

**REGIONAL STRATEGIC PRESENTATION SUMMARY  
TO 38<sup>TH</sup> STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING (6-9 March 2007)**

**Bureau for Africa**

**Part A: Introduction**

In 2006, prevailing peace and security in several countries permitted UNHCR to make significant advances in its search for durable solutions for some of the protracted situations of displacement, most notably those of refugees from Angola, Burundi, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Southern Sudan, and of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Among the key political developments, the successful completion of the electoral process in the DRC and the opening of peace talks between the Ugandan Government and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in Sudan are worth mentioning. Voluntary repatriation operations to Liberia and Burundi progressed markedly and the return movement to Angola entered its final stage. At the same time, opportunities for the repatriation of Togolese refugees, many of whom returned spontaneously during 2006, increased following the consolidation of the reconciliation process in the country. Equally notable was the willingness expressed by some States to enable refugees to integrate locally. Hence, in collaboration with the concerned States, UNHCR has initiated steps to address the legal, social and economic components of local integration for Liberians in Guinea and Sierra Leone; Sierra Leoneans in Guinea and Liberia; Congolese in Angola; and Angolans in Namibia. UNHCR has continued to use the option of resettlement as a protection and burden-sharing tool, while further harmonizing it with ongoing voluntary repatriation movements.

In other parts of the continent, however, instability has worsened, severely limiting prospects for pursuing durable solutions and even leading to increasing displacement in and from the Central African Republic (CAR), Chad, Sudan (Darfur) and Somalia. In Darfur, the progressive deterioration of security conditions has seriously hampered efforts to protect civilians and caused further displacement, with repercussions in neighbouring Chad and CAR. In Chad, the rebel uprising in the eastern part forced UNHCR to evacuate non-essential international staff from several locations and widespread insecurity has reduced the opportunities to access refugees and IDPs. In CAR, clashes of growing intensity between rebel groups and the Government army occurred repeatedly in the northern part of the country, causing movements of refugees into neighbouring Chad and Cameroon, as well as internal displacement. Political turmoil in Somalia, causing a continuous influx of Somalis into Kenya throughout 2006, escalated to armed confrontations between the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and the Supreme Council of Islamic Courts Union (ICU) at the end of the year. Renewed fighting in the Casamance region in Senegal led to the forced displacement of more than 6,000 persons in 2006.

As part of the United Nations Humanitarian Reform Initiative, UNHCR has substantially increased its involvement in the protection and assistance of IDPs in Côte d'Ivoire, DRC, Liberia, Somalia, and Uganda, where the cluster approach has been adopted. Similarly, in CAR, Chad and Sudan, UNHCR, as part of the UN Country Team, has developed IDP programmes.

The phenomenon of mixed-migratory flows continues to pose challenges for UNHCR, particularly in West Africa, southern Africa and the Horn of Africa. To preserve asylum space and guarantee access to adequate refugee status determination procedures, UNHCR is supporting States to strengthen their national capacities.

Throughout 2006, the adoption of austerity measures restricted the implementation of operations and reduced the provision of some basic services to refugees, which were sometimes already below minimum standards in many sectors. Although the re-allocation of resources contributed to addressing some of the most critical situations, considerable gaps persist, particularly in the health, education, water and sanitation sectors.

In 2007, UNHCR will continue to build upon progress achieved in 2006. A key aim is to ensure that tools rolled out in 2006, such as Project Profile and Age Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming (AGDM), continue to contribute effectively to the planning and implementation of operations. Focus will be maintained on strengthening partnerships to enhance governmental capacity; bridge the gaps between relief and development; create opportunities for local integration; and actively participate in United Nations Reform initiatives.

**Part B: Progress on UNHCR's Global Strategic Objectives (GSOs) for 2007 and implementation of the Agenda for Protection (AfP)**

Ensure that international standards of protection are met for all persons of concern to UNHCR taking into account their age, gender or personal background (GSO 1)

UNHCR has continued to roll out the Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming (AGDM) initiative in Africa, and the exercise has now been completed in 35 African countries. The participatory assessments have contributed to UNHCR's planning process and are helping to address a wide range of protection issues, including: sexual exploitation of refugee girls; child labour and recruitment for military activities; discrimination against persons living with HIV and AIDS; and prostitution of adolescent girls. In Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Sierra Leone, a regional project has been implemented for Liberian refugees to identify adolescents at risk and provide literacy and vocational training, as well as HIV and AIDS awareness. In Ghana, UNHCR has facilitated the development of a Refugee Action Committee and a Peer Counselor network specialized in psycho-social support and Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) prevention. In Uganda and Zambia, female police officers have been recruited to patrol refugee settlements and more refugee women groups were formed.

