM's organigram of administrative structures makes clear this is the operating assumption. The 6.8 million figure contrasts sharply, however, with GOS statements that a few hundred thousand civilians are living under SPLA administration (GOS, 1996, March 28).

The reaction of OLS agencies to the politicization of population figures, and divergent claims by the warring parties, has been different for North and South. In the Southern Sector, the discussion on population figures in needs assessment documents for 1994 and 1995 indicates an enlightened caution. In the 1995 document, no fewer than five pages are devoted to methodical caveats, the comparison of various census data, and local NGO estimates regarding populations, before advancing an estimate for planning purposes of 4 million people in South Sudan, including some government-held towns (UN, 1995, November).

In this document, South Sudan includes as Bahr El Ghazal, Upper Nile, and Equatoria. Including all government-controlled towns, the document estimates a total population of 5.1 million; of these, 3.9 million are the sum of Southern Sector 1994 assessments, and the balance of 1.1 million people are from Northern Sector assessments. The latter figure is very close to the estimate of 1,060,478 people reported in the OLS Northern Sector Assessments in South Sudan, the Transitional Zone, and the Khartoum Displaced Camps for 1994, endorsed by the GOS Commission for Relief and Rehabilitation.

Significantly, the Southern Sector speaks only of an estimated population, and does not claim that this number is accessible to OLS assistance. In fact, UNICEF Nairobi rules out the concept of an estimate of the population serviced by OLS at large (Nicols, 1996, April 15). However, estimates of populations reached by particular

sector programs are produced. For example, the population with potential access to health care facilities was estimated to be 1.13 million for 1995 (UN, 1995, November). This figure is down from 1.5 million in 1994, due to insecurity. This amounts to 28% of the population having access to health care services.

The Northern Sector also uses caution in determining populations. However, as noted in the Northern Sector Needs Assessment document for 1994: "Estimated population figures were primarily reported by local authorities in the areas assessed. The figures were not confirmed by the assessment teams and no census or headcount was undertaken as part of the assessment exercise. No accurate population figures are presently available for most of the areas covered. Frequent population movements further complicate the demographic picture in the assessed areas. Therefore, the population figures included in this report are only indicative of actual civilian populations in the assessed areas".

Despite the problematic situation of having to rely on population figures generated by local authorities, UNICEF Khartoum states categorically in its 1995 Programme Review that 3,690,000 displaced and war-affected persons were accessible from Khartoum, of which 2.5 million were targeted for UNICEF assistance, and of which over 2 million were effectively reached (UNICEF, 1995).

A related problem arises here - that of the definition of a person assisted, and the method of counting beneficiaries. Since another UNICEF Khartoum document uses a figure for access to vulnerable populations that is the same as the number of beneficiaries (MacCarthy, ?????????????????????? ADD DATES TO THIS REFERENCE!!!!), one is led to suppose that the entire population deemed accessible was counted as being assisted. Even if the statistics were based on programme specific outputs, however, it would be virtually impossible to calculate the union of all sets of persons who, during the year, benefited from this or that programme component.

When the Review Team pointed out the difficulty of comprehensive beneficiary counts and requested that the spread of various programme activities over the 202 locations with access be documented, such information was not available with the single exception of seed distributions. While some of the few output indicators consistently maintained for the past three years do indicate programme growth, the spread of assistance over the many locations and 2 million needy people remains a matter of faith. The Review Team thus considers this claim by UNICEF Khartoum unsubstantiated.

For WFP, the population issue is slightly different. Claims to total population, or population that can be accessed (as opposed to effectively assisted) are not made. The validity of beneficiary claims is, rather, connected to the flow of information from field to the country offices, a problem that is detailed below. Here we simply reproduce the figures as contained in the WFP 1995 Annual Report. Accordingly, in 1995, as many as 1,179,387 persons in the South, the Transitional Zone, and Khartoum needed emergency food aid; in the same document it is noted that WFP, plus NGOs operating in Khartoum and in the South, provided assistance to 1,749,727 persons (WFP, 1995).

When we pieced together all the figures that the two UN OLS agencies provide for the persons in need, and those whom they assisted in 1995, a paradox appears. The people who received assistance actually outnumber those in need. For WFP, the two figures have been noted above. For UNICEF, these figures are compiled from the number globally claimed by the Northern Sector plus, as a minimum for the Southern Sector, those who had access to the health care programmes supported by UNICEF (we have no means of knowing how many more were reached by its other sectors). Although the agencies themselves do not make these sums, they are implicit in the claims made in their programme reviews.

Figure 8.2 indicates the paradox of assisting more people than were identified as in need, for both WFP and UNICEF, against a total population of 6,426,559 estimated to live in the South, the Transitional Zone, and to be reached in the Khartoum displaced camps:

Figure 8.2

(Insert Figure "Claims to Populations in Need and Reached 1995" here.
Filename = data3.doc)

The excess of persons supposedly assisted over those in need demonstrates the shakiness of the entire monitoring and reporting enterprise. Even so, the numbers are less than half the total population estimated to be living in the three concerned OLS regions: South, Transitional Zone, and Khartoum displaced camps. While UN OLS beneficiary figures are likely inflated - and more so for Northern Sector - they do not, and even when amended will not, speak to the question of how many people live on which side of the conflict.

8.1.5 Special Issues of Concern:

Comparing Numbers in Need Versus Numbers Served

The Review Team received from WFP detailed information regarding the delivery of relief commodities early in the Review process. Needs assessments were also obtained, but from different documents and at a later date. Comparing the two, we were struck by the discontinuity between information used for needs assessment, and information used for reporting needs fulfilment.

While needs were assessed for populations living in an area such as a former rural council, deliveries were reported against a much larger number of different locations. No attempt was made to correlate the two sets of data; hence, it was not possible to understand the extent to which the stated needs were actually met.

When the Review Team asked about this, we were told by the WFP office that collates reports from both sectors that WFP Khartoum has no idea where most of the locations, for which deliveries appear in the reports, were to be found on the map (Alaman, 1996, April). The important question then arises how WFP is able to continue using an information system that apparently cannot identify the specific location of its beneficiaries, or correlate this data with needs assessment reports.

Emergency food needs are projected using assessments made in specific geographic areas prior to the Consolidated Appeal. During the programme year, populations in need are, where possible, reassessed. Indeed, some areas are reassessed several times, depending on logistics and the need to continue assistance for several months. Monthly delivery plans are prepared, breaking deliveries down according to locations and weeks. In the Southern Sector, most locations are accessed by air. Flight permits are sought for these, often with a number of spare locations included should the GOS refuse access to the primary destinations.

For logistics reasons - to document which locations were actually used, to calculate block hours, etc. - delivery reports indicate locations, quantities, and number of beneficiaries present at distributions, multiplied by an average family size where appropriate. (As noted above, they do not, however, refer to the same locations indicated in assessment reports).

For the Southern Sector, when delivery reports reach the OLS Nairobi office, data on beneficiaries and data on commodities are processed separately. Commodity data is copied to the logistics section, which tracks each commodity separately. Logistics has no particular interest in the areas serviced as such; its major concern is to be able to close Shipping Instructions so that reporting requirements for donors can

be satisfied, and to keep track of those lots for which customs exemptions need renewal within a 45 day deadline. Hence, as discovered from an examination of Spreadsheet formats, there are no tonnage totals calculated for deliveries to individual locations; rather, the focus remains on tracking individual commodities. Commodity reports and beneficiary figures are then copied to Khartoum for report integration, but in separate communications.

WFP Khartoum keeps beneficiary statistics and commodity delivery information in separate files (in 1995). Over time, this separation has encouraged a number of anomalies. First, in the Northern Sector, beneficiaries do not necessarily constitute those people actually served during the reporting month; rather they may include persons reassessed as being in need but supplied later, or, if access to them was lost, not at all served. In effect, this means that the ability to distinguish between those requiring assistance and those actually supplied disappears. Consequently, as many as 39 out of 177 locations in the WFP 1995 datafiles indicated the presence of beneficiaries, but did not show any actual deliveries.

Second, while data on beneficiaries is kept monthly (more specifically, a cell in the spreadsheet is reserved for each location and each month), data on deliveries to a location is kept cumulatively over the course of the year, leaving no monthly entries with which to verify beneficiary claims. This is because, as noted above, commodity reports forwarded from Nairobi do not total the amount of all commodities delivered to a specific location. Instead, the Information Section in Khartoum is left with the tedious job of adding total weights commodity by commodity and entering these manually into location cells in the spreadsheet.

The way the system functions at present has important implications for the calculation of total beneficiary figures. Such calculations are also affected by the security of flight destinations. It is not unusual, for example, for a population in need to have to travel to different distribution points, depending on the extent of access to individual locations at any given time. Since statistics are kept at the level of locations, some groups of beneficiaries are reported under several locations during the same month, or under location A in one month, and location B in the following month.

The formula used to calculate yearly beneficiaries adds all monthly figures for a location, and divides by the number of months with entries. Thus, a double-counting effect is built into the system, which cannot be cross-checked because information on commodities actually

delivered has been structurally separated from data on beneficiaries. When this was pointed out by the Review Team, WFP abandoned the above formula for the final version of the 1995 Annual Report. Instead, figures for populations in need were simply used as approximations for populations assisted, with an additional 500,000 beneficiaries added for barge operations, and 200,000 beneficiaries served by NGOs from Kenya and Uganda.

Although this discussion points to serious deficiencies in the information systems of WFP, it should also be noted that WFP staff were open in discussing the shortcomings of the system as it stands. Moreover, during a special exercise with the Review Team, WFP Nairobi succeeded in correlating assessment and delivery reports, and in the process creating 18 cluster areas for which 1994 versus 1995 deliveries, as well as 1995 needs assessments and deliveries, could be meaningfully compared.

For the Review Team, the problems in information management detailed here have less to do with technical competence among WFP staff than with the direction that accountability flows in OLS more broadly. OLS operations are logistics and access-driven, and reporting is designed primarily to satisfy donor requirements. Hence, delivery reports are constructed according to delivery locations, rather than areas noted needs assessments, and they concentrate on donor-driven concerns such as Shipping Instructions and customs exemptions, rather than real beneficiaries.

Indeed, under the present system, it would be more honest to report straightforward commodity figures only. However, as was pointed out to the Review Team, donors and executive boards insist on having beneficiary figures, no matter how unreliable, or even fictitious, the complex context of OLS renders them.

8.1.6 Management of Needs Assessments Information

Annual OLS needs assessments form the basis of the annual UN Consolidated Appeal, and as such have enormous significance. In the North, this significance is greatest, since annual assessments are said to determine the operational field of OLS (Painter, 1996, March 24).

Considering its importance, the Review Team spent considerable time examining the assessment exercise. The results of this examination have already been discussed in previous chapters. Here, the experience

of the Review Team in obtaining information concerning assessment reports is discussed.

The first task was to obtain annual assessment reports for the duration of OLS. Reports from 1991 to 1995 for the Southern Sector, and for 1994 for the Northern Sector, were provided in advance of fieldwork. Attempts to find reports for the missing years in Khartoum failed, for the simple reason that do not exist; 1994 is the only year that an assessment report was written for the Northern Sector.

For the Northern Sector, from a search of UNEU box files, two assessments of specific locations for 1993 were found; no assessment reports could be found prior to 1993, however, although one UNEU staff member remembered vaguely that an assessment must have taken place in 1992. Further attempts to trace the missing reports were then made with WFP, where some joint (OLS) assessment reports prior to 1993 were found, but again relating only to specific locations.

