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**SELF-SUFFICIENCY AID FOR AFGHAN REFUGEES IN PAKISTAN  
AND RESETTLEMENT ASSISTANCE FOR LAOTIAN REPATRIATES**

The Commission has approved the financing of two refugee assistance projects in Pakistan and a refugee resettlement project in Laos.

**- PAKISTAN**

Between a quarter and a third of Aghanistan's population has fled the country since the events of December 1979. The figures officially recorded by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) put the number of persons seeking refuge in Pakistan at 2.9 million.

The UNHCR is coordinating, together with the Pakistan Government, the distribution of aid to the refugees, 70 % of whom are women and children. The form of such aid has changed substantially since 1980. Since the refugees have no opportunity to return to their country of origin, the aid currently proposed concerns self-sufficiency projects involving income-producing activities; 40 % of 1987 expenditure will have been accounted for in this way. International organizations, including the World Bank, and some 40 NGOs are supporting these efforts and placing emphasis on self-assistance activities.

Since 1980, the Community has provided substantial amounts of humanitarian aid to assist the refugees, this having been implemented on its behalf by specialised international agencies, the UNHCR, the Red Cross and NGOs. The total amount of Community aid provided since 1980 is 160 million ECU, which averages out at approximately 20 million ECU per year.

The two projects for which financing has been approved are as follows :

**Reafforestation and vocational training - 3 000 000 ECU**

The project is part of a multiannual programme by the World Bank, costing 36 million ECU. It will be the sequel to a pilot project carried out over the period 1984-87, cofinanced by the Community, the twofold aim of which was to :

- create jobs for Afghan refugees living in the camps and for the local population,
- repair some of the infrastructural and environmental damage caused in Pakistan by the arrival of large numbers of refugees with their livestock (damage roads, soil erosion, etc.).

**Production of quilts, satchels and school uniforms by Afghan refugees - 1 800 000 ECU**

This programme involves training the refugees to make articles for their own use, such as quilts and satchels, the aim being to keep them gainfully employed.

**LAOS**

**Resettlement assistance for Laotian repatriates - 200 000 ECU**

There is a need to provide help to Laotian repatriates, especially among the rural population, to become resettled in their home villages in various districts of Saravan and Savannakhet provinces.

The project, which has agricultural, health and education components is aimed at helping not only in the resettlement of repatriates but also to prevent further departures by improving living conditions in the areas concerned. In total, 6 150 beneficiaries and the local population will receive agricultural equipment, rice mills and livestock with a view to raising the level of food production. The improvement of the water supply, the construction of health care units supplied with basic equipment and medicines, and the construction of primary schools with essential teaching equipment will be undertaken in the districts concerned.

In line with its policy of assisting in the resettlement of refugees or displaced persons, the Commission has approved the allocation of 200 000 ECU for a project to be implemented by the UNHCR.