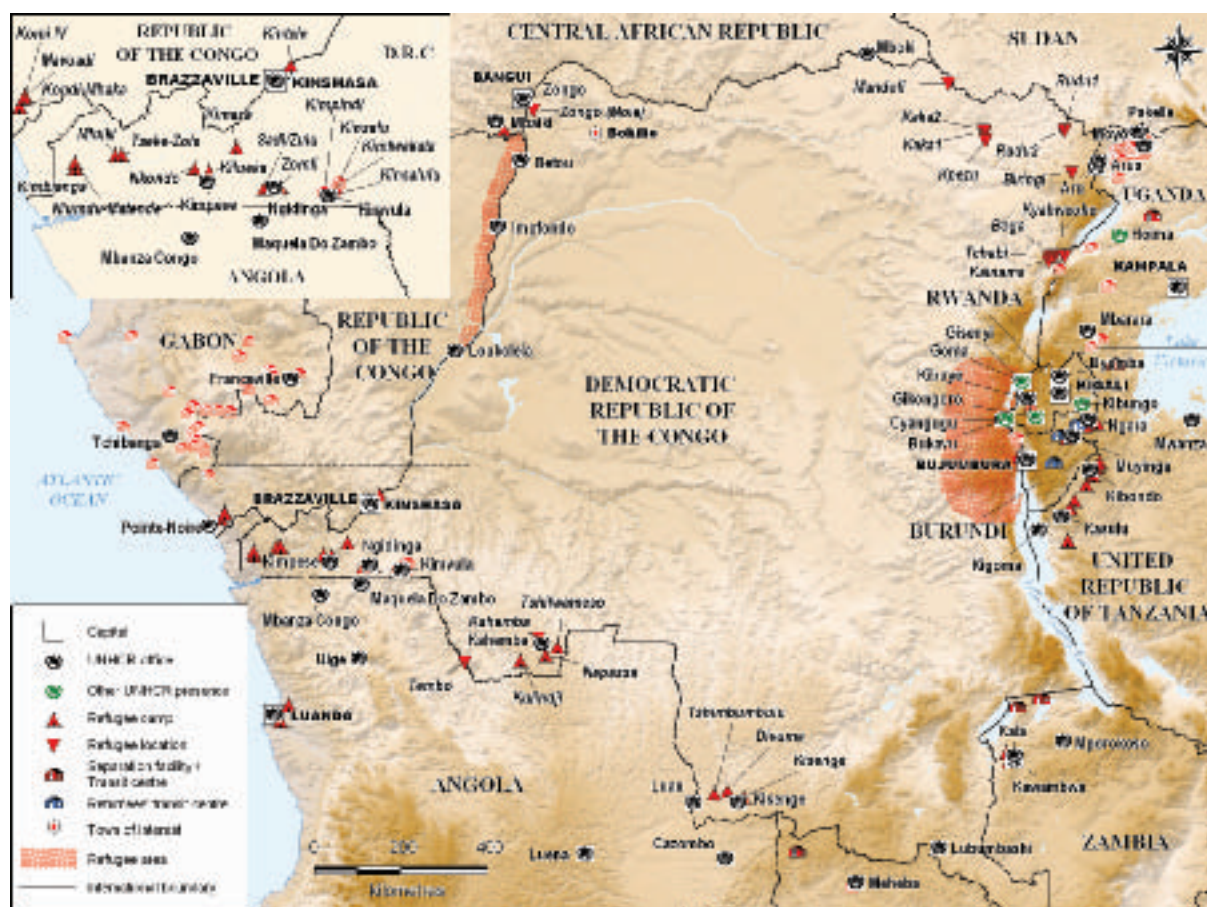


Democratic Republic of the Congo



Main objectives

Support the relevant administrative bodies in the implementation of the recently adopted refugee law, providing institutional support to the National Eligibility Commission to ensure conformity with the principles of international refugee law; prepare for and organize voluntary repatriation of Angolan, Rwandan and other refugees who wish to return to their countries of origin, while at the same time ensuring that all refugees who wish to remain in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) enjoy continued international protection; contribute to the process of Disarmament, Demobilization, Repatriation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (DDRRR) through close cooperation with MONUC and UNDP; provide international protection and basic humanitarian assistance in newly developing refugee

situations as well as to refugees who have been in protracted refugee situations for many years; decrease the dependency of the residual refugee population on assistance through self-reliance measures; in collaboration with the relevant Congolese authorities, distribute identification documents to all refugees registered during the 2002 census; elaborate a legal framework for the repatriation of DRC Congolese refugees, including the conclusion of tripartite agreements.