Seventy per cent of operations in Africa have taken steps to adopt SGBV Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). In Kenya, prevention and response to SGBV received particular attention, as better policing and distribution of firewood in camps contributed to reducing the number of incidents. In southern Africa, all countries in the region have completed a self-assessment of their SGBV programmes, and a peer review mechanism has been established to monitor implementation. In Benin and Burkina Faso, three community centres have been established under the Strengthening Protection Capacity Project (SPCP) to host the offices of several refugee organizations, which are implementing SGBV and HIV and AIDS training and awareness activities. (AfP Goals 4.3, 4.4, 6.1, 6.2).

In 2006, resources were prioritized to address malnutrition problems. During the year, the highest rates of malnutrition registered were in Kenya (up to 22 per cent), Ethiopia (up to 14 per cent), Chad (up to 12 per cent) and Sudan (up to 16 per cent). Following nutritional assessments carried out in partnership with WFP, supplementary feeding programmes have been set up in Ethiopia, eastern Sudan and Chad; and micronutrients and fortified blended food have been provided for refugees in Kenya and Chad. Efforts to reduce malnutrition rates will be pursued further in 2007 (AfP 4.3, 4.4, 6.1, 6.2).

Primary school enrolment of refugee boys and girls in Africa reached an average of 75 per cent, the lowest rate being in Central Africa and the Great Lakes (72 per cent) and the highest in southern Africa (80 per cent). Gender parity at the primary school level was achieved in most of sub-Saharan Africa although the school dropout rate is still a major concern. The austerity measures adopted by UNHCR in 2006 severely affected the provision of educational services to refugee children, causing an increase in the pupil-to-teacher ratio and a decrease in the overall quality of education. Cuts in secondary education and vocational training in numerous countries left adolescents more exposed to abuse and exploitation. Specific fund-raising activities have been undertaken to fill the gap in the education sector, notably in southern Sudan, Uganda and West Africa. (AfP 6.2).

Apart from Angola, Botswana, Gambia, Mali, Somalia and Zambia, Project Profile was rolled out in all African operations where UNHCR organizes or supports the registration of refugees and other persons of concern. In Djibouti, UNHCR has assisted the Government in the long overdue registration and verification of camp-based refugees. In Gabon, with the assistance of UNHCR, the Government has agreed to issue identity cards to over 15,000 refugees, a precondition for obtaining work permits and embarking on self-reliance activities. In Rwanda, UNHCR has begun discussions with the Government to expedite the issuance of identity cards to refugees. A verification exercise conducted in June 2006 revealed that half of the Togolese refugees in Ghana had repatriated spontaneously (AfP 1.11).

In southern Africa, continued advocacy efforts and partnership with UNAIDS have enabled UNHCR to assist partners to deliver HIV and AIDS services and resulted in host governments integrating refugees in their national plan against HIV and AIDS. While underfunding of programmes for refugees remains a challenge, by the end of 2006, there were seven countries in southern Africa where refugees were included in national anti-retroviral therapy (ART) programmes.

Advocate for and support governments in the creation and maintenance of an international protection regime including its implementation at the national level (GSO 2)

UNHCR continues to support governments' efforts to improve national asylum systems. In 2006, Kenya and Uganda passed new refugee laws. In Malawi, with the support of UNHCR, the Refugee Status Determination (RSD) Unit submitted recommendations to the National Refugee Committee for half of the 1,600 pending asylum claims. A similar initiative has been launched in Mozambique for over 1,500 pending asylum claims to be completed by mid-2007. In Burundi, UNHCR has supported the Government in carrying out RSD for some 20,000 Rwandan asylum-seekers. In the United Republic of Tanzania (Tanzania), UNHCR has contributed to the revision of the draft refugee legislation (AfP 1.2).

In 2006, Rwanda acceded to the two Conventions on the Status of Stateless Persons and on the Reduction of Statelessness. In Côte d'Ivoire, UNHCR has monitored developments linked to nationality and identification during the verification process undertaken by the Government through the itinerant hearings ("*audiences foraines*"). UNHCR has also been monitoring closely the situation of Arabs (Mahamids) in Niger who may be at risk of statelessness.