For 1995, the Review Team was informed that an assessment report was not prepared by the UNEU for the Northern Sector, due to delays in the recruitment of the Information Officer. For 1993 and before, reasons for the lack of assessment reports are less clear. In 1993, attempts were made to combine the Northern and Southern Sector assessments in one report, but eventually this was only done for food security information from household interviews, and the report was prepared by the Southern Sector. No reports were written, however, using information from the broader area assessments, which included other sectors. It appears that this was at least partly due to differences in the quality of information between the Northern and Southern Sector. Between 1990 and 1993, UNEU took part in the FAO/WFP crop and food supply assessment mission, and it may be that the report from this mission was seen as sufficient, even though this includes the whole of Sudan, and only assesses food aid needs.

Some form of assessment was carried out in mid-1990 to adjust needs for populations assisted under OLS II, and also in late 1992. For the latter, it is unclear whether these were OLS assessments done in preparation for the Appeal. For both, it is impossible to say how many locations were assessed, as we cannot be sure that all area reports were found. At the end of 1991, UNEU prepared regional profiles for the FAO/WFP Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission, which was deduced from the report of the FAO/WFP mission and seeing regional profiles without date or author in the WFP files.

Finally, although assessments are referred to in the Plans of Action

for OLS I and II, we found no record of these assessments. For the Northern Sector therefore, we have no information about assessments done in late 1989, 1990, and 1991.

For the Southern Sector WFP assessment reports are available for 1989 and mid-1990, as part of an adjustment of needs for OLS II, but they are not available for the following year. It appears that, for both sectors, regular joint annual assessments started with the initiation of the SEPHA appeal in 1992.

In terms of food aid needs, assessments of war-affected populations are incorporated within the annual FAO/WFP Crop and Food Supply assessment mission from 1990 forward. These reports however, cover emergency food aid needs for the whole of Sudan, including drought-affected and displaced people not necessarily included under OLS. In late 1990, a special WFP/NGO/donor mission, separate from the FAO Crop Assessment mission, estimated the food aid needs for drought-affected and displaced in Sudan. This report estimates numbers of drought-affected and displaced for the South, but does not separate these by areas under GOS and SPLA control. For the north, no distinction is made in the report between drought-affected and displaced.

OLS assessments are sometimes, but not always referred to in FAO/WFP Reports. From 1993 at least, both WFP Northern Sector and WFP Southern Sector worked out food aid needs based on the OLS assessment results, prior to the FAO/WFP mission. Food aid needs for OLS as a whole are then combined in a meeting with both Sectors, either in Khartoum (in 1994) or in Nairobi (1995), or by fax (1993). These estimates for food aid needs are then adopted by the FAO/WFP mission, and also go into the SEPHA appeal.

However, the stage between the OLS assessment and how the information is used to estimate food aid needs is rarely recorded. OLS assessment reports, when they exist, rarely give recommendations in terms of the quantities of food aid required, and FAO/WFP assessment reports do not disaggregate the estimated food aid needs by location for Northern and Southern sectors, or even between OLS and drought-affected populations in need of food aid. With the assistance of WFP staff present at the time of the review, the Review Team was able to separate Northern and Southern Sector needs by area or location for 1995, and tables existed that showed the calculations for 1996. This information is not available for the years prior to 1995, however. For this reason, the only year for which the Review Team was able to plot food aid needs against deliveries was 1995.

Food aid needs for 1992 and 1993 for the Southern Sector are also based

on an annual assessment exercise. In 1992, the Southern Sector assessment was apparently part of the FAO/WFP mission, as well as part of preparations for the SEPHA Appeal; indeed, this is the only time that any OLS assessment report gives clear recommendations about actual quantities of food aid required.

Assessments in the Northern Sector are less clear in these years. In 1991 and 1992, UNEU took part in the FAO/WFP mission, but OLS is not mentioned, nor is there a distinction made between populations that fall under OLS and other populations in need of emergency food aid. At the same time, no separate OLS assessment was done for these years that could tell the Review Team the needs of populations under OLS. For example, the 1991 FAO/WFP assessment report estimates food aid needs for displaced populations and refugees in the Eastern State, Northern State, and Khartoum, as well as in Darfur and Kordofan. In Darfur, this includes displaced populations in North Darfur as well as in South Darfur. Of particular interest here is the inclusion of the Khartoum displaced - 342,000 displaced in Khartoum are considered to be in need of food assistance throughout 1992. Similarly, the assessment of food needs for 1993 includes 146,000 displaced in Khartoum (FAO/WFP, 1993, March). However, information provided to the Review Team by UNEU indicated that the Khartoum displaced were not included under OLS until 1994 (Painter, 1996, March 24).

What this review indicates is that food aid needs for populations under OLS are not specified in OLS assessment reports, with the exception of the 1991/92 Southern Sector report and the June 1990 WFP/OLS assessment, also for the Southern Sector. While FAO/WFP assessment reports specify the food needs of Sudan as a whole, it is not always clear which populations fall under OLS, and which are to be covered by general Sudan drought relief programmes.

Ideally, assessments are not only used as the basis for the Consolidated Appeal, but also, and perhaps more importantly, for prioritization of programme interventions, planning, and coordination. Considering that there is only one report of a Northern Sector assessment, it is difficult to see how this information was used to plan interventions and develop strategies. It is also difficult, for the same reason, to understand how it is possible to monitor trends over time.

Further, since assessments for the Northern and Southern Sectors have only been reported together once, it is difficult to form a picture of populations assisted by OLS as a whole. While it is true that the situation in the North and South is different, much could be gained

by combining and cross-checking information from both sectors, especially in terms of understanding and assessing the impact of population movements between locations. Population movements between Khartoum and the South are evident from some reports, as are population movements between GOS-held towns in the South and surrounding rural areas. However, in the absence of an overall combined analysis, it is not possible to gain a sense of the ways in which these movements relate to each other and to events such as changes in security conditions, crop production, trading patterns, or other factors. This, in turn, weakens the capacity for early warning.

A major component of the annual assessment exercise is estimating the actual number of people in need of assistance. In addition, needs assessments should also determine the specific requirements of these populations, as well as how such needs are to be met by available resources and modalities of implementation. Although it is understood that the specific objectives of a needs assessment exercise will vary, the Review Team found assessment reports rarely include these components, and indeed rarely state the specific objectives of the exercise. For the Northern Sector, since no overall assessment reports exist, assessment objectives cannot even be ascertained retroactively from the reports themselves.

Although covered in more detail in previous chapters, it is worth reviewing again the main issues the Review Team noted with regard to the content of assessment reports.

First, the Review Team noted that most assessment reports appear to concentrate on service delivery, rather than on conditions and needs. For example, information may be provided on how many clinics exist in a given location, how many feeding centres, and how many latrines, but little or no information is given on morbidity and mortality rates (although main diseases may be mentioned, and nutritional survey results are sometimes reported). Information related to food security, on the other hand, rarely includes data on the distributions of food aid, seeds, tools, and other inputs. Overall, implementation mechanisms are rarely indicated, and the impact of past interventions is never described.

Second, while numerous assessments, monitoring, and evaluation reports are made on a regular basis by all OLS agencies, the Review Team found that there is little attempt to build on existing information to expand the analytic capabilities of the annual assessment exercise. Instead, the same baseline data is re-collected over and over, with an eye toward the Consolidated Appeal. While

one-off rapid assessments, using checklists of basic questions such as those employed in the Northern Sector, may be justified at the start of an emergency operation, after seven years both the operational agencies and the donors should be able to distinguish baseline data that needs only periodic updating from new kinds of investigations that provide greater depth of understanding.

Third, NGOs interviewed by the Review Team also reported that much of the information gathered in the annual assessments is already available, in greater depth and detail, from their own assessment and programme reports. While UNEU notes that they are obliged to report on all sectors due to their limited access, it is difficult to substantiate this claim, since WFP now has international food monitors in many locations, and UNICEF's decentralization policy has led to greater penetration to local levels. Hence, the Review Team felt that much greater use of existing information could be made, and energies could be focused on the gaps in knowledge for the annual assessment, rather than treating each assessment as if the locations were being visited for the first time.

Fourth, some indicators in the Northern Sector have been monitored consistently over the years, at least for some locations. This data can be used to monitor trends; for example, market prices, which are of obvious importance for displaced populations in GOS areas, and which are generally recognised as good indicators of food security in famine early warning systems. The Review Team was thus surprised to find that no one in the Northern Sector thought of using information available on market prices to monitor trends over years, including comparisons of prices for different locations. The same is true for information that is already available on the prevalence of malnutrition, which is not used to analyze trends that would shed substantial light on the overall pattern of food insecurity relative to other factors.

For the Southern Sector, analyzing specific variables over time to see trends is more difficult, since assessments have on the whole been different every year. This has the obvious disadvantage of rendering comparisons between years problematic; on the other hand, it results from a continuing effort to improve information gathering, and as such the Review Team is reluctant to be overly critical in this regard. Southern Sector Assessments have also focused on filling in gaps in information, rather than re-collecting the same basic data every time (a key problem with the Northern Sector, as noted above). An important reason for this is that baseline information on the food economy of different areas has been collected since 1994, and more recently, the development of a health information system has added to this baseline

picture.

However, the Review Team noted that, as in the Northern Sector, Southern Sector reports do not incorporate existing information from NGOs, or from other monitoring systems. At the same time, the Review Team noted that the process of incorporating such information, given the large number of implementing partners in the Southern Sector, is daunting; in 1995 alone, for example, over 200 assessments had been done in the Southern Sector.

8.2 Funding Patterns

8.2.1 Overview

Donors contribute to OLS in response to Annual Consolidated Appeals, launched by the UN for all their humanitarian operations in the Sudan. Donors also contribute to NGO programmes in Sudan that are not normally included in the UN Appeal, although NGOs in principle report all grants received for OLS to DHA.

This section analyzes funding patterns based primarily on statistical data from the DHA Financial Tracking Unit, and from UNICEF. The section considers the issue of funding from five key angles:

- * The total amount of resources provided, and shares provided to UN and NGOs.
- * Sources of funding for specific programme types.
- * UN agency requirements and donor responses.
- * The importance of various donors in OLS funding.
- * Funding for Northern and Southern Sectors.

8.2.2 Overall Volume and UN/NGO Shares

In Figure 8.3 and Figure 8.4 below, funds received for Consolidated Appeals for Sudan from 1993 to 1995 are presented, broken down according to requirements and grants received, and by donors. As can be seen from the Figures, the international community has given more than half a billion dollars to the Consolidated Appeals for this three year period, to both UN agencies and to NGOs.

As reported to DHA, contributions to NGOs (as well as other non-UN agencies such as ICRC) totalled USD 255 million for 1993 to 1995, while

UN agencies received USD 311 million. In Figure 8.3, however, these totals appears slightly different. The difference depends on how one handles USD 18 million and USD 53 million worth of emergency food aid channelled through NGOs in 1993 and 1994, respectively. It should also be remembered that the sum includes USD 24.5 million for UNHCR's refugee operations, of which an unknown amount was used to assist drought-affected populations in North Sudan.

