



September 2013

Voluntary repatriation

- ⇒ **Returns to Afghanistan:** over **5.8 million** Afghan refugees returned home since 2002 (4.7 million with UNHCR assistance) = nearly a quarter of Afghanistan's population. In 2012: **94,000 returns** (39% higher than 2011).
- ⇒ In 2013 (to date): 33,401 returns; (decrease of 40% compared to same period in 2012).
- ⇒ Areas of return: Central Region (30%), mainly to the provinces of Kabul (22%), Logar, Ghazni, and Parwan; Eastern Region (19%) mainly Nangarhar (15%), Laghman and Kunar; Northern and North-Eastern Regions (27%), mainly Kunduz (10%), Baghlan and Balkh; Southern Region (10%) mainly Kandahar and Hilmand; Western Region (8%) mainly to the provinces of Hirat (6%) and Farah; South-Eastern and Central Highlands (7%).

Sustainable Reintegration

- ⇒ **Reintegration challenges:** access to livelihood opportunities, access to basic services and security concerns; growing urbanization and informal settlements of returning IDPs and refugees. Some 60% of returnees encounter reintegration difficulties, resulting in secondary movement for 15% of them (within and outside Afghanistan); investment needed in high return areas/communities including in rural / urban settings.
- ⇒ **Conflict-induced IDPs: 590,184**, incl. **113,241** newly displaced in 2013.
- ⇒ Afghanistan entering '**transitional period**' with the upcoming presidential elections and withdrawal of international troops in 2014. This could have a number of consequences incl. on national economy, loss of employment opportunities, internal displacement and incentives to return. The wish to repatriate significantly depends on community stability. Other factors that may affect returns include security concerns and the election environment.
- ⇒ **Security and access** for humanitarian / development actors: UN has direct access to approx. half of the territory. UNHCR has additional reach (total 75%) through local NGOs, authorities and community networks.

Support to Host countries

- ⇒ **Challenges for host countries:** Afghans remain the largest refugee population worldwide with 2.4 million registered Afghan refugees (in Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran) plus an estimated 2.5 million undocumented Afghans; this has resulted in high levels of asylum fatigue in the two main host countries after three decades. Support to host communities is essential to preserve protection space and an important sign of international burden sharing and solidarity.
- ⇒ Afghans were, until 2012, the second largest group of individual asylum seekers worldwide, with 53, 766 new claims in 2012.

Institutional Progress to date

- ⇒ May 2012 : Launch of the strategy in Geneva and endorsement by international community (48 countries).
- ⇒ October 2012: 1st meeting of the Quadripartite Steering Committee (Q4) in Geneva: adopts ToRs for Q4 and recommends creation of National Steering Committees (NSC).
- ⇒ January 2013: 2nd Q4 meeting (Abu Dhabi) reaffirms need for NSCs to prioritise country plans; commitment by all parties to finding durable solutions for refugees; need for support to the Joint Resource Mobilisation Strategy incl. through encouraging development funding towards outcomes of SSAR.
- ⇒ NSCs and Work Plans established in all 3 countries (end 2012).
- ⇒ September 2013: 3rd Q4 meeting (Islamabad) agrees on common messaging and adopting a Joint Resource Mobilisation Strategy.

International Support

- ⇒ Tokyo Conference (June 2012): USD 16 bn pledged for Afghanistan by donors.
- ⇒ Istanbul Process: Heart of Asia Ministerial conference (April 2013) reaffirms support for the creation of conditions conducive to voluntary return and sustainable reintegration of refugees.
- ⇒ Ashqabat Conference (May 2012): Organization of Islamic Countries endorsed SSAR.
- ⇒ Friends of SSAR group meets in Geneva since June 2012 (5 meetings to date) to support the strategy and encourage resource mobilization.
- ⇒ UN Secretary General's Durable Solutions Initiative in Afghanistan (UNDP/UNHCR) to build up synergies with SSAR.

Financial requirements

- ⇒ Total requirements: USD **1.9 bn** for 3 years 2012-2014 (Afghanistan: 863 mil; Iran: 432 mil; Pakistan: 610 mil.)
- ⇒ UNHCR's contribution: approx. USD 600 million (2012-2014)
- ⇒ Pro-active measures to mobilise and align development resources towards the outcomes of the Strategy are imperative.

