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U.N. IN ACTION

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Programme No. 875

Length: 4'03"

WFP PROVIDES FOOD AID TO MAURITANIA

VIDEO

LANDSCAPE OF SAND (12")

DESERT WITH LITTLE
VEGETATION (17")

PEOPLE IN TENT (19")

PEOPLE RECEIVING FOOD

AUDIO

NARRATION

The desert landscape of Mauritania, in west Africa, lends itself to exotic images on screen, but in reality life here can be harsh and unforgiving.

Ninety percent of the country is covered by sand. With less than one percent of its land capable of producing sustainable crops, the government imports two thirds of its cereal for the nation's nearly three million population.

But after three consecutive years of severe drought, the chronic problem of food shortage has now become a crisis. Famine now threatens hundreds of thousands of lives. The government has declared a state of emergency and appealed for international assistance.

The World Food Programme, WFP, has set up

(22")

nutrition centres to deliver food aid to women and children. In addition to emergency relief, the UN agency also carried out long-term activity to promote self-reliance. Philippe Guyon Le Bouffy is WFP's representative in Mauritania.

PHILIPPE GUYON LE BOUFFY
ON CAMERA (26")

LE BOUFFY:

"In all the activities carried out by the World Food Programme, food aid is used as a tool to provide sustainable assistance. It aims to create long-term benefits to the families and communities, providing them with the necessary means to survive by themselves and also to pursue a better life."

CHILDREN IN CLASS
(17")

NARRATION

Education is one of the best ways to ensure a sustainable future and to lift people out of poverty. But in rural villages, only half of the children go to school. For those who do make it, they often attend classes on an empty stomach.

AGHLA IN CLASS (15")

Aghla, like all children here, comes from a poor family. She likes to study and wants to become a teacher. But it's hard to concentrate when one is feeling hungry. Many end up dropping out or repeating grades.

AGHLA & CHILDREN EATING
LUNCH (18")

WFP has traditionally sponsored a school-feeding programme to help increase rural school attendance particularly. Now such programmes

have become all the more necessary as more parents become desperate to feed their children. Including Aghla's mother, Mariam.

MARIAM ON CAMERA
(12.5")

MARIAM: (in local dialect)

"I am grateful for the programme. It feeds my children and allows them to learn to read and write. Thank God for that. I also have orphan children who lost their father."

STUDENTS ASSEMBLING IN
SCHOOL YARD (14")

Since the school added a free lunch, enrolment in Aghla's school has more than doubled. The WFP programme is one of the big attractions, says school Director, Mohamed Lemine.

MOHAMED LEMINE ON CAMERA
(15.5")

LEMINE:

"Apparently, the schools have benefited a great deal from the feeding programme. Especially in areas where there are no schools, children will have to walk long distances from surrounding villages."

CHILDREN SINGING AND
WALKING TO SCHOOL (16")

NARRATION

Children trek across the desert to attend school five days a week and 180 days a year, as long as classes are held. Their aim is to get a nutritious meal, an education, and to survive.

LANDSCAPE OF DESERT (16")

The desert, whether it's beautiful or hostile, is not their concern. To them, it's the landscape within which they struggle to live – and with help from the international community, to create a better

life.

UN LOGO (20")

This report was prepared by Patricia Chan and
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