Impact

- Overall, 38,822 refugees repatriated to their countries of origin through organized convoys of trucks or boats; 20,782 of them were Angolans residing in Bas Congo and Katanga. The Office

also repatriated 215 Angolan refugees from Kinshasa and 28 from Lubumbashi. It also documented and monitored the return of 4,253 Angolans who repatriated without UNHCR's assistance.

- Improved access to previously inaccessible areas enabled UNHCR to repatriate some 15,000 Rwandan refugees, thus complementing the repatriation programme for ex-combatants as part of the DDRRR process.
- The successful repatriation of 2,007 CAR refugees from Equateur Province led to the closing of the refugee site.
- 800 refugees from the Republic of the Congo (RoC) repatriated from Kimaza in Bas Congo with UNHCR's assistance. UNHCR did not close the site as initially planned. However, it withdrew its

implementing partner, leaving behind structures, arrangements and resources that support basic services such as health and education as well as assistance for the most vulnerable people. UNHCR regularly monitors the site and provides continued voluntary repatriation on a needs basis.

- Apart from a group of 540 Angolan refugees escaping renewed fighting in the Angolan enclave of Cabinda, no new refugee situations evolved during the reporting period. UNHCR pursued basic humanitarian assistance for 157,337 refugees in rural areas of DRC, some of whom have lived there for decades. UNHCR also assisted various groups of urban refugees. All protracted refugee groups with access to land were involved in agricultural subsistence activities, and in spite

Persons of concern

Main origin/Type of population	Total in country	Of whom UNHCR assisted	Per cent female	Per cent under 18
Angola (refugees)	123,700	42,700	52	51
Sudan (refugees)	45,100	10,900	50	49
Rwanda (refugees)	19,700	400	47	42
Burundi (refugees)	19,600	500	44	46
Uganda (refugees)	19,000	0	55	56
RoC (refugees)	6,600	1,200	40	50
Returnees (from RoC)	2,500	2,500	-	-
Liberia (asylum-seekers)	200	0	-	-
Rwanda (asylum-seekers)	100	0	-	-

Income and expenditure (USD) Annual programme and supplementary programme budgets

	Revised budget	Income from contributions ¹	Other funds available ²	Total funds available	Total expenditure
AB	23,015,477	12,875,544	8,344,134	21,219,678	21,219,678
SB	4,792,939	346,086	3,858,382	4,204,468	4,204,468
Total	27,808,416	13,221,630	12,202,516	25,424,146	25,424,146

¹ Includes income from contributions earmarked at the country level.

² Includes allocations by UNHCR from unearmarked or broadly earmarked contributions, opening balance and adjustments. The above figures do not include costs at headquarters

Note: The Supplementary programme budgets do not include a 7 per cent charge (support costs) that is recovered from contributions to meet indirect costs for UNHCR.

of the adverse socio-economic conditions, over 60 to 80 per cent of these refugees were at least nutritionally self-reliant by the end of the year. UNHCR was able to consolidate its programmes throughout the year.

- The Office registered 71,349 refugees in nine different field locations in 2003. As the Ministry of the Interior (MoI) did not endorse the issuance of Congolese identity documents, UNHCR provided temporary refugee cards to all registered refugees.
- In November, UNHCR held an internal high-level meeting to agree on a strategic framework for the repatriation of Congolese refugees.

Working environment

The context

Eighteen months of arduous negotiations yielded a peace settlement for DRC, backed by the United Nations and the international community. In July 2003, a Transitional Government of National Unity was formed from previously warring factions and representatives of civil society. A National Follow-Up Committee and the International Committee to Accompany the Transition (ICAT) are expected to remain in place throughout the transition period, underlining the role of the international community. Persistent instability in a substantial part of the east of the country remains a challenge.