In Figure 8.4, grants for refugee assistance, although not primarily used for OLS work, are kept in the calculations. For greater realism, NGO-channelled food aid is also transferred to the non-UN sector. After the transfer was made, we noted 287 records of contributions made to UN agencies between 1993 and 1995, totalling USD 264 million. DHA tables work out this total differently, at USD 258 million (as seen in Figure 8.3); we have not been able to elucidate the difference in calculations, although we suspect it is based on different ways of accounting food aid.

Figure 8.3

(Insert table "UN Consolidated Appeals for Sudan - Agency Appeals and Donor Contributions 1993-95" here. Filename = DON_TBL1.DOC)

Figure 8.4

(Insert table "Donor Contributions to the UN Sudan Appeals" here. Filename = DON_TBL2.DOC)

Despite small discrepancies in the way various amounts are allocated, it is possible to identify a number of key trends in funding patterns from these Figures.

First, contributions to NGOs have been larger than those to UN agencies for the three year period 1993 to 1995. Since not all NGO funding received is reported to DHA, NGOs will in fact have received a larger share than is indicated.

Second, when the drought disaster was over in 1995, contributions decreased. This decrease was sharper for the UN than for NGOs. In 1995, contributions to UN agencies were less than half of what they had been in 1993 and 1994, although this is mitigated to some extent by the value of WFP food stocks carried forward to 1995.

Third, over the three year period the donor community underwrote the Consolidated Appeals at a level of only 53% of stated requirements.

Although this percentage is affected by the way DHA reported food aid contributions, and although NGO appeal figures are not known, the Review Team nevertheless feels confident to say that in 1995, only 50% of requirements were met by donors.

The pattern of donor funding for the three year period, and the shares of funding provided to UN agencies versus NGOs, is illustrated graphically in Figure 8.5 below.

Figure 8.5

(Insert Figure "Grants Received in Response to Sudan Appeals" here. Filename = don_tbl3.doc)

8.2.3 Sector Requirements and Donor Response

Information on the sectoral composition of grants received is available only for the UN agencies, and is provided in Figure 8.6 below. The Figure illustrates the dominance of the food sector, including emergency food aid, nutrition programmes, and Household Food Security interventions aimed at rehabilitating local production. In comparison, other programme shares are small. The fact that multisectoral activities make up only 15% of the total is indicative of a high degree of donor earmarking.

Figure 8.6

(Insert table "Sectoral Composition, 1993-95" here. Filename = don_tbl4.doc)

As can be seen from the Figure, humanitarian activities in the Sudan are logistically demanding; not less than 37% of all UN receipts go to logistics. At the same time it should be remembered that the UN provides logistical support to NGOs for free, including the transport of their own programme inputs. Hence, the USD 97.5 million cited in the table actually supported a greater volume of OLS logistical activity than Figure 8.6 suggests.

The same holds true for programme support, given the manifold coordination and support functions that the UN provides to NGOs participating in OLS. The 4% that programme support receives as indicated in Figure 8.6 thus appears very low, and we must suppose that a considerable amount of support costs are charged to programmes. The low figure indicated may also reflect a genuine lack of donor support

for this budget item - seen, for example, in the fact that monitoring and evaluation units have been unable to fill key posts.

Hence, the Review Team felt that for an operation of the size and complexity of OLS, programme support appears profoundly underfinanced, and consequently dependent on major transfers from logistics and sector-specific budgets.

8.2.4 UN Agency Requirements and Donor Response

Given their specialisation, comparisons of funds received for individual UN agencies tends to follow donor funding priorities for different types of interventions. Within the Consolidated Appeal, UN agencies not only received different levels of donor support overall, but also different levels of response to stated requirements. Figure 8.7 indicates these levels.

Figure 8.7

(Insert Table: "Response to Agency Appeals" here. Filename = don_tbl5.doc)

As can be seen from Figure 8.7, UNHCR had the highest level of donor response to stated requirements, followed by the WFP. In fact, WFP's level of donor response in relation to requirements rises if the NGO-channelled part of its requisitions are removed from the calculation.

8.2.5 Importance of Various Donors

For the period 1993 to 1995, contributions to OLS were raised from 22 countries, the European Union, various UNICEF National Committees, and a small number of NGO and private sources. DHA tables also make note of 156,000 MT of sorghum donated to OLS by the GOS in 1993, but this food is not monetised. DHA also noted some internal contributions from UN agencies, but for our purposes, USD 1,857,230 of carry-over funds from 1993 is excluded from analysis.

The USA emerges as the largest donor for the entire period, contributing USD 75 million to the UN agencies covered by the Appeals. The US contribution is trailed by those of the European Union (USD 48 million) and the Netherlands (USD 44 million). These three donors together account for 63% of all contributions for 1993 to 1995.

However, over the space two years, the importance of individual donor countries changed substantially. Figure 8.8 ranks donors by their relative importance in 1993 and in 1995:

Figure 8.8

(Insert table "Donors Ranked by their 1995 Contributions" here. Filename = don_tbl6.doc)

8.2.6 Funding for Northern and Southern Sectors

As well as being earmarked for specific programmes, donors contributions to OLS are also earmarked according to Northern and Southern Sector. However, the extent to which funds were earmarked in this way does not appear in DHA grant tables until 1995. In that year, out of a total of USD 51 million, DHA reports that USD 5 million and USD 11 million were earmarked for Northern and Southern Sectors, respectively. These figures refer to funds received in addition to other grants that are understood to be used predominantly in one sector or the other - for example, those for air operations. Hence, it is difficult to exactly determine funding shares for the Northern and Southern Sectors from DHA grant tables.

A different set of indicators of North/South sector shares is available from agency expenditure data. Such data is available from UNICEF, and for a longer period of time than DHA financial data covers. The variable that allows for comparison of Northern and Southern sectors is expenditure authorisations, known as Programme Budget Authorisation (PBA) callforwards. Although several million dollars may be carried over as unutilized authorisations from one year to the next, PBAs called by sector nevertheless illustrate the magnitude of respective sector strength. Yearly sector totals are presented in Figure 8.9 below.

Figure 8.9

(Insert Figure "UNICEF/OLS Expenditure 1990 - 95" here. Filename = don_tbl7.doc)

In this Figure, the growing difference between Southern and Northern Sector spending after 1992 is clearly visible. This is explained in large part by the higher logistical costs of the Southern Sector operation - USD 14.4 million in 1994 and USD 7.6 million in 1995 for UNICEF-rendered services alone.

At the same time, the difference between Northern and Southern Sector spending is also influenced by the fact that the UNICEF Khartoum office administers both OLS Northern Sector programmes, and UNICEF's country programme - a situation distinct from UNICEF Southern Sector, which administers only the OLS operation. Looking at expenditures that UNICEF Khartoum charged to the OLS cost centre, Northern Sector annual averages were fairly constant at approximately USD 11 million for the period 1991 through 1993. Expenditure for OLS then dropped to USD 7 million in 1994, and USD 6 million in 1995, when larger shares of available funds were channelled to parts of the Sudan country programme.

PBA data is summarised by year and project type in Figure 8.10 below.

Figure 8.10

(Insert table "UNICEF/OLS: PBAs Called, By Project Type and Year" here. Filename = PBA_CALL.DOC).

While these various indicators - grants, authorisations, expenditure - are not fully comparable, they do document the preponderance that the Southern Sector established after 1992.

8.2.7 Problems in New Trends of Donor Funding

Our analysis has been based on yearly figures that do not reveal the interaction between donors and UN agencies on a shorter time scale. The Review Team was told, however, that in the two past years donors have tended to make commitments in more piece-meal and short-term fashion, thereby compromising both funding certainty and flexibility for OLS agencies. This has special and important repercussions for the planning of logistics, where relatively large contracts are involved. Failure to contract transporters in a timely manner due to funding uncertainties compounds the difficulties of access and coordination, and negatively affects programmes. Hence, the Review Team noted that donors must be aware of the penalties - in terms of the interests of programme beneficiaries - that the new trend in donations to OLS involves.

8.3 Logistics

8.3.1 Overview

The distinction in the nature of logistics between the Southern and Northern Sectors of OLS can be seen in the difference in amount of relief commodities handled by air versus other kinds of transport modes.

In 1995, for example, the WFP Northern Sector moved only 470 MT of relief food by air; an additional 6,992 MT were moved by land and train, and 3,733 MT by river.

In contrast, the WFP Southern Sector moved 9,791 MT by air out of Lokichokio in 1995; an additional 2,855 MT was moved by road. To this should be added 27,000 MT of relief commodities arranged by NGOs and trucked by land, mainly to Equatoria, and the supply flights of UNICEF (for which we do not have complete data for any year). For the Southern Sector, air cargo volume actually shrank between 1994 and 1995.

8.3.2 The Southern Sector

WFP Nairobi, arriving at a slightly different tonnage from the above values, breaks deliveries down for both 1994 and 1995 as indicated in Figure 8.11 below:

Figure 8.11

(Insert table "WFP Air Cargo Ex Lokichokio" here. Filename = logist2.doc)

From Figure 8.11 it is possible to see the prioritization of relief flights to the needy areas of Jonglei and Bahr El Ghazal during 1995, when OLS faced budget and access problems. Equally striking is the high and increasing share that Western Equatoria held in non-food cargo. What this indicates to the Review Team is that development efforts have taken firm root in OLS policies, and are not being dislodged by logistical constraints. This is corroborated by another observation: OLS NGOs, generally considered in the frontline of development efforts, contributed a low portion to the total WFP-handled food air cargo (less than a fifth), but accounted for two thirds of the non-food tonnage in both years.

However, cargo figures give only a partial view. The transition from emergency to development favoured by the Southern Sector calls for an increasing number of meetings, programme visits, training workshops,

and other events for which passengers must be transported.

OLS has responded to this escalating demand for passenger transportation; in 1995, there were some 11,000 passenger return trips between Lokichokio and South Sudan on OLS aircraft (Maj, 1996, April 17). Similar data for previous years was not available, but the Logistics Coordinator at Lokichokio estimates that outbound passenger figures rose from 300 per month in 1994 to 900 per month in 1995. Recently, there appears to have been a reduction in such traffic; for example, the Sudan-bound passenger table prepared by WFP Lokichokio for January 1996 shows that 457 persons from 38 agencies were flown to 32 different locations.

In addition, commuting facilities have been expanded between Nairobi and Lokichokio. At the time of the review, European Union/ECHO-operated flights carried 35 passengers between these two points five times a week. The air operations undoubtedly help to keep organizational networks in the South well connected with their sponsors based in Kenya.

In general, the Review Team received the impression that, despite the compression of air cargo due to access and funding limitations, WFP has remained an effective logistics agent for the UNICEF/NGO-led operation.

8.3.3 The Northern Sector

For the Northern Sector, developments in logistics are of a different kind; in 1994, the sector expanded its barge and train operations, due to greater access as well as cost-cutting strategies. In 1995, however, both of those transport modes suffered sharp reversals. No relief trains arrived in Wau, and barge cargo dropped to less than a fifth of its 1994 volume, representing considerably more than the proportional reduction in total WFP relief food. The number of barge voyages also dropped, as indicated in Figure 8.12.

Figure 8.12

(Insert table "WFP Barge Operations" here. Filename = logist3doc)

Similarly, UNICEF barge missions were reduced from 11 in 1994 to only three in 1995 (Tayyara, 1996, March 28). Problems in obtaining flight authorization, and restrictions that NGOs face in the use of radio equipment, have greatly reduced confidence that OLS operations could,

in future, be wholly dependent on river and rail corridors, as well as on secondary transport from GOS-held towns such as Malakal.