Redoubling the search for durable solutions (GSO 3)

In West Africa, UNHCR has helped some 50,000 people to return to Liberia in the past year, and the organized voluntary repatriation will continue until June 2007. As reconciliation initiatives continued in Togo, refugees began to return spontaneously from Benin and Ghana. UNHCR closely monitored the situation and facilitated the returns process for some 2,400 persons.

In the Great Lakes region, repatriation to Burundi peaked in the second half of 2006 following UNHCR's decision to move from the facilitation to the promotion of voluntary repatriation. However, the pace of return declined by the end of the year, owing to concerns about the lack of reintegration opportunities and the scarcity of food in the areas of return. Overall, some 45,000 Burundians have returned home during the past year, while another 287,000 remain in asylum countries, mainly in Tanzania. Repatriation to DRC also took place with some 41,000 persons returning primarily from Burundi, the Republic of the Congo (ROC) and Tanzania. The pace of return was modest due to concerns related to the electoral process in DRC and continuing volatility in the security situation in the east of the country. The progressive stabilization following the completion of the electoral process in DRC is nurturing hopes for an increase in repatriation movements to the country in 2007, although serious gaps remain with regard to the reintegration of returnees.

Over the past year, UNHCR has facilitated repatriation movements to Southern Sudan for 27,000 refugees from CAR, Kenya, Uganda, DRC and Ethiopia,. Operations have progressed amidst difficulties relating to security conditions and logistical, as well as other operational constraints. UNHCR expects return movements to Southern Sudan to increase during 2007.

Organized repatriation to Angola was extended to accommodate refugees in DRC and Zambia who had expressed their wish to return, but who had not been able to do so due to logistical constraints. Following the return of more than 8,000 refugees from Zambia in 2006, the camp in Nangweshi was closed and the remaining population was transferred to the camp in Mayukwayukwa. The organized repatriation to Angola will officially end in March 2007 (AfP 5.1, 5.2, 5.3).

Progress was achieved towards local integration, particularly in West Africa and southern Africa. Mission teams from Headquarters went to Angola, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone to assess the legal and socio-economic frameworks for local integration and to support the Governments in preparing local integration strategies for implementation in 2007. Governments showed a high degree of commitment to pursuing local integration for long-staying Congolese (DRC) refugees in Angola; Liberian refugees in Sierra Leone and Guinea; and Sierra Leonean refugees in Guinea and Liberia (AfP 5.4). In a more recent development, the Governments of Botswana, Mozambique and Namibia have indicated their willingness to consider local integration as a durable solution for at least a part of the remaining refugee population. In the latter two cases, UNHCR has begun working with the Governments on the development of a local integration strategy, for implementation starting in 2007, and on the revision of programmes to strengthen self-reliance initiatives. In Mozambique for instance, activities include crop production, microcredit for small business, vocational training and animal husbandry. (AfP 5.4, 5.7)

In 2006, some 19,300 refugees of 28 different nationalities from 37 countries of asylum in Africa were referred to resettlement countries for consideration. This was an increase of 36 per cent compared to 2005 (AfP 5.5, 5.6).

Establish effective partnerships and frameworks for action for responding to the challenges of protecting and finding solutions for persons internally displaced due to conflict and abuses of human rights; protecting refugees in broader migration movements; and bridging the gap between relief and development (GSO 4)

UNHCR has progressively assumed a greater role for IDP protection and assistance through the adoption of the cluster leadership approach in Côte d'Ivoire, DRC, Liberia, Somalia, and Uganda, as well as in CAR, Chad and Sudan within the context of UN Country Team agreements. In 2007, UNHCR will increase its cooperation with national authorities and humanitarian partners to improve IDP protection and assistance.

In Liberia, under UNHCR's leadership, the protection cluster developed a comprehensive monitoring framework which has revealed that child rights' violations, rape, domestic violence, physical assault and property disputes are the most common problems to be addressed. UNHCR has worked closely with agencies of the sub-cluster on the rule of law, to provide logistical and technical support to judicial and police institutions, in order to establish effective mechanisms to ensure the treatment of survivors of abuses, as well as the prosecution of perpetrators.

In DRC, the roll-out of the protection cluster has improved coordination between the humanitarian community and the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission, enabling the establishment of a system of legal advice and referral services for returnees and IDPs to settle land disputes in Ituri. The cluster has become a key forum for discussion and advocacy on civilian protection issues.

In Somalia, UNHCR has set up a protection-monitoring network and a population displacement tracking system. Massive floods during the rainy season and the deterioration of security conditions severely hampered access to displaced populations, causing further displacement. UNHCR has monitored the population movements and the distribution of relief items to ensure assistance to individuals with vulnerabilities, as well as child protection, through national implementing partners.