In May 2003, following the outbreak of violence and the gruesome events in Bunia, a multinational force was deployed to Ituri region (Artemis operation). In July, MONUC's mandate was strengthened under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, authorizing it to take all necessary action to protect civilians and humanitarian personnel under imminent threat of physical violence.

Despite the inauguration of the Transitional Government, the reunification of the country is far from complete. Central and local authorities are still in the process of finding their roles, especially with regard to the social and physical protection of civilians. Their capacity is weak in all areas, and extensive support is needed. With 36 ministries involved in a post-conflict situation, confusion over responsibilities is hard to avoid.

UNHCR and other humanitarian agencies work in an environment of economic devastation and fractured social infrastructure. More than three million people have been displaced by the protracted war, and most Congolese citizens are exhausted by years of aggression, injustice and misery. The extremely precarious living conditions of war-affected populations gradually came to light as humanitarian agencies gained access to previously rebel-held areas.

Constraints

In DRC, the legacy of war undermined efforts to assist refugee communities to become fully self-sufficient. Even minimum standards of UNHCR assistance generally surpassed the local standard of living. The shift of donor attention towards the humanitarian drama in Ituri was to the detriment of other refugee-affected areas in DRC, namely Bandundu, Bas Congo and Equateur. Several previously anticipated interventions by humanitarian and development actors – expected to complement UNHCR's activities – did not materialize. Development actors such as the World Bank had set aside substantial funds for post-conflict reconstruction in DRC, but in 2003 these funds had scant effect on the ground. UNHCR had therefore to spend substantial funds on, for example, road rehabilitation and maintenance, purely to maintain access to refugee populations and to enable voluntary repatriation.

The lack of employment opportunities and the rudimentary or non-existent state of the formal economy are serious obstacles to UNHCR's efforts to make refugees self-sufficient and pursue efficient exit strategies. In 2003, UNHCR functioned as an important economic factor, contributing substantially to the livelihood of the refugee-affected region. UNHCR's efforts to decrease dependency on assistance in a meaningful way by involving refugees in self-management are hampered however, by the weakness of local administration and social infrastructures.

With respect to the fight against SGBV, entrenched attitudes, cultural taboos, and in some cases lack of access to refugee communities in war-ravaged regions, have hampered UNHCR's efforts in this field.

The lack of absorptive capacity in Angola created frustration among the refugee population eager to return home. An even more immediate preoccupation was the presence of landmines along repatriation return routes to Angola. The consequence of both these factors was that a number of return areas in Angola remained off limits.

In the eastern province, the inter-ethnic conflict between the Hema and Lendu in Bunia created a climate of insecurity in the Ituri region, impeding UNHCR's access to Ugandan refugees settled south of Ituri (Boga).

The Angolan repatriation process advanced satisfactorily at the political level, but the late introduction of a new registration system (called RAPID) caused significant challenges. The sudden introduction of this new system in June without adequate resources and staff training led to errors in refugee documentation and frustration on all sides. In Kinshasa, UNHCR's responsibilities increased exponentially, with the implementation of repatriation and care and maintenance programmes required alongside preparations for a major return programme for DRC Congolese refugees living in neighbouring countries. In DRC, UNHCR's difficulties were compounded by the scale and complexity of new programmes.

Funding

Funding constraints resulted in inadequate staffing capacity, with consequences for the repatriation operation and ongoing care and maintenance programmes. UNHCR received 92 per cent of the required funding for international protection and humanitarian assistance to refugees in DRC, as also presented in the *UN Inter-Agency Consolidated Appeal for the Democratic Republic of the Congo 2003*.

Requirements related to the voluntary repatriation of Angolan refugees from DRC were included in a regional supplementary appeal budget.

Achievements and impact

Protection and solutions

UNHCR provided international protection to some 60,000 refugees in the DRC, almost half of whom received basic humanitarian assistance (except the Ugandan refugee population, due to persisting insecurity and lack of access to the region). The Office continued to support central as well as local authorities in providing protection and maintaining physical security in the refugee sites.

Together with local authorities, UNHCR registered 71,349 refugees in nine locations throughout the country. Apart from up-to-date documentation, and refugee identification documents temporarily provided by UNHCR, these registration exercises afforded a better insight into the degree of local integration and enabled UNHCR to reduce the number of beneficiaries by some 25 per cent.