8.3.4 Comparisons Between Sectors

As a result, ideas concerning improvements in logistics vary greatly between Northern and Southern Sectors. In the North, difficulties are attributed chiefly to restrictions in access by the Government of Sudan. UN agencies in Khartoum, therefore, are not susceptible to the same kind of criticism as UN OLS agencies in the South, since it perceived that access - the key component of the operation - is beyond their control.

In the South, rebel movements are rarely accused of obstructing access for OLS air operations. Rather, Southern Sector NGOs direct their criticism of UN agencies toward the issue of persistent cargo backlogs. In particular, NGOs claim that UNICEF has provided poor leadership on this issue, and has been insensitive to the priorities expressed by NGOs. As a solution, NGOs operating in the Southern Sector want a greater say in decision-making concerning the prioritization of cargo. The UN agencies maintain, on the other hand, that there is a legitimate difference between OLS priorities and NGO priorities, and that its cargo prioritization has been weighted toward the former.

In general, the Review Team felt that it was not in a position to evaluate the technical competence of logistics sectors. However, with regard to the issue of cargo prioritization in the Southern Sector, the Review Team was surprised to note how little the extent of free access to cargo transport was questioned.

Few NGOs have the resources to pay for the movement of their inputs (Vicary, 1996, April 13). They receive transport of cargo and passengers for free, and expect to continue receiving it for free. The demand for transport, therefore, is limited only by opportunity cost - in other words, whether or not organizations could make better use of their resources in places other than Lokichokio and South Sudan. The demand for transport to South Sudan is also increased by the increased movement of people between Nairobi and Lokichokio.

The Review Team felt that, regardless of improvements in management, demand cannot be possibly met and frustrations will continue as long as NGOs are not required to pay for transport, and therefore have no incentive to balance transport decisions with other aspects of their budgets. In an April 14 meeting of NGOs, this problem may have

underpinned the proposal that UN, NGOs, and donors consider contracting out the air operation to a private company (Philippino, 1996, April 4). In the meantime, some of the bigger NGOs have formed a consortium to buy cargo space privately. While this should help reduce the cargo backlog, such arrangements have their own dangers; they may, for example, complicate logistics management, and marginalise smaller NGOs.

8.3.5 Timeliness in Commodity Delivery

Timeliness in the delivery of relief commodities is crucial for those operations that need to take account of seasonality, production deadlines, or continuity of inputs. Food relief prior to harvest, the provision of seed prior to planting, and regular supplies of medical kits are some examples.

For UNICEF, Letters of Understanding are signed with participating NGOs that state the quantities of key programme inputs and their approximate delivery times. For WFP, the aim is to deliver the greater part of annual food aid needs during the first half of the year. Indeed, the WFP Southern Sector set itself a precise objective in this regard - that in 1996, some 79% of the 18,609 MT relief food needed during the entire year should be distributed between January and the end of July.

Complaints about delayed deliveries are common. There is a the backlog of cargo physically in OLS warehouses, awaiting onward transport. Discontent with this kind of situation has been most vocally expressed in Lokichokio, as noted above. In general, problems with onward transport of cargo take different forms. First, it may happen that transport of food aid is prioritized, when participating organizations agree that seeds should have priority for the time of year. NGOs may also have different priorities related to their specific programmes, as for example when cement bags for the construction of clinics are held back for considerable periods of time.

Secondly, overseas procurement may run into delays and frustrate work schedules. This is held notably against the UNICEF centralised medical supplies from Copenhagen. Third, constraints may arise from factors that lay outside of OLS agency control; for example, insecurity, lack of access, and donor decision-making.

In order to assess the timeliness of deliveries, the Review Team concentrated on a case study of monthly food deliveries by WFP. These

provide a useful indicator of timeliness, and can also be matched against a precise objective stated by WFP itself - that 79% of yearly food needs be met the end of July in the Southern Sector). It should be noted that data for the Northern Sector was not accessible. This objective is relevant for the years 1994 and 1995; years previous to 1994 were drought years, and hence represented extraordinary circumstances with regard to the timing of food commodities.

The Review Team obtained data from the WFP Nairobi logistics office. Figure 8.13 below presents this data (which, at least for 1994, differs from that found in other sources).

Figure 8.13

(Insert table "WFP Relief Food Deliveries (MT), Southern Sector 1992 - 1995" here. Filename = cost4.doc)

According to its own standard, WFP deliveries were thus timely: 73% in 1994 and 84% in 1995 of all relief food was distributed in the first seven months of the year.

At the same time, these figures must be considered in the broader context of the total amount of relief commodities delivered during the year. As seen above, in 1994 only 40% of needs were met for the entire year. For 1995, the figure is approximately 60% of total needs. Hence, relative to actual needs of beneficiaries during the period of lowest food supply, beneficiaries received only approximately 30% of requirements during this critical period. Comparison of the two indicators thus suggests that timeliness in delivery is less determined by logistics per se, than by overall access of the operation and levels of donor support.

NGO views regarding timeliness are more critical, however, and focus more specifically on logistical arrangements. NGOs noted, for example, that in March 1996, OLS failed to place heavy lift aircraft in Lokichokio for the fourth year running, which could have ensured that seeds as well as food commodities were moved in a timely manner (Philippino, 1996, April 4).

8.4 Cost Effectiveness

8.4.1 Overview

MARK, STICK YOUR STUFF IN HERE.....

8.4.2 Cost Effectiveness and Reporting

The Review Team found a number of challenges in studying the issue of cost effectiveness, as a result of limitations in the production and dissemination of financial information within OLS.

First, in the Consolidated Appeal, UN agencies calculate what the cost of their operations will be for the coming year, and compare this with grants received from the previous year. This enables WFP, for example, to estimate unit costs. However, the Consolidated Appeal does not include a comprehensive income and expenditure statement for the operational year just completed, nor does it provide an expenditure projection for the operational year during which the appeal is prepared.

Second, financial information is uneven within the UN/OLS agencies themselves. The two main agencies of OLS - UNICEF and WFP - observe different practices regarding financial information-sharing between their respective headquarter and field offices.

For example, UNICEF field offices receive comprehensive income and expenditure statements on their operations at the close of annual accounts each year (Gerity, 1996, April 26).

WFP headquarters, on the other hand, does not prepare annual statements of income and expenditure for field offices. Instead, WFP headquarters monitors expenditures according to projects, which may comprise only a portion of the total operation and which may be ongoing for several years. Further, WFP field offices are not privy to many contracts paid directly by Rome, and are told little about sources of funding outside a current year's grants, including WFP's own reserves (Oberle, 1996, April 26). While the present system is designed with an eye toward facilitating WFP's accountability to donors (McMahon, 1996, May 14), it does render cost control in the field problematic; in effect, WFP field offices do not know the total cost of their operations.

This asymmetry from what is considered normal financial reporting practice is odd, but has a parallel in another reporting disparity. As seen earlier, WFP assesses annual needs for specific areas; WFP delivery reports, however, do not refer to these areas. Consequently, it is not possible to analyze the extent of needs fulfilment from the delivery reports.

To respond to concerns for greater transparency and effective cost control, it may be useful in future to produce for the Consolidated Appeal tables comparing the final income and expenditure figures for the previous year, projections for the year being closed, and the requirements for the appeal year side-by-side. This would also make for greater realism than the Appeals offer at present, since requirements are often undersubscribed by donors, and contributions are not necessarily made on a financial year basis.

8.4.3 Innovations in Cost Reporting Within Field Offices

When field offices do not know the major cost components of their operations, an analysis of cost effectiveness becomes difficult. Nevertheless, various units in the Northern and Southern sectors have made efforts on their own initiative to shed light on cost structures that are of particular concern to them.

Not surprisingly, the most advanced cost effectiveness thinking is to be found in logistics. Many contracts involving logistics are made locally, and the logistics sections of both WFP and UNICEF maintain efficient information systems. Further, cargo weight provides a straightforward common denominator for different types of cost comparisons. Examples of relevant cost-effectiveness studies in the logistics sector include:

* Cost effectiveness study of OLS aircraft operations (Twinotter Study by Cowater International THIS REFERENCE NEEDS TO BE FIXED!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!).

* Possibilities of a cross-border pipeline to South Sudan from western Ethiopia (Middleton, 1994, October).

* Comparative cost of barge operations (WFP Khartoum THIS REFERENCE NEEDS TO BE FIXED!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!).

There have also been advances in the cost thinking of some programme sections, which are linked to a general relief-to-development continuum approach, and epitomized in the oft-quoted observation that one kilogram of airlifted food for Juba is eight times more expensive than arranging for it to be grown locally (Jaeger, 1996, March 24). Notable among these are the UNICEF seeds distribution and veterinary cost recovery programmes. The most detailed and ambitious study to date, however, is a feasibility study on buying and transporting

surplus food commodities from Western Equatoria, for use in neighbouring regions; this study was included in the broader objective of revitalizing the Western Equatoria economy through the expansion of an NGO-led barter scheme (Anyanzo, 1995, September: Table 6).

Finally, in 1995 the WFP Country Director submitted to the GOS a table indicating costs and food aid quantities delivered by various transport modes (WFP, 1996, March 4). It is important to note this communication, since, as will be seen below, certain assumptions concerning transport costs were communicated to the GOS as a result. WFP's table was a variable cost-only model, with different global CIF values and transport rates for each sector and mode of delivery. Importantly, no fixed costs were assumed. According to the table, the Country Director estimated that it cost USD 696 for WFP to field one metric ton of relief food.

8.4.4 The Issue of Malakal Versus Lokichokio

Although the focus of this section is economic, it is worth placing the issue of cost effectiveness in a wider context. While usually considered an issue of concern mainly to donors, cost effectiveness has also become an issue for both sides in the conflict.

In particular, the GOS has stated that a major part of the operations presently run out of Lokichokio should be relocated to bases within the Sudan. For accessing most of South Sudan, the GOS proposes a base in Malakal, which is supplied by Nile barges that move from Kost. Air distances to major humanitarian intervention zones, such as northern Bahr El Ghazal and large parts of Jonglei, are also shorter from Malakal than from Lokichokio.

The proposed transfer of operations from Lokichokio to Malakal is contentious. The SPLA has stated it will not allow relief flights to run out of GOS-controlled towns. Further, OLS agencies have articulated a number of important concerns regarding Malakal, including: reliability of supplies and communications, security, living conditions of OLS personnel, and concerns about donor willingness to invest in a new logistical infrastructure.

The issue of moving a major part of logistics to Malakal has been raised at various times. WFP proposed the establishment of a logistics base there in the 1994 appeal, at a cost of USD 411,000 for a rudimentary structure. The matter was subsequently put on hold. Lately, another proposal has surfaced - that of using C-130 aircrafts based in

Lokichokio and returning there every evening, but doing the second of the days flight rotations out of Malakal. The WFP estimates that an investment of USD 80,000 would provide the necessary technical improvements to make this possible.

8.4.5 Constructing a Model to Study Cost Effectiveness

In this section, we construct a model that simulates the cost of operations using different transportation arrangements. The aim is to estimate the magnitude of savings that would be realized by shifting all deliveries to cheaper transportation modes and routes, under conditions of free access and free choice of transport modes. Having accomplished this, we will then modify the assumptions in our initial model to take account of restrictions in access and modes of transport, in order to test the sensitivity of presumed savings to such restrictions.