In Afghanistan

Process

- ⇒ Inter-Ministerial Coordination Committee, chaired by Deputy Minister MoRR, is assuming the role of interim National Steering Committee.
- ⇒ 2nd Vice President to create & chair a committee with key line ministries and the UNCT, focusing on solutions for returnees & IDPs to ensure their needs are taken into consideration in the national development plan.
- ⇒ Alignment with **National Priority Programmes** (NPP) sought through 12 MoUs signed with line ministries (2012)
- ⇒ Final draft of national **IDP policy** submitted to Cabinet for adoption.
- ⇒ **Combining humanitarian assistance with development:** Letter of Intent (LoI) signed (Res. Coord./ILO/UNDP/UNHCR) in Feb.2013 provides a framework through joint programmes, esp. with UNDP, for socio-economic reintegration.
- ⇒ Building effective **inter-ministerial and inter-agency partnership**: UNHCR discussing with key government entities (MoRR, MRRD, MAIL, MoE, MoPH), development partners and stakeholders (WB, ADB, USAID, JICA, CEDA, DIFID) and sister Agencies (mainly UNDP and ILO) to align and manage resources in accordance with SSAR.
- ⇒ UNHCR also engaged in the CCA/UNDAF process for 2015/2019 to ensure **returnees feature prominently in development priorities** defined by the UNCT.
- ⇒ 48 high return areas selected (2011)
- ⇒ **Urbanization** and informal settlements: UNHCR actively engaging local and central authorities as well as UN agencies to address the issue of urbanization.

2012 /2013 Implementation

- ⇒ NPPs cover **20 areas of high return**, 19 of them have completed projects (USD 7.4 mil), all 20 have ongoing projects (USD 33.4 mil), 17 have new projects planned (USD 24.6 mil)
- ⇒ National Solidarity Programmes (NSP) reach-out to communities in all 34 provinces, **54,000 programmes** completed so far, (Agriculture, Health, Education, Irrigation, Power, Transport, Water supply and sanitation) specific provisions for returnees included.
- ⇒ UNHCR's **humanitarian programmes** funded community-based interventions in 12 high return areas located in 11 provinces; activities in the sectors of protection, shelter, water and sanitation, health, education, infrastructure, and community mobilization (implemented by UNHCR or partners)
- ⇒ Programmes in 12 out of the 48 identified high return areas (UNHCR/UNOPS/ILO) in line with UN Agencies agreement to become more involved in the implementation of the solutions strategy
- ⇒ **UNOPS Baseline Data Survey** concluded that status of returnees lower than surrounding communities in 48 high-return areas and identified **agriculture and livelihood** as key sectors for intervention
- ⇒ **ILO Survey on Livelihood** in 22 high return areas helped identify available skills, livelihood opportunities, financial services and business development options; agriculture adversely affected by drought leading to returnees seeking **casual employment in urban areas**.
- ⇒ UNHCR's **shelter assistance programme** for returnees and IDPs (over 216.000 shelters built since 2002) helps stabilize returnee populations in rural areas (study conducted by Maastricht University/Samuel Hall Institute) and should continue as it is a cornerstone of sustainable reintegration; UNHCR is the sole provider of shelter.
- ⇒ **University of York's study** identifies **infrastructure development** and resulting short-term employment as positive factor for reintegration.
- ⇒ Assistance to 90,000 IDPs in 2012 through emergency shelter and NFI clusters; in 2013 contingency stocks pre-positioned for about 50,000 families.
- ⇒ 150 IDP families from Kabul Informal Settlement relocated by UNHCR to returnee areas and provided with reintegration assistance, linking SSAR with SG's Durable Solutions Strategy.

In the Islamic Republic of Iran

840,158 registered Afghan refugees, est. 1.4 million (formerly) undocumented Afghans

Process

- ⇒ 18th Tripartite Commission meeting (Jan 2013, Tehran)
- ⇒ **Summary of Proposals** for SSAR-related activities in Iran endorsed by the National Steering Committee in May 2013. The plan includes projects by **22 participating agencies**, covering the four outcomes of the SSAR (1.Support to volrep; 2.Access to shelter and essential services for refugees; 3.Diversification of livelihood opportunities and improvement of food security; 4.Improvement of social and environmental protection and enhancing of resettlement) for a total of **USD 130 million**.
- ⇒ First Donor Briefing at Tehran-level successfully conducted by the NSC on 8 September 2013 as part of national-level resource mobilization.
- ⇒ Financial requirements for 2013: USD 130 million; 2014: USD 163 million.
- ⇒ Working Group created (NSC, UN, NGOs, donors) as a consultative body to support the National Steering Committee.
- ⇒ Exploring with Govt of Iran for alternate stay arrangements for Amayesh holders (registered refugees)

