

OPS

Subject on Yemen,
Jan 80, Internal
situation

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PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL MESSAGE
SERIAL No. T13A/83

Dear Prime Minister,

You have undoubtedly received the news of the devastating earthquake that on 13 December 1982 wrecked the Central Region of the Yemen Arab Republic. Violent seismic tremors, occurring in Yemenis and rendered hundreds of thousands without shelter. Surviving men, women and children found their homes destroyed, their personal property depleted, their economic and commercial assets demolished. Government buildings together with the social and economic infrastructure in the Region has been largely destroyed.

This situation exposed our meagre and narrow economic base to yet another enormous burden. The devastation and resulting losses will surely have serious negative repercussions, for many years to come, on the economy of a least developed country like ours. It imposes limitations on development possibilities and would introduce disruption in the overall economic life and activities of the Yemen Arab Republic.

Your Government have been following the unfortunate events in our country, and we deem it appropriate that we present to you the data and information that will shed light on the scope and magnitude of the disaster faced by our people. Seismic tremors, which commenced on 13 December 1982, have in fact never ceased to occur until this date. The tremors covered about four thousands square kilometres of the area the Yemen Arab Republic.

The official and public authorities of our country devoted all their energies and resources to provide the needed relief to provide the needed relief to the affected population. We were able to extend such relief due to the enormous assistance that arrived in Yemen from your Government as well as from all Arab and friendly Governments and International Organisations.

During this relief phase, we were able to distribute medicine, food and tents that are providing temporary shelters for no less than 300,000 persons.

The second and most important phase is still ahead. This phase requires enormous funds and efforts. It will also require detailed technical studies for the rehabilitation, resettlement and reconstruction in the affected Region.

To present to you an idea of the needed effort, it may suffice to indicate that the number of human dwellings that are no longer suitable for living exceeds 43,000 dwellings. The cost of these dwellings is estimated at

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7,800,000,000 Yemeni Rials, the equivalent of US\$1,800,000,000. The number of cities, towns and villages affected by the disaster is 1337 human settlements of which are the four cities of Dhamar, Aanes, Rasabah and Dhowran. As mentioned earlier 300,000 citizens are shelterless. In addition, a number of families have left the affected Region to other areas in Yemen seeking temporary refuge and shelter.

As for infrastructure, the Region lost 651 mosques, 78 schools, 131 water supply projects, 19 Government buildings, 15 power supply projects, at a total estimated cost of 335,000,000 Yemeni Rials, about US\$74,000,000.

The losses in the field of Agriculture, Livestock and Animal Husbandry are estimated at 130,000,000 Yemeni Rials. This includes losses of agricultural inputs stock, damaged terraces, etc.

As estimated amount of 912,000,000 Yemeni Rials in personal properties have also been lost from the sixty thousand families affected by the earthquake.

In sum, the total losses are estimated at about 9,000,000,000 Yemeni Rials, about US\$2,000,000,000.

I must mention that the above figure is related to the damages and losses in the Province of Dhamar, only. Other seismic tremors also occurs outside Dhamar Province, such as Sa'da, but the extent of damage was fortunately less than that of Dhamar.

It is clear that even the above cited financial figures will not be sufficient for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the devastated Region of Dhamar Province. The cost of reconstruction will definitely be higher than the above mentioned financial estimate of the damage of US\$2,000,000,000. Reconstruction of the villages entirely, devastated by the earthquake will be needed. Anti-earthquake dwellings and buildings are required. These tasks are also compounded by the difficulties that human settlements in the Dhamar Province are widely dispersed over an area of 4,000 square kilometres. In addition to human settlements, the Government has to provide the necessary public infrastructure and services such as mosques, schools, etc.

We have already commenced the second phase in our efforts to cope with the disaster and human misery caused by the earthquake. New additional taxes and fees from our citizens will be collected, the revenue of which will be devoted to reconstruction and rehabilitation. A high council, chaired by the Vice President, Mr. AbdulAziz Abdul Ghani, has been established to plan, supervise and execute these activities in cooperation with the local authorities and the citizens in the Region. The Prime Minister and a number of Ministers and Senior Officials are also members of the Council.

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We have deemed it necessary and appropriate to lay before you the facts about the disaster caused by the earthquake and also to explain our efforts for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the affected Region, which is a highly fertile agricultural region in the country. The Government and the whole country will pursue this objective with all determination. We are certain that our efforts will be endowed with your continued support.

You have always been on the side of the Yemeni people and the Yemen Arab Republic in their development and reconstruction efforts. The People and Government of Yemen are grateful for your support and we know that you appreciate very well the magnitude and extent of the disaster that befell on Yemen and will lend your support and assistance for the tasks of reconstruction.

Please accept, Prime Minister, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Colonel Ali Abdullah Saleh
President
Yemen Arab Republic
Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces,
Secretary General of the People's National
Conference

The Rt. Hon. Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, MP.,
Prime Minister of United Kingdom and Northern Ireland
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