8.4.5.1 Calculating a Baseline: WFP Food Transport in 1995

We have taken WFP's 1995 food deliveries as the baseline for costing our model. This example is chosen because of the detailed data that is available on quantities delivered, transportation rates, and commodity values.

In 1995, WFP fielded a total of 23,841 MT of relief commodities to South Sudan. This included: from the Northern Sector, 470 MT delivered by air (to Juba), 6,992 MT delivered by land, and 3,733 MT delivered by river; from the Southern Sector, 9,791 MT delivered by air, and 2,855 MT delivered by land. Since WFP does not produce yearly statements, we have ourselves estimated the cost of the 1995 operation. Details of the technical assumptions made in this estimate are provided in Appendix 2.

According to our calculations, operational expenditure in 1995 broke down as follows: USD 6.3 million in the Northern Sector, and USD 16.1 million in the Southern Sector. (This assumes that 60% of all air deliveries for the year were made by C-130 aircrafts, before this type of aircraft was banned from OLS airspace). This calculation yields unit costs of USD 566/MT for the Northern Sector and USD 1,274/MT for the Southern Sector. It should be noted that the unit cost for the Southern Sector is higher than WFP's plan to supply emergency food aid at USD 1,090/MT in 1996, inclusive of aircraft and Lokichokio operations (WFP, 1996, April 9).

8.4.5.2 Key Assumptions in Constructing the Model

Five key assumptions have been made in constructing our model, which should be noted here in order to understand the limits of the modelling exercise; technical details of these are elaborated in Appendix 2.

* Free access is assumed. That includes free choice of aircraft type. According to this scenario, 90% of food is delivered via less expensive airdrops from C-130 aircraft, and only 10% is landed on airstrips using Buffalo aircraft at a higher per ton and mile rate. As noted above, this was not the case in actual practice, since use of C-130 aircraft was not permitted as of July 1995. Nevertheless, it is still necessary to begin with the assumption of free choice of aircraft, to establish a baseline against which the cost effects of substituting cheaper arrangements can be meaningfully compared. The impact of restricted choice will then be re-introduced, to show its impact on costs.

* Major costs include: purchase of food, field personnel, logistics (including infrastructure for field personnel and the transportation of commodities and personnel), and office costs. The direct food-related costs (CIF value, transportation) can be calculated using quantities, rates, and distribution patterns. Other costs, however, have been difficult to estimate. We assume that the full cost of offices and field personnel (including their logistics) in 1995 were underwritten by the grants effectively made during the programme year, including USD 2.8 million for monitoring and USD 1.6 million for support costs. This USD 4.4 million comes close to the USD 4.5 million that WFP Rome estimates, but cannot break down into the two components (WFP, 1996, May 17). The grants values are, therefore, used as proxies values for monitoring and support expenses.

* Fixed costs are indifferent to transfers between the Northern and Southern Sectors. In other words, office support for the operation comes at the same cost per MT of food delivered regardless of its origin in Khartoum or Nairobi. For the same reason, the simulation does not take into account the additional set-up costs necessary for Malakal to be used as an air operations base. Rather, support and logistics costs now attributed to Lokichokio will simply occur in Malakal in proportion to the volume shifted there. Since three-quarters of fieldtrips deal with assessment, and thus occur regardless of how much food is delivered, the cost of monitoring is also assumed to be the same for Khartoum and Nairobi.

* Certain cost elements that the new arrangement would necessitate are not included. For barge and train operations - particularly for northern Bahr El Ghazal - secondary transportation costs from barge and train drop-points to distribution sites have not been included. Whereas many groups in need live within relatively short distance from one of the many bush airstrips, delivery by train and barge also requires onward transport to serve the entire catchment area. However, we are unable to define the costs of this onward transport in numeric terms. The omission may prove important, given the absence of trucks in most of South Sudan.

* The potential of local procurement of food is not fully explored. Sorghum locally purchased in 1995 accounted for approximately 60% of cereals distributed by WFP Northern Sector. This left a potential savings of approximately USD 400,000 unused. However, we have not varied the proportion of locally purchased versus imported food for two reasons: first, food aid often comes as in-kind donations from donors (and the 1995 operation used large carry-over stocks from such donations), and second, the key variables with whose effect the model is concerned are transport arrangements.

8.4.6 Analysis: Implications of Optimal Transport Substitution

The 23,841 MT of relief commodities that WFP delivered in 1995 was sent to 138 different destinations, located in different areas. Looking at the history of conflict and needs, we can group these delivery points into 18 relatively homogeneous clusters, as shown in Figure 8.14.

Figure 8.14

(Insert "Map: WFP Food Delivery Clusters" here. Filename = map-1.gif)

(Insert "Table: WFP Delivery Clusters" here. Filename = cost1.doc.)

Our model assumes that the same quantities of relief commodities must be delivered to the same destinations as in 1995. However, given our assumption of free access, we have optimized transport by substituting the most efficient modes. Details of the specific pattern of transport substitution used, and the way in which cost savings were calculated, are provided in Appendix 2. For the purposes of this discussion, it is important to highlight the following points.

According to our model, if deliveries are re-routed to optimize savings, we estimate that nine out of the 18 clusters of delivery sites

will receive relief commodities through different transport modes than were actually used in 1995. Specifically, we estimate that as much as 10,385 MT of the total of 23,841 MT will be delivered via less expensive means, making greater use of river, road, and railway, and using Malakal as the base for the majority of air transport still necessary.

In our model, most of the re-routed 10,385 MT is now delivered by the Northern instead of Southern Sector. The new pattern of routing includes 4,296 MT supplied to the Northern Jonglei factional fighting zone by air from Malakal, and 3,303 MT supplied to Northern Bahr El Ghazal by train. Overall, this means a significant change in shares that the Northern and Southern Sectors have in the OLS operation. The Northern Sector will see its actual share of 47% of 1995 deliveries increase to 87% of deliveries in the substitution model; the Southern Sector will see its share decrease from 53% of 1995 deliveries to 13% in the model.

In terms of cost, implementing a full substitution of transport enables WFP to save an estimated USD 5.2 million, thereby reducing the total cost of the operation from USD 19.9 million to USD 14.7 million.

Although our model addresses concerns regarding cost effectiveness, it also throws up substantial new issues of a more structural and political nature, and begs the question as to whether or not opposition movements will agree to such dramatic changes in the share of the operation between North and South.

8.4.7 Analysis: Comparative Cost

In the optimal-transport model we have constructed, most of the savings is made in the area of transport costs. Some savings are also made in procurement. Figure 8.15 below details costs for major components for both the 1995 baseline and our optimal-transport model.

Figure 8.15

(Insert "Table: Major Cost Components" here. Filename = cost2.doc)

As can be seen in Figure 8.15, the savings thus realized would be 26% of the total cost. It should be remembered here that this savings is contingent on the operation of all of the assumptions noted above. Notably, it is assumed that the running costs of Malakal-based operations would be matched by savings in Lokichokio. Moreover, it is assumed that secondary transport needs from barge and train

drop-points will not compress savings: in other words, that expensive trucks and road improvements will not be necessary, and that in areas supplied by surface transport, there remain no interior places dependent on air transport.

The 26% savings indicated in our optimal-transport model has been challenged by GOS representatives, who anticipated a much larger savings, and in this regard referred to transport cost figures submitted by WFP to the GOS in 1995. In the WFP's figures, however, transport costs absorb support and monitoring elements that are fixed in nature, and are not variable with the delivery pattern. In our model, these items are costed separately from transport, as fixed costs. Informally, WFP estimates air transport savings to be in the neighbourhood of 60%, assuming that 5,000 MT per year would be flown out of Malakal (WFP, 1996, March/April). This is close to the 4,300 MT that we identify as shiftable to a Malakal air operation, with an estimated 52% reduction in air transport costs. However, as other cost factors remain high, the overall savings realized is far more modest than WFP's 1995 estimates for the GOS suggest.

8.4.8 Testing the Model: Economies of Scale

The 1995 WFP operation was considerably smaller than the previous year's operation. The cost of an operation commensurate with the scale of WFP deliveries in 1994 was estimated, in order to test the optimum-transport scenario for the effects of size.

In 1994, WFP delivered 85,129 MT of relief commodities. For the purposes of analysis, we can scale up our baseline of WFP's 1995 deliveries to reflect 1994 levels. This is done by assuming the following: that the destination of relief commodities remains exactly the same as in 1995, and in the same proportion relative to the total, that the ratio of local procurement to imported food is identical, and that CIF values, transport rates, and operational costs remain the same. By increasing the amount of food delivered to each cluster by 3.57 times, it is possible to scale-up the model to reflect the same level of operation as occurred in 1994.

When the scaled-up operation is costed according to the transport modes actually used by WFP in 1995, we found that total cost increased to USD 59.7 million. When the scaled-up operation is costed according to our optimum transport substitution model, however, the total cost is reduced to USD 41.2 million. This amounts to a 31% savings.

Thus, in our model, the savings rate does grow with the scale of operation, much as expected. In practice, however, costs for a larger scale of operation would also be affected by cheaper transport rates from large contracts, as well as by higher levels of investment in infrastructure needed for larger railway shipments and Malakal-based air operations.

8.4.9 Testing the Model: Reduced Access and Limited Choice

More importantly, the savings to be had from substantial shifts in transport routes and operational bases that we have modeled has to be weighed against the risk, and indeed the likelihood, that some of the basic assumptions we made will be violated. Foremost among these is free access to the areas in need, and free choice of transportation modes.

Consequently, we ran additional models to see the cost implications of restricted choice of transport modes. As noted above, OLS lost permission to use C-130 aircraft in July 1995. From then onward, OLS air transports had to rely on smaller, more expensive aircraft only. Keeping all other things equal, two modifications of our 1995 baseline were studied in order to simulate an extension of that kind of situation:

* In the first model, the amount of relief commodities delivered remains similar to 1995, but no big aircraft can be used at all throughout the year. Deliveries by air rely instead on small Buffalo aircraft.

* In the second model, no air delivery is possible; in retaliation, rail access is also blocked. Only areas accessible by road and river are serviced. The total amount of relief commodities delivered for the year therefore drops to 13,580 MT.

The impact of these various scenarios is calculated in terms of unit costs, or the total cost of delivering one ton of relief commodities. For comparison, we also look at the value of commodities when they arrive in Port Sudan and Mombasa. The average CIF value for all commodities, for both sectors, was USD 225/MT in 1995. These unit values are displayed in Figure 8.16 below.

Figure 8.16

(Insert Figure "Cost of Relief Food per Ton" here - Filename =

cost3.doc)

As can be seen from the graph in Figure 8.16, by the time relief commodities have been fielded, unit costs have increased to USD 834/MT, or more than three times the CIF value of the relief commodities. In our optimal-transport model, unit costs come down to USD 617/MT. This corresponds to the 26% savings noted above.

However, when access is reduced, unit costs go up. In fact, the international community pays dearly for refusal of access.

Delivering food according to the baseline pattern of 1995, but being forced to use only small aircraft of the Buffalo type, unit costs surge to over USD 1,100/MT. Multiplied by the total volume of relief commodities delivered in 1995, the difference in cost between year-long use of Hercules aircraft, and no use of Hercules aircraft, is close to USD 7.7 million.

