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- 1 This is a study of the socio-economic conditions of Shirabad, a peri-urban district of Zahedan, the capital of Sistan-Baluchestan. It provides a unique insight into the dynamics of a marginalized, poverty-stricken community and sets out the framework for poverty alleviation.
- 2 The Human Development Report of I.R. Iran 1999, presented a picture of the geographic unevenness in Iran's human development. It attributed the lowest indexes to Sistan-Baluchestan. Building on ongoing activities of some agencies the UN country team, an integrated inter-agency program, was established in early 2000 to pursue sustainable human development through capacity-building and empowerment.
- 3 After consultation with Government authorities and Mr. Seyed Mahmoud Hosseini, the Governor General of Sistan-Baluchestan, it was agreed that the inter-agency program would focus on three pilot locations, namely, Shirabad, Bent and Bahukalat. Work is currently underway in the first two communities. Both Shirabad and Bent have been recipients of "development software", i.e. capacity-building and empowerment through training, micro-credit financing and the expansion of health and educational services. To complement this, UNDP has recently completed an analysis identifying more capital-intensive projects for employment generation and economic development. This "development hardware" could be funded by national authorities, international agencies or bilateral donors.
- 4 This study was commissioned by the inter-agency program in Sistan-Baluchestan as a reference for the UN county team and as a model for development practitioners

elsewhere in the I.R. of Iran. In it, Professor Parviz Piran highlights the poverty and income-distribution structure within the community. Drug related distortions, a significant refugee population, cultural factors and historical processes are documented to support the analysis. The study makes recommendations for measures to alleviate poverty and achieve sustainable development in Shirabad.

INDEX

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