Voluntary repatriation and the consolidation of assistance characterised UNHCR's programmes in 2003. The Office repatriated 38,822 refugees to their home countries in safety and without incident. They were mainly from Angola (21,015), Rwanda (15,000), CAR (2,007) and RoC (800). The Office also monitored and documented the spontaneous return of 4,253 Angolan refugees.

With respect to basic humanitarian assistance for protracted groups of Angolan, Sudanese and RoC refugees, 2003 was a year of consolidation. Refugee committees, and especially women, were encouraged to play a more active role in the design and implementation of projects to maximize their impact on the well-being of vulnerable groups. By the end of the year, 60 per cent of Angolan refugees and more than 80 per cent of Sudanese refugees had reached food self-sufficiency. The number of beneficiaries of food assistance was reduced by almost 30 per cent (on the basis of information collected in household surveys). The pursuit of the Bamako Initiative – sustainability of primary health services for refugees and their host communities – led to the introduction of flat fees for health consultations in virtually all refugee sites with ante- and post-natal care, vaccines, health care to the most vulnerable, as well as surgery and medicines continuously provided free of charge. Increasingly, micro-credits intended to enhance income generation were

administered through local expert partners. UNHCR linked professional training and education programmes to the quest for self-reliance. However, repatriation perspectives to some extent undermined these efforts, as the refugees saw little reason to invest in food production or income generation when they were about to depart.

UNHCR's assistance activities in DRC generated dilemmas as well as solutions. For the local population, insecurity, poverty and malnutrition, crippling maternal health and high child mortality rates are commonplace, as well as low school enrolment in rural areas. By contrast, UNHCR-assisted refugees enjoy primary health care, access to primary and secondary education for girls and boys alike and various amenities. The refugee registration exercises undertaken throughout the year allowed the Office to better appreciate the degree to which host communities benefit from social infrastructure, such as health centres and schools initially put in place for refugees. For example, in Sudanese refugee sites, up to 70 per cent of school children are from host communities (in Angolan refugee sites, up to 30 per cent). UNHCR helped a group of Angolan refugees from the Cabinda enclave with the construction of a shelter, and six-month food rations. Punctual support to the local community (such as wells, benches for existing schools, supplies for the health centre, and seeds) served to facilitate the local integration of the refugees. UNHCR's policy on local integration of urban refugees was consolidated so that destitute Angolans in Kinshasa could be offered assistance in refugee sites in Bas Congo.

The level of participation of women in the distribution of food and non-food items generally exceeded 50 per cent and increased by 10 per cent in management committees. Five of the workshops on SGBV targeted Sudanese refugees, as gender-based violence is one of their main concerns. UNHCR distributed sanitary napkins to Angolan refugee women in Bas Congo and Rwandan refugee women in the transit centres.

The Office secured the introduction of international refugee law as part of the curriculum offered at faculties of law in the universities in Kinshasa. In addition, two major seminars on refugee protection and sexual and gender-based violence were held with governmental counterparts and operational partners, and local SGBV follow-up committees were established.