Finally, we can see what happens when the two modes of transport that are most vulnerable to interdiction - namely, air and railway - are both eliminated as options. The exclusion of air transport brings big savings; unit costs go down to USD 681/MT. However, this is achieved at the price of a significant reduction in the amount of relief commodities delivered; 40% less relief gets distributed in the OLS areas, and particularly needy areas such as Northern Bahr El Ghazal can no longer be serviced.

9. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of the OLS Review are in accord with the more general recommendations made in the Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda (Borton, et al., 1996); in particular, the need to uphold international law, to strengthen donor policy coherence, and to extend the modalities of conditionality.

Some fundamental criticisms of OLS have been made in the Review. It should be stated at the outset, however, that the Review Team believes that OLS should continue. It is in this spirit that the following recommendations are made.

9.1 Successes of OLS

In delivering a large-scale and increasingly diversified package of humanitarian assistance to South Sudan under difficult conditions, OLS must be considered a success. Of particular importance, however, has been its ability to use international pressure to maintain access. At the same time, the development of the Ground Rules approach is a major innovation. This has the potential of establishing a rule-based framework to temper the manner in which internal wars are fought.

9.2 Relief or Development?

It was often stated during the course of the Review that the acute stages of the emergency were over, and more long-term rehabilitation and development assistance was now required. In particular, it was stated that OLS should shift its resources in this direction. More generally, it is now widely believed that relief assistance should play a developmental role. The model for the relief-to-development continuum is derived from natural disasters. Relief spending should support preventative measures, build local capacity to respond, and so on.

There is a limited transferability of this approach, however, to a political emergency. Such an approach underplays issues of neutrality when development partners in an internal war are also directly or indirectly allied to the warring parties. At the same time, promoting food security in a political emergency can have as much to do with providing protection as building capacity.

Sudan is representative of a chronic political emergency, having been at war with itself for most of the last fifty years. Existing formulations of the relief-to-development continuum fail to acknowledge this. Moreover, given the informal embargo on official development assistance to Sudan, it is unlikely that this crisis will quickly improve. In this situation, humanitarian aid cannot substitute for development assistance, nor should it be expected to.

As long as the current war continues, development and humanitarian assistance should be kept separate. At the same time, OLS should re-assert its identity as a humanitarian operation.

Since the continuum has to be operationalised in relation to an actual development process, it raises the question as to what this is in Sudan. No significant information could be found on the nature of the underlying social and economic trends within Sudan within UN agencies that support continuum thinking.

Research should be carried out on the actually existing development process in Sudan. This should include an examination of the land issue in North Sudan, the origin and condition of the agricultural labour force, the nature of the parastatal organisations involved, and the sustainability of their activities.

It should also be noted that a similar problem exists in the Southern Sector. Despite greater access, agencies have not used this to engage in any meaningful social or economic research. Many operational categories appear to be derived from Western social policy.

Research should be carried out on the social and economic structures of South Sudan. In particular, social trends within family or wider social units must be established so that projects can respond effectively to the social consequences of the war. OLS should recognise that a more efficient use of relief inputs will be made if the overall coping ability of local communities is strengthened. Greater attention should be focused on methods of distribution, including markets and commercial networks. Seasonal variations in commodity availability, prices, and long term fluctuations are also important.

Despite the rhetoric of moving from relief to development, the situation of war-affected populations in Sudan has changed little during the course of OLS. It remains a chronic political emergency, where people's options for reducing their vulnerability are limited.

In this situation, humanitarian crises have been, and will continue to be, a common feature. The need for humanitarian assistance remains.

9.3 The Future of OLS

Regarding the future of humanitarian assistance to Sudan, the Review considered several main options. That is, (a) the transference of all OLS coordination activities to GOS areas, (b) the replacement of OLS with a donor and INGO consortium, (c) the formal splitting of the Northern and Southern Sectors, and (d) the reform of OLS as a unified humanitarian programme.

9.3.1 The Transference of OLS Coordination to GOS Areas

The government has called for the closure of the Southern Sector and the transference of all OLS coordination activities to GOS areas. It is claimed that this would improve cost effectiveness. The Review has estimated that moving as many OLS commodities by the least expensive routes possible, particularly surface routes originating in the North, would hypothetically save about a quarter of total costs. This figure is speculative, however since - among other things - it does not include the need for secondary transport from the rail and river drop-off points involved.

At the same time, the Review does not think that the movement of relief supplies is a purely technical matter. The main cost inefficiency of OLS is not the mode of transport, but denial of access. When the suggested restructuring of OLS would place nearly 90% of relief assistance to the South under the potential control of one of the warring parties, the quality of access becomes important. Given the very different operating environments of the Northern and Southern Sectors, it is the opinion of the Review that the programmes currently supported from Nairobi and Lokichokio could not be replicated under the regulatory regime that currently operates from Khartoum.

GOS demands that the Southern Sector should be closed and its activities transferred to government areas are not supported.

Some activities could be transferred, but this would depend on reaching a clear and comprehensive OLS access agreement. This is discussed below.

9.3.2 Replacement of OLS with A Donor/INGO Consortium

The current crisis within OLS has led some donors and INGOs to think in terms of the closure or collapse of OLS, and its replacement by a donor/INGO consortium. On the grounds that a solidarity movement would emerge, the SPLM/A is also sympathetic to this idea. The Review is sceptical, however.

If OLS were to fold, it is unlikely that a technically illegal cross-border operation would attract as much funding as OLS does, despite its increasingly poor fund-raising performance. Most agencies would probably concentrate in Equatoria, exacerbating the uneven development of South Sudan. Moreover, an important avenue for addressing Sudan issues at an international level would have been closed off. While the pursuit of some donor political interests may be better served, the Review is not convinced that the war-affected populations of Sudan would benefit.

There is a related issue here; that is, the growing importance of direct donor funding to INGOs both within and outside the OLS umbrella. Some donors have seen this as an insurance policy. If OLS is to be reformed in the interests of gaining greater access, however, the need to strengthen OLS's bargaining power with the warring parties is more important than ever. Without a clear and coherent donor strategy on Sudan and OLS, the efforts of the Review will count for little.

As soon as possible a high level donor and UN meeting on Sudan should be convened to agree a common policy toward OLS.

Of particular importance here is the issue of donor sub-contracting through INGOs. While the UN is the official coordinating body for OLS, donor interest in "their" INGOs can create a clash of interests.

9.3.3 The Formal Splitting of Northern and Southern Sectors

Making the current de facto division of Sudan de jure is a policy supported by the SPLM/A. Both Sectors of OLS would report separately to New York.

The Review regards this as unrealistic, since it would amount to a formal limitation of GOS sovereignty. At the same time, it would

entrench one of the main weaknesses of the present arrangement. That is, the displaced and war-affected in the North would be excluded from OLS.

9.3.4 The Reform of OLS as Unified Humanitarian Programme

If OLS is to achieve its potential, develop its innovative aspects, and become a possible model for other complex emergencies, this can only come about by a reform and extension of the existing structure as a more unified programme. That is, tackling its existing political and programmatic weaknesses and, as far as possible, attempting to harmonise the approach between Sectors. In particular, this will require an extension of OLS support to all displaced and war-affected groups in Sudan. While dependent on international support, this is the option chosen by the Review.

9.4 The OLS Agreement

Reforming OLS as a unified humanitarian programme requires the creation of a level playing field between all warring parties. This does not mean leveling the amount of resources to create a balance between sides irrespective of needs and conditions. It does mean a leveling between sides in the sense of operating a single and impartial framework of rules and obligations. Compliance to these rules and obligations, moreover, should produce a series of transparent, appropriate, and impartial responses. It is only in this manner that a negotiated or informal safe area programme can work.

The Ground Rule approach, as currently existing in the South, should be developed as a framework of a signed OLS agreement between the UN and all warring parties.

While a tripartite agreement would be preferable, a series of signed bilateral agreements between the UN and the warring parties would be sufficient. The document should be carefully crafted, contain the key aims of OLS, define its humanitarian principles, the expectations regarding the behaviour of warring parties to civilians, and the scope of international responsibilities. In particular,

...the agreement should be clearly based on independent international access to all war-affected populations regardless of their location or who controls the territory. It should also acknowledge that within an internal war, people

cannot necessarily be supported by technical interventions alone. Protection issues are also involved.

The agreement must further establish that the definition of a war-affected population is the prerogative of UN assessment. The nature of the contractual relation involved must also be clear.

The agreement should specify that for all OLS matters, a contractual relation exists between the UN and the cooperating organisation. Furthermore, access to OLS resources is dependent on the implementation of OLS principles.

The agreement must also cover the issue of so-called capacity building. This usually means administrative support or training to improve the implementation of OLS programmes or assisted activities. At the moment, there is an imbalance in this type of support. The humanitarian wings of the movements and some other agencies receive such assistance through the OLS Ground Rule framework in the South. Such support is less in evidence in the North.

On signing the new OLS agreement, the government's humanitarian institutions and related bodies would be eligible for appropriate administrative support and training within the OLS framework.

At the same time, however, there is an issue regarding the sustainability of such assistance, particularly in the South. The SPLM/A, for example, provides little or no funding for the SRRA. Rather, the international community is expected to meet the running costs of SRRA.

Administrative or training support given to the humanitarian wings of the warring parties and related institutions should be phased out unless those parties, from their own resources, make adequate provision for the running costs of these bodies.

Regarding the South, this measure also addresses the issue of OLS recognition, and the wish to avoid factionalism. OLS has not developed adequate criteria on which to assess the eligibility of new factions to become part of OLS. Criteria have usually been based on control of territory and political cohesiveness. In order to discourage opportunistic factionalism, the sign of a serious movement should be the capacity to provide the running costs of its humanitarian wing.

The Review supports the idea which first emerged during the IGADD mediation process of an International Monitoring Committee to oversee the implementation of the OLS agreement. The lack of an International Monitoring Committee to which violations could be addressed has been a major weakness.

An International Monitoring Committee should be created to oversee the implementation of the OLS agreement.

It should be emphasised that the Review considers as inappropriate the representation of the warring parties on such a Committee. While this body could have representatives from regional organisations, donor participation is regarded by the Review as vital. This participation would help establish a closer link between OLS and the donor governments. Outside of crisis issues, the committee would meet biannually to review progress. It would have an advisory role in relation to assessment, implementation, and conditionality issues. Information from assessments, moreover, should be examined from a much broader perspective than the technical responses available within the UN system. It could, for example, become part of the negotiating process.

Apart from the International Monitoring Committee, a further measure to improve transparency is reform of the Annual Appeal. This is dealt with below. The Annual Appeal must serve as the basis of OLS programme prioritisation, and clearly indicate the full range of activities, including those of participating NGOs. It therefore becomes a more complex process than currently exists. If the UN is to maintain a neutral and effective coordinating role, then the Appeal must establish a mandate. Reporting to the warring parties should largely involve reviewing implementation.

9.4.1 Making Humanitarian Aid Conditional

The thrust of OLS reform is not only to create a level playing field, but to make humanitarian aid conditional. The Review believes that in the context of a long running internal war, this is the only measure that can moderate the activities of the warring parties to the benefit of civilians. Moreover, through the establishment of an International Monitoring Committee, it strengthens the potential role of global opinion.