In August 2006, a protection cluster was officially created in Côte d'Ivoire to work on a strategy to respond to the needs of IDPs. UNHCR accepted the leadership of this cluster, which brings together United Nations agencies, Government Ministries, national and international NGOs.

In Sudan, at the request of the United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator, UNHCR has developed IDP programmes in Southern Sudan and in west Darfur. Over 41,000 IDPs in Juba and surrounding areas have received assistance from UNHCR and its partners. In west Darfur, UNHCR is coordinating protection activities in the region as part of a United Nations collaborative effort for IDPs. UNHCR chairs protection working groups and co-chairs the working group on SGBV with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), exchanging information and coordinating the response to SGBV.

In Chad, as agreed by the UN Country Team, UNHCR has assumed a lead role for IDPs in the areas of protection, camp/settlement management and shelter, under the overall leadership of the Humanitarian Coordinator. Monitoring missions to IDP sites have been conducted to identify protection problems and human rights violations have been brought to the attention of the Chadian authorities and partners in the protection cluster. Following the clashes late last year in eastern Chad, UNHCR and its partners assisted new IDP arrivals with non-food items.

In CAR, UNHCR has set up a protection-monitoring network in the northern part of the country and leads the protection working group in Bangui. Sensitization on IDPs' rights is one of the three pillars of UNHCR's protection strategy in response to massive displacement in the country, the other two being: the monitoring of the protection situation and patterns of displacement, and assistance to survivors of human rights abuses. In collaboration with UNICEF and ICRC, UNHCR organized a seminar on IDP human rights and International Humanitarian Law for members of the National Army (FACA) and the regional peacekeeping forces (FOMUC).

UNHCR is paying increasing attention to individuals who may be in need of international protection within broader migratory movements. In north-east Somalia ("*Puntland*"), UNHCR screens migrants and carries out status determination. Similarly, in Angola, Malawi and Mozambique, national RSD procedures have been strengthened to enable more effective processing of claims of asylum-seekers who are part of mixed migratory movements (AfP 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.7).

UNHCR continues to advocate for development actors to support the reintegration of returnee populations. The Office has been working closely with FAO to promote food security and self-reliance of returnees in Burundi, Liberia and Sudan through agricultural assistance and income-generating activities. However, despite these efforts, the gap between relief and development remains a significant obstacle to the sustainable return of displaced populations, particularly in DRC, Burundi, Sudan and Uganda.

In Liberia, UNDP, UNICEF, UNHCR and WFP have established a Joint Action Plan for Community-Based Recovery. Objectives include ensuring sustainable solutions for rebuilding microeconomies and restoring basic services; supporting leadership and capacity building of authorities at national, county and district levels; and establishing linkages with medium to long-term programmes by the World Bank, UN agencies, NGOs and bilateral donors. In 2006 the Joint Action Plan served as a catalyst for cohesive inter-agency collaboration through joint gap analysis and resource mapping at the district level, pending full development of the common country assessment and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework in Liberia.

In DRC, UNHCR, as co-leader of the early recovery cluster with UNDP, has conducted a village assessment and mapping project in some return areas. This information has been used to identify needs and establish priorities for interventions. Projects jointly developed with UNDP to support the reintegration of refugees and IDPs have received funding from the Pool Fund and are currently under implementation.

Strengthen UNHCR as an effective, fully engaged, responsive and respected humanitarian agency worthy of public, political and financial support (GSO 6)

UNHCR has begun to re-organize its presence in the southern African subregion in order to streamline operations and reduce fixed costs. In January 2007, the Regional Representation in Pretoria assumed increased supervisory responsibilities for operations in southern Africa. This was possible not only due to the progress in achieving durable solutions for refugees, but also to the strengthened capacity of governments to assume greater involvement in the protection of refugees, notably in the areas of RSD and registration. Progress achieved with the Liberian repatriation has enabled UNHCR to begin readjusting its presence in some countries of asylum. In Guinea, UNHCR has closed the field office in Kissidougou, transferring the remaining refugees to another camp. Similarly, some offices have been closed in Central Africa, the Great Lakes and in the East and Horn subregions to reflect the evolution of operational needs at the field level, with an increased focus on returnees and IDPs. This adjustment of UNHCR's presence is aimed at improving the organization's efficiency by concentrating financial and human resources where they are most needed.

*UNHCR*  
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