Activities and assistance

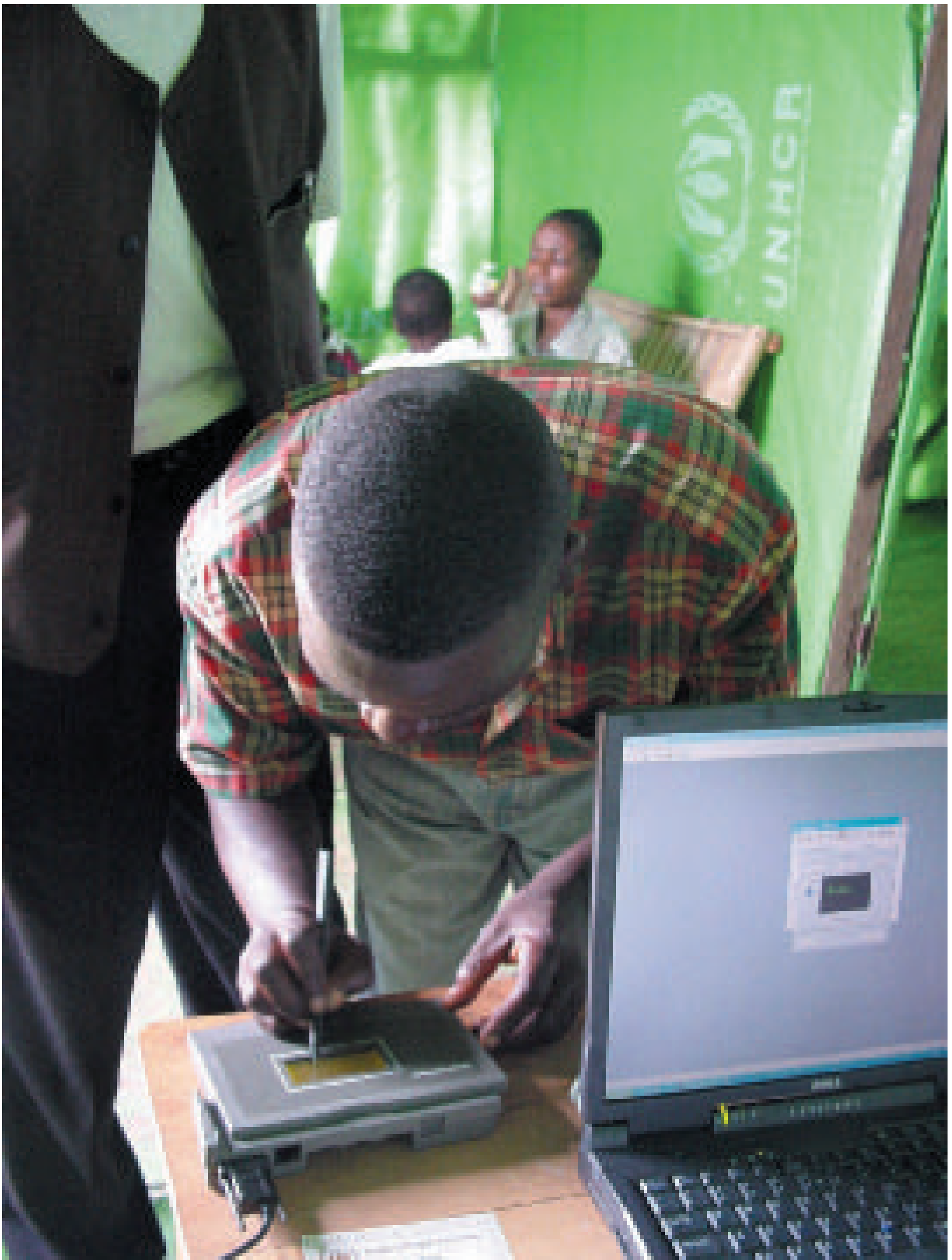
Community services: Adult literacy programmes continued and language training activities were offered to those preparing for voluntary repatriation. Furthermore, 15 training sessions on the promotion of peace culture were held in Bas Congo; 27 per cent of the participants were women.

Crop production: Various kinds of seeds for the three planting seasons were distributed to Angolan, Sudanese and RoC Congolese refugees.

Domestic needs/ Household support: In Kimpese, UNHCR distributed firewood (54 cubic feet per household per month). In other Bas Congo and Bandundu sites, only vulnerable groups received firewood. Standard soap rations of 200 grammes per person per month were distributed to Angolan refugees. Soap was handed out to Rwandan refugees in transit centres in Kivu. Non-food items were only distributed to vulnerable refugees and new arrivals, while plastic sheets were used for selected public structures, such as transit or community centres. Second-hand clothes were handed out to vulnerable groups and Rwandan refugees departing for their home country.

Education: 13,752 children in Angolan sites, 2,891 children in Sudanese settlements, and 358 RoC Congolese children went to primary or secondary school in 2003. UNHCR pursued the maintenance of existing schools in Tsekezele and Mfuiki in Bas Congo and a new school with six classrooms was built in Aru (Rudu II site). UNHCR equipped newly constructed or rehabilitated schools with benches. The Office also distributed school materials to Angolan and Sudanese refugee children and paid boarding school fees when appropriate. Refugee children in Kahemba and Ngidinga received school uniforms. In Rudu I and II (near Aba), the distribution of second-hand clothes helped to enhance the participation of Sudanese refugee girls in secondary education. In integration sites, such as Ngidinga and Kimvula for Angolan refugees or Rudu I and II, Sudanese refugees learn side by side with local children. More than 40 per cent of school children in the Sudanese sites are Congolese.