Some donors may be hesitant in supporting such a proposal. Making humanitarian aid conditional goes against what has been accepted

policy for more than a decade. Several factors should be borne in mind, however.

First, sufficient is known about the dynamics of internal war to suggest that, except under special circumstances, unconditional humanitarian aid rarely reaches the intended beneficiaries in satisfactory quantities. Moreover, the separation of humanitarian aid from conditionality has arguably led to a policy dead-end, and promoted aid abuse.

Second, conditionality in the form of agreement to Ground Rules has been in operation in South Sudan for several years. This appears to have had a moderating effect on the activities of the movements. Moreover, it has brought together the issue of humanitarian aid and respect for human rights. Non-conditional relief programmes usually separate them.

Finally, conditionality is related to defined humanitarian principles, and not to the foreign policy or political interests of donor governments.

Further research on the Ground Rule concept is required.

Especially, how it can be used to broaden the modalities of conditionality in an acceptable manner and, at the same time, moderate the dynamics of internal war.

Regarding the monitoring of compliance, this is already undertaken in the Humanitarian Principles Unit in the Southern Sector. Recommendations below indicate how this could be done in the Northern Sector. In both cases, information would be collated and regularly forwarded to the International Monitoring Committee.

9.4.2 The Overall Management of OLS

Creating a unified programme demands that the ambiguity related to the informal separation of OLS be addressed. At the same time, it is recognised that for many reasons, including political ones, it would be impossible to create a single management structure administering one OLS programme. The recommendations in this area represent a pragmatic compromise; on the one hand, attempting to improve political and managerial coordination within OLS, and at the same time - providing that the quality of access can be improved in the North - encouraging appropriate programme rationalisation and unification between Sectors.

While the detail is given below, the basis of the recommendations are to encourage a much stronger coordination role for DHA. Namely, the recruitment of a DHA Humanitarian Coordinator who is also the UN Resident Coordinator based in Khartoum. Regarding the Southern Sector, UNICEF's lead agency role should be retained. However, the recommendations urge that both DHA and UNICEF should be properly resourced to play their roles. The OLS Coordinator/UNICEF Chief of Operations would be clearly seen as deputising in the South for the DHA Resident Coordinator, perhaps even being a DHA appointee but seconded from UNICEF. As in the present arrangement, for OLS matters WFP would continue to deputise in the Northern and Southern Sectors in the absence of the Humanitarian Coordinator or the OLS Coordinator/UNICEF Chief of Operations, respectively.

9.4.3 The Special Envoy For Humanitarian Affairs

Despite the political weakness of OLS, the Special Envoy has diligently pursued OLS's humanitarian aims. The Special Envoy would have an important role to play in helping implement the reform of OLS.

The position of Special Envoy would remain important in the context of a reformed OLS. The Envoy's brief, however, should be changed to focus on the monitoring of opinion within neighbouring countries as well as liaison between the warring parties. In addition, the chairing of the International Monitoring Committee by the Special Envoy should be considered.

The Review feels this wider brief is necessary to better reflect the regional significance of OLS, and to promote more informed donor opinion.

9.5 Management and Coordination

9.5.1 Overall OLS Management

The Review is of the opinion that a UNDP Resident Representative based in Khartoum, with both development and OLS responsibilities, represents a serious clash of interests. There is a structural contradiction in the expectation that one person can work with the government on development issues and, at the same time, intercede

with the same body, this time as a warring party, on behalf of conflict-affected civilians.

A DHA Humanitarian Coordinator should be appointed. This person should also occupy the position of UN Resident Coordinator. Moreover, while based in Khartoum, the person would be expected to regularly visit Nairobi. UNDP would play deputy role in relation to development, while WFP would continue to operate as a deputy for OLS matters.

This adjustment is long overdue, and more accurately reflects the centre of gravity of UN activity in Sudan. At the same time, however, the Review is aware of DHA's lack of capacity and, so far, its lacklustre performance in Sudan. This could be helped by the support of the International Monitoring Committee established to oversee the implementation of the OLS agreement. This is why this committee should have donor representation. It could also complement attempts to support DHA's role globally. Improved coordination through DHA would require additional donor funding, however.

9.5.2 Northern Sector Coordination

Improved Northern Sector Coordination is based upon expanding and redefining the role of the United Nations Emergency Coordination Unit (UNHCU).

UNHCU should, contractually and managerially, be placed under DHA. Moreover, its overall coordination role in the Northern Sector should be clearly recognised.

At the same time, there needs to be a reversal of the trend for UNHCU's budget to decline. Perhaps through a Memorandum of Understanding, the other UN specialist agencies in Khartoum would need to recognise the authority of UNHCU in its coordination and monitoring role. As indicated, the following posts would need to be either created or upgraded.

(a) OLS Northern Sector Coordinator

This post would replace the current Chief of UNHCU post, which has responsibilities for the Southern Sector. The new Coordinator would focus on the Northern Sector, the implementation of OLS principles, and the management of an expanded unit, these being the prerequisites for a more consolidated approach.

(b) Field Advisors

Field Adviser is an existing post that would be upgraded and redefined, and the number of Field Advisors would be expanded. There is currently one Field Advisor with both UNDP and OLS responsibilities. The post would be both upgraded and increased to four persons. Moreover, they would have only OLS responsibilities. Field Advisors would monitor all contracting agencies under the OLS agreement in terms of compliance with its principles. They would also participate in assessments. This would greatly increase the visibility of OLS in the North.

(c) Senior Advisor on the Internally Displaced

This is a new post. The priority would be to develop a coherent strategy with regard to internally displaced persons, of which Sudan has the largest number in the world according to UNHCR. The post-holder would also liaise with other international bodies working on this issue, for example, UNHCR, ICRC, and improve monitoring.

(d) Information Coordinator

This is an existing post, the role of needs redefining. The purpose of this post would be both to advise other UN agencies and NGOs on data collection methods and dissemination, and to consolidate the information produced. The person would need to be a qualified specialist in this field, and able to advise on standardisation, technical definitions, and so on. While sectoral information would continue to be produced by the specialist agencies, the role of Information Coordinator would also be to consolidate this information, for example, in relation to assessments and the Appeal. The Information Officer would also be the lead person in relation to the exchange of information with the Southern Sector.

(e) NGO/Humanitarian Principles Officer

This is an existing post, the role of which needs redefining and expanding. The post would monitor the contractual relations between the GOS, NGOs, and the UN. This officer would supply regular information to the suggested donor-based Monitoring Advisory Committee for OLS. At the same time, after the fashion of the Humanitarian Principles Unit in the Southern Sector, information would be disseminated on OLS principles through a series of workshops, newsletters, etc..

9.5.3 Southern Sector Coordination

In the Southern Sector, UNICEF plays the role of lead agency. Overall, this role has been performed well. As already mentioned, UNICEF's development of Ground Rules is a major innovation for working in ongoing conflict. The Review would like to see this approach extended to the OLS agreement generally. At the same time, however, as the OLS programme has become more extensive and complex, there has been a growing tension in the lead agency approach. That is, the conflict inherent in the need to coordinate and plan for all cooperating agencies and, at the same time, be conscious of its own country programme interests.

9.5.4 UNICEF's Lead Agency Role

While appreciative of UNICEF's activities in sectoral coordination and, especially, its security and evacuation system, some NGOs have been critical of UNICEF's ability to discharge its overall coordination responsibilities. This is both with regard to keeping its own programme interests at an appropriate distance and, especially in relation to WFP, of representing OLS interests to other strategic agencies. At one stage, the Review did consider establishing a separate DHA-headed coordination unit in Nairobi. Given that UNICEF's role did not seem irretrievably compromised, however, it was felt to be more practical to encourage the reform of the lead agency role.

UNICEF/OLS is currently in the process of examining its organisational structure with a view to improving effectiveness. The Review supports this development. In particular, attention must be directed to distinguishing and resourcing OLS coordination. This situation is complicated in the case of South Sudan by having support activities divided between Nairobi and Lokichokkio. Regarding the former,

...the Review supports the creation of a Deputy OLS Coordinator/Chief of Operations to concentrate on the day to day management of OLS and, especially, UNICEF matters.

This post would allow the present OLS Coordinator to focus on the wider lead agency issues, for example, liaison with the opposition movements, donors, participating agencies, fund raising, reporting,

and so on. Moreover, reflecting the brief for the DHA Humanitarian Coordinator to visit Nairobi, a deputy would enable the OLS Coordinator to make regular visits to Khartoum to ensure that Southern Sector interests are properly represented. As in the current situation, WFP would continue to act as deputy regarding OLS matters.

While the OLS Coordinator acts as the deputy of the DHA Humanitarian Coordinator in the Southern Sector, in order to strengthen managerial coherence and the primacy of OLS matters,

...although seconded from UNICEF, making the OLS Coordinator a DHA appointment should be considered.

Ultimate GOS sovereignty is not challenged by these proposals. A number of checks and balances should therefore be reviewed to prevent the UN in Khartoum, due to political pressure, acting to the detriment of the Southern Sector.

While the deputising role is clearly established, making the DHA Humanitarian Coordinator and the OLS Coordinator of equal rank within the UN system should be considered.

Regarding the standardisation and collation of information in the Southern Sector,

The existing post of Monitoring and Evaluation Officer within UNICEF/OLS should be changed to reflect the role of the revamped Information Coordinator in Khartoum. That is, a suitably qualified person to advise OLS agencies on standard methodological procedures and, through liaison with UNHCU, the production of joint reports.

Regarding Lokichokkio, coordination here has been the subject of much INGO complaint, in particular, the inability of UNICEF to reconcile the different interests of the competing agencies.

The Review supports the measures taken to recruit a Lokichokkio-based OLS Field Coordinator.

This person will be in overall control of OLS activities in Lokichokkio; for the first time, this includes camp management and WFP logistics. As far as possible, this person should be freed from day to day responsibility for UNICEF's country programme. Moreover, the post need not be filled by a UN staff member, but could be seconded

from an INGO. While it is hoped that this will encourage better coordination, the Review still feels that there is a lack of representation of INGOs within OLS structures.

9.5.5 Ground Rules and Letters of Understanding

UNICEF's development of the Ground Rules in relation to the opposition movements represents a major innovation in working in ongoing conflict. More research on this approach has already been suggested. The Humanitarian Principles Unit should be encouraged in its work of monitoring compliance with the Ground Rules. At present, this appears to be done on an ad hoc basis.

Reflecting the recommendation for more Field Advisers in the Northern Sector, four Field Advisers should also be attached to the Humanitarian Principle Unit. These people would monitor compliance with the OLS contractual regime.

In relation to the Letters of Understanding (LOUs),

...UNICEF/OLS should consider introducing clauses that cover the professional competence of the NGOs within OLS. Introducing such standards should be seen as part of a longer term project involving DHA support and wider consultation with counterparts and participating agencies.

The issue of donor welfare sub-contracting within the OLS umbrella has already been mentioned. Modifying the LOUs to provide guidance regarding NGOs that bring non-OLS resources, but operate under the OLS umbrella, should be considered.

9.5.6 Management Advisory Committee

Difficulties over cargo prioritisation have led INGOs to establish their own Forum. While coordination bodies exist, this suggests the absence of a means where participating agencies can fully appraise OLS management of their concerns.

Management Advisory Committees should be established in Nairobi and Lokichokio. The former would concentrate on broad policy issues, while the latter would focus on implementation. The Committees would be open to INGO, donor, and WFP representation.