2012 /2013 Implementation

- ⇒ 7,089 returns to Afghanistan in 2013 to date, presenting a decrease of 37% compared to same period of 2012; 914,246 returns since 2002.
- ⇒ Legal travel document (incl. renewable 3 mth visa and work permit) delivered to **undocumented Afghans**: an est. 135,000 families (6-800,000 individuals) have benefitted so far.
- ⇒ Government/UNHCR provide **Primary Health Care** in 15 settlements and 22 urban locations.
- ⇒ **Health Insurance Scheme**: 331,000 refugees enrolled (2011/2012); 209,714 vulnerable refugees covered in 2013, including 1,112 with special diseases.
- ⇒ Community Integrated Social and Medical Assistance Programme (CISAMAP) targets 12,000 vulnerable refugees with chronic ailments in 2013.
- ⇒ Medical referral, harm reduction, SGBV prevention and community-based rehabilitation through 8 local NGOs (supported by UNHCR)
- ⇒ **Education**: 318,884 Afghan refugee children enrolled in national Iranian education system for 2012-2013 school year (+12% compared with previous year)
- ⇒ Support to education through school construction and supplies, literacy training, ATM cards (by UNHCR)
- ⇒ **Livelihood**: income generating projects in the garment sector and other home-based businesses for vulnerable refugee women (UNHCR)
- ⇒ Capacity-building of refugee communities in Saveh settlement on the sustainable management of environmental resources.
- ⇒ Facilitating access of vulnerable refugees to financial services by supporting and building the capacity of banks/financial institutions
- ⇒ **Resettlement** in 2012: 2,172 submissions, 1,438 departures. In 2013, the quota is 2,422, and for 2014, the target is 2,500.
- ⇒ **Contact Group** for resettlement since 2010, chaired by Sweden.

Cross-border livelihood programmes

- ⇒ Iran / Afghanistan: Multi-year project on value chain development to support micro, small and medium enterprises in foot-wear, raisin and saffron sectors in the provinces of Khorasan Razavi in Iran , as well as Herat in Afghanistan (UNHCR / UNIDO).
- ⇒ Multi-year programme on sustainable livelihood currently developed by UNHCR and partners (refugee-populated areas of Iran and return areas of Afghanistan) (actors: Government of Iran/UNIDO/NRC/DRC/UNDP/UNHCR)

In Pakistan

1.6 million registered Afghan refugees + est. 1 mil. undocumented

Process

- ⇒ Cabinet approved a **new Afghan refugee policy** (25 July 2013), including extension of Proof of Registration cards and the Tripartite Agreement on voluntary repatriation until December 2015. The policy is closely aligned with the outcomes of the SSAR and focuses on creating conducive conditions for volrep, support to host communities, alternative stay arrangements for the residual caseload and resettlement to third countries.
- ⇒ A draft National Refugee Law is under consideration.
- ⇒ Government plans to cooperate with IOM to register **unregistered Afghans**, (while maintaining distinction with registered refugees)
- ⇒ **National Steering Committee** officially constituted (July 2013) to guide SSAR implementation, composed of: SAFRON, Refugee Commission, MFA, EAD, UNHCR
- ⇒ 10 UN agencies, and 2 ministries and local authorities involved in planning and implementation of RAHA (Refugee Affected and Hosting Areas), part of UN Delivering as One.

2012 /2013 Implementation

- ⇒ 26,249 returns to Afghanistan in 2013 so far, presenting a decrease of some 40% compared to same period in 2012; over 3.8 million since 2002.
- ⇒ Total repatriated in 2012: 83,423
- ⇒ Enhanced NFI and transport assistance “Surge” in Nov-Dec 2012 led to significant increase in volrep over same period in 2011.
- ⇒ RAHA (launched in 2009 with a budget of USD 140 million for 5 years in 17 districts) currently covers 41 districts in 4 provinces: KP, Balochistan, Sindh, Punjab, and 5 agencies in FATA.
- ⇒ **1,779 RAHA projects** implemented (2009-2013), benefiting 3.9 million people incl. 585,000 (15%) Afghan refugees; projects in infrastructure, water & sanitation, education, health, livelihood.
- ⇒ In 2013, **699 new RAHA projects** in the sectors of health, education, water and sanitation, infrastructure and livelihoods launched by UN agencies (UNHCR, UNDP, FAO, WHO, UNESCO) and GIZ.
- ⇒ UNHCR and partners currently working on 165 projects.
- ⇒ From 2013 onward, **urban development** is being prioritised esp. in major urban informal settlements hosting refugees
- ⇒ Geographical expansion of RAHA sought. RAHA is now an integral part of the Government’s Management and Repatriation of Afghan Refugees Strategy beyond 2015 and a key component of the regional Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees, with a budget of **USD 495 million** for 2012-2014.
- ⇒ **Resettlement:** in support of SSAR, UNHCR has negotiated 2,000 resettlement places for Afghan refugees in 2013; in 2014, UNHCR plans to increase submissions to 3,850 for Afghan refugees.
- ⇒ **Contact group** established in Islamabad (Dec 2012), chaired by Australia; increased resettlement quota offered by Australia.