Food: WFP supplied food for regular distribution to Angolans in refugee sites. From October 2003 onwards, distribution was based on the results of a joint WFP/UNHCR needs assessment exercise



A refugee from the Republic of the Congo giving a specimen signature during registration at Kimaza site in order to obtain a valuable refugee ID card. *UNHCR/F.S. Kaba*

undertaken earlier that year, encompassing more recent arrivals and particularly vulnerable individuals. In spite of recurring logistics problems hampering food deliveries, only a few cases of malnourished refugees were observed. The increased security of food supplies for the majority of households in most sites allowed refugee communities to accommodate shortages by means of transfers between the different communities. Feeding centres were closed before the end of the year as they had served their purpose. In urban Lubumbashi refugees received food allowances from Caritas to meet their basic needs. Food was also delivered to transit centres for Rwandans in the Kivus, where local Congolese women prepared warm meals in communal kitchens for the repatriating Rwandans.

Forestry: UNHCR supported reforestation (tree-planting activities and distribution of seedlings to both refugees and the local population) around the refugee sites. 56,338 acres were reforested in Bandundu, 18,532 acres reforested in Bas Congo and 40,030 acres reforested in Kisenge. Good environmental practices, such as the use of fuel-efficient stoves, were promoted in all refugee sites.

Health/Nutrition: UNHCR provided medical supplies, medicines and maintenance to health centres and maintained sufficient health personnel in all refugee sites. UNHCR's partner built medical centres in Kingoma and Doruma. As part of its exit strategy, UNHCR supported the formation of health committees to manage the Bamako Initiative in all refugee sites except transit centres in the Kivus. UNHCR pursued a basic HIV/AIDS programme involving voluntary blood testing, systematic testing of blood transfusions, the free distribution of condoms and some small-scale awareness campaigns.

Income generation: Income-generating activities continued in Angolan, Congolese, and Sudanese refugee sites and urban settings, often in the form of de facto grants that were attributed as credits or in-kind allocations. In autumn 2003, UNHCR began to offer micro-credit schemes to local small business associations. The results were encouraging: more than 80 per cent of the loans were repaid. However, such successes may lead to some amount of frustration, as socio-economic conditions do not generally favour income-generating activities.

Legal assistance: In Bukavu and Goma, UNHCR continued to support Regional Committees of Repatriation. These are governmental structures whose role is to support UNHCR in repatriation operations.

Operational support (to agencies): Substantial support was provided to 11 implementing partners. This included funds for their administration as well as transport and communication equipment. Audits were conducted and a seminar on local purchasing was organized in December.

Sanitation: Refugees ensured the maintenance of latrines, with UNHCR's support in providing cleaning materials. Latrine blocks were constructed for Tsekezele and Mfuiki medical centres; incinerators for medical waste were also provided.

Shelter/Other infrastructure: Aiming to support the repatriation of Angolan refugees, UNHCR's partners constructed three transit centres in Kisenge (Kisenge, Divuma, Tshimbumbulu) and two in Kimpese (Kilweka, Nkondo). UNHCR continued to maintain community infrastructures while refugees themselves maintained individual shelters. Only vulnerable refugees benefited from the maintenance or provision of shelter by implementing partners. In Bas Congo, 20 construction kits were distributed to 135 families recently settled in Tsekezele to enable them build their own shelters.

Transport/Logistics: In 2003, UNHCR rehabilitated a total of 295 km of access roads in Province Orientale, Bas Congo, Bandundu and Katanga and repaired 13 bridges to enable access to refugees as well as their repatriation. The Office transported repatriating refugees and ensured the final distribution to the refugee sites of food and non-food items for transport, such as fuel. UNHCR also maintained eight warehouses throughout the country and ensured that running costs were covered. In addition, more than 25 trucks and dozens of all-terrain light vehicles were maintained, such that the costs relating to the Angolan repatriation were split between the budgets for DRC and Angolan operations.