The remit of these Committees would be to advise OLS on all aspects of the operation. It should not become a talking shop, but a forum in which OLS is expected to address the issues that are raised. The humanitarian wings of the warring parties and related agencies should not be members of this committee. There is a clash of interests, and this should be recognised. At the same time, however, it is strongly recommended that,

...OLS should seek to regularise its negotiating and consulting mechanisms with the humanitarian wings of the warring parties and related agencies.

9.6 Lokichokkio Base Camp and Logistics

Given the range of activities supported, and the conflicting interests involved, the Review feels that broadly speaking the Lokichokkio camp is well run. Concerns are of a more general and strategic nature.

The camp has grown continuously since 1992. At the same time, the area in which it is located has become more insecure. For this reason alone, it is felt prudent to suggest that Lokichokkio should grow no further and, if possible, be reduced in size. While primarily a logistics base, there has been a drift toward agencies establishing programme personnel in the camp. It will be difficult to stop this trend. As far as possible, however, programme decision making should be retained in Nairobi, and the logistics function in Lokichokkio. While this might require investment in telecommunications, it could prevent personnel drift and function duplication.

It might be possible to check or reduce the growth of Lokichokkio by transferring some activities into South Sudan. More training, for example, could take place inside Southern Sudan.

Another approach to managing the size of Lokichokkio is the move toward cost recovery. The Review Team is aware that UNICEF has already undertaken investigations into this possibility regarding accommodation and subsistence for participating agencies.

The Review supports the introduction of cost recovery procedures in Lokichokkio. This principle should not only cover accommodation, it should also be extended to logistics.

In general, the Review felt that the supply and logistics units of UNICEF and, especially, WFP were working well. The difficulty, however is that they are self-contained and use different information management systems.

Concerning logistics in Lokichokio, there has been dissatisfaction among INGOs concerning cargo prioritisation procedures at Lokichokio. This has partly fed the drift toward the establishment of more INGO personnel in the camp. The success of several INGOs in attracting donor funding to rent their own aircraft has led to call that the whole of OLS logistics be transferred to a private company. Some donors are keen on this idea. While recognising that there is a problem, the Review is against such a move. Given that OLS is operating in an ongoing war, UN control of logistics would seem important in helping establish the neutrality of the operation. In order to overcome the cargo prioritisation problem, however,

...attempts should be made to better balance the demands for transport with available resources. INGOs should either pay for transport from their own grants, or a points-voucher system should be developed. In other words, transport should not be a "free" commodity; a rationing mechanism is required.

Flight clearance procedures should also be reformed in the interests of efficiency and transparency.

The requirements of detailed cargo breakdowns in clearance requests should be dropped. Reports carrying lists of actual cargo should be shared in appropriate detail. Plans to have the cargo manifest process generate such reports should be implemented.

9.7 Programme Issues

There is a lack of coherence and depth to much of OLS programming. Lack of coordination, particularly between UNICEF and WFP in both the Northern and Southern Sectors, is a recurrent theme. Moreover, while more advanced in the South, assessment and monitoring approaches need improvement both in terms of what is assessed and how. Recommendations and relief strategies need to be clearly justified on the basis of assessed information. A particular weakness is the failure to adequately monitor programme delivery and implementation, as well as impact. As a consequence, little is known about the effectiveness of OLS programmes. In terms of food aid, there

have been no comparisons of assessed needs with actual deliveries. In fact, this was attempted for the first time by the Review Team.

The lack of depth is illustrated by a spontaneous change in the overall nature of the programme. This change is based on assumptions that the emergency has changed from an acute crisis associated with high levels of malnutrition and excess mortality, to one where the problem is primarily access to food. There is a general perception of a gradual improvement in the situation of war-affected populations, and the achievement of greater self-sufficiency. Correspondingly, there has been an increasing emphasis on supporting livelihoods and improving self-reliance. This has been accompanied by a decrease in the provision of emergency food aid, and greater targeting. However, information available to the Review Team, gave no indication that such a change in status has taken place.

Regarding overall information management,

...greater care needs to be exercised in the calculation of population and beneficiary figures. In particular, more restraint is required in agency claims for the number of people assisted.

Without higher quality information, improved coordination is not possible. Moreover, accurate information goes to the heart of transparency. This requires training, and the setting of clear objectives in information management. Standardisation of application software within and between agencies, and the phasing in of relational databases, are recommended.

Monitoring should probably focus on delivery information. Ambitious impact analysis is likely to be unproductive, given complexities of the situation. The exception to this is likely to be where agencies have extensive local knowledge. Or, as with WFP and the Food Economy approach, where UN agencies have developed a reasonable amount of rigour. In the Northern Sector especially, UNICEF is still at a stage where it must concentrate on documenting the spread of its activities and inputs. WFP should consolidate gains on delivery reporting.

9.7.1 Appropriate Programming

With the exception of modalities for working in ongoing conflict, as long as the war continues the opportunities for programme expansion and deepening remain limited. OLS should continue,

...to support peoples limited strategies for achieving food security and respond to localised crises. At the same time, the limitations of community-based programmes in a war-torn and resource poor environment should be recognised.

9.7.2 Assessments and the Appeal

In the interests of impartiality, all OLS assessments should be conducted by the UN. A greater attempt should be made to forge a more integrated approach to assessments, especially by UNICEF and WFP. Recommendations regarding the standardisation of information management, increasing the number of UNHCU and Humanitarian Principles Unit Field Advisers, and the formation of Food Aid and Food Security Units in WFP Khartoum and Nairobi (see below) should facilitate this.

Assessments should be broadened beyond what can be measured and responded to in a technical manner. The social and political dimension of food security should also be examined. Assessments should also include a review of the effectiveness of past interventions. In particular, deliveries should be matched with assessed needs. When there are variations, the reasons why should be clearly stated.

Assessments and monitoring, moreover, should be seen as a continuous process. Annual assessments should become a review of existing information, rather than a new exercise. Particularly in the North, annual assessments appear as a process of collecting the same information over and over again. There is little evidence of the integration of existing information, or the use of participatory approaches to the gathering of information.

The main purpose of the annual assessments is to form the basis of the Appeal. However, it is difficult to see how the information from the assessments is used other than for estimating food aid needs by WFP. NGOs, moreover, are not involved in the planning or follow-up, and their activities are not reflected in the Appeal.

The Appeal should be clearly based on information gathered in the annual assessment exercise, whether from field assessments or

from the analysis of information from on-going monitoring systems. Assessment reports should provide clear recommendations which are justified on the basis of the information gathered.

The annual assessment, apart from forming the basis for the Appeal, must provide the foundation for a coherent OLS strategy which includes the activities of all OLS agencies.

On a wider issue, the question of resourcing long term chronic emergencies needs to be examined. While the Review is making recommendations for the reform of the Appeal process, it is also aware that short term financing is ultimately inappropriate.

It is recognised that assessments in the Northern and Southern Sectors, owing to their different conditions, will continue to be prepared separately. There is a need, however, to combine information. Regarding the estimation of food aid needs, assessments need to give clear justification for food aid requirements. Moreover, rather than being specified geographically, in the interests of greater transparency the needs of government and non-government areas should be clearly distinguished.

The estimation of OLS food aid needs should not be part of the annual WFP/FAO mission. The methodology employed is not appropriate for OLS needs. Any non-OLS drought related problems should be funded and responded to separately.

The possibility of developing a joint WFP/DHA mission to assess OLS food aid needs should be explored. The WFP component could supply the technical expertise, while the DHA component would ensure appropriateness under war conditions. At the moment, the best methodology in Sudan is that used by the Food Economy approach in the South. In the final analysis, however, food aid needs must be based on independent assessment under the terms of the OLS agreement.

9.7.3 Food Security in the Northern Sector

Regarding food security, greater policy coherence needs to be established. At the moment different aspects of what should be a more unified approach are scattered between WFP, UNICEF, UNDP, and FAO.

A single Food Aid and Food Security Unit should be established within WFP.

This may require the secondment of UNICEF and other agency personnel, and echoes similar recommendations made for the South. In making this recommendation, the Review is aware that WFP may not have the necessary expertise to deal with the non-food aspect of food security. This is why secondment may be necessary.

Regarding the health field,

UNICEF should consolidate the coordination of health inputs in the North and subsume the contributions of WHO. At the same time, however, the sustainability of non-food interventions in a chronic emergency should seriously be considered.

9.7.4 Food Security in the Southern Sector

As in the North, food security matters are divided between UNICEF and WFP.

A single Food Aid and Food Security Unit should be established within WFP.

Given the greater complexity of the OLS programme in the Southern Sector, the secondment of UNICEF and INGO personnel to boost WFP non-food capacity is probably particularly important. This would help foster a more integrated approach to food security. It is envisaged that joint reports for the Northern and Southern Sectors would be produced with the assistance of the UNHCU Information Officer and the UNICEF/OLS Monitoring and Evaluation Officer in Khartoum and Nairobi, respectively.

9.7.5 Capacity Building

Regarding capacity building, the main recommendation has been made in relation to the OLS agreement. Namely, that the warring parties must demonstrate a willingness and ability to adequately support the running costs of their humanitarian wings before additional OLS resources should be committed. In relation to the Southern Sector,

On the understanding that office rents in Nairobi, etc., are being met from movement funds, OLS capacity building should concentrate on field level activities. Improving the human resource base, especially in relation to education, through

quality training of teachers and various technical personnel is important.

9.7.6 General Programme Recommendations

The Review is also concerned about the uneven development of OLS and agency inputs in South Sudan. While insecurity and restrictions have played a part, Bahr el-Ghazal and Upper Nile, for example, are relatively poorly served.

Conditions permitting, attempts should be made to address the issue of uneven aid input into South Sudan. If possible, additional OLS resources should be directed to the deprived regions.

In this respect, the Review acknowledges the development of mobile teams as another useful innovation in the face of growing insecurity. The orientation of this approach to providing skills, rather than fixed structures on the ground, seems a sensible adaptation.

9.7.7 Cost Effectiveness

Donors have frequently expressed concern about the cost effectiveness of OLS. The dependence, especially in the Southern Sector, on air transport has been an important issue. GOS has pushed for maximum use of surface routes originating from North Sudan.

More use should be made of rail and river access from North Sudan.

At the same time, the Review would urge that a balance of surface routes is sought.

Under the term of OLS, the attempt to establish cross-line arrangements for surface transport should be restarted. At the same time, the opening of humanitarian cross-border routes from neighbouring countries - for example, Ethiopia - should be investigated if this is the easiest way to reach war-affected populations.

Regarding air transport, some costs could be saved by operating some OLS flights out of Malakal or other GOS locations. This would first require a comprehensive settlement, however, such as that suggested in the new OLS agreement. Without free access to radios, for example, this arrangement would not work.

Other cost-savings are may be possible by changing the way the Annual Appeal operates.

The form of the Appeal should be changed to encourage financial transparency. Comparisons with past years should not be limited to requirements and donor contributions.

The Appeal should show exactly how much the agency's operations cost. Agencies should be expected to produce complete annual income and expenditure statements for their OLS activities. The Appeal document should present the statement of the previous year in juxtaposition with projections of the year closing and the requirements for the next. Major types of support such as grants obtained and used during the year, the value of stocks used from carry-forwards, internal reserves called upon, and so on, should be shown in reasonable breakdowns.

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