Water: UNHCR's partners increased the quantity of potable water available in refugee integration sites and Rwandan repatriation transit centres to more than 20 litres per person per day. Implementing partners set up 14 additional water points in Aru, in the villages of Doruma and Aba, as well as in

Tsekezele, Bas Congo. Seven water points were renovated in Ngidinga and five in Kimvula. Refugees participated in the renovation of 36 water points and wells in Kisenge. In Bandundu, the provision of an electric water pump improved the water yield of Kulindji. Seven additional water points and a well were renovated in Kahemba. As part of its exit strategy, UNHCR encouraged the formation and training of water committees representing refugees and the local population.

Organization and implementation

Management

UNHCR's operations in DRC were coordinated by the branch office in Kinshasa, four sub-offices (Aru, Kimpese, Kisenge, and Bukavu) and six field offices (Kahemba, Ngidinga, Kimvula, Lubumbashi, Zongo and Goma). The Office employed 35 international staff (including 10 UNVs) and 130 national staff.

In 2003, there were several missions to DRC, including the High Commissioner's visit to commemorate the launching of the Angolan voluntary repatriation operation. An OIOS audit focused on programme and supply management; there was a staffing review mission; an environmental mission, which resulted in the deployment in 2004 of an environmental officer; an HIV/AIDS mission, in preparation for the Great Lakes Initiative against AIDS and the Multi-Country AIDS Programme; and one inspection mission.

Working with others

In 2003, UNHCR worked with five international and six national implementing partners, one of which was the Governorate of North Kivu.

Within the framework of the repatriation of Angolan refugees, UNHCR's office in Kinshasa worked closely with the branch office in Luanda and the regional coordinator's office. Tripartite commission meetings were pursued. Several cross-border meetings and coordination meetings were held to plan the repatriation operation. Go-and-tell visits were facilitated for Angolan parliamentarians and provincial authorities.

UNHCR's office in DRC maintained close cooperation with other United Nations agencies, including WFP, MONUC, OCHA, UNICEF, FAO and UNOPS. It contributed to the UNDAF and CAP processes as well as to the Resident Coordinator's Report. Close collaboration continued throughout the year with WFP with regard to the delivery and distribution of food. UNOPS contributed to the assistance project for Angolan refugees by repairing the Kimpese-Nkondo road (34 km) and Ngidinga-Sadi-Zulu road (18 km). UNOPS also renovated one primary school in Ngidinga. WHO and UNICEF joined UNHCR's efforts to assist refugees by providing vaccination programmes in the refugee sites. Cooperation with ICRC focused on tracing of unaccompanied minors amongst refugees. One donor provided financial and technical support to assist Angolan refugees in Nkondo in the sectors of health (HIV/AIDS), agriculture and education. The Government of the DRC facilitated humanitarian operations by ensuring free and unhindered passage for all humanitarian personnel.

Overall assessment

Overall, UNHCR attained its objectives in a difficult and complex environment, which nevertheless remained relatively stable in 2003. The most tangible and easily measurable impact was achieved through its voluntary repatriation operations. Not only did the Office pursue the search for durable solutions through voluntary repatriation, but, in providing international protection and basic humanitarian assistance, UNHCR played an important economic role, contributing substantially to the livelihood of the refugee-affected regions. This situation is not sustainable in the long-term, but, in the absence of alternatives to UNHCR operations in 2003, exit strategies could not be pursued. The prevailing socio-economic conditions in the DRC undermine efforts to integrate refugees locally.

Offices

Kinshasa

Aru

Bukavu

Goma

Kahemba

Kimpese

Kimvula

Kisenge

Lubumbashi

Ngidinga

Zongo

Partners

Government agencies

Gouvernorat du Nord Kivu

NGOs

Actions et interventions pour le développement et l'encadrement social (AIDES)

Association pour le développement social et la sauvegarde de l'environnement (ADSSE)

Atlas logistique

Caritas Katanga

Catholic Relief Services (CRS)

Danish Church Aid (DCA)

International Rescue Committee (IRC)

Mine Action Trust (MAT)

OXFAM-Quebec

Regroupement des institutions du système de financement décentralisé du Congo (RIFIDEC)

Vision mondiale Canada

Others

FAO

MONUC

OCHA

UNICEF

UNOPS

WFP

Financial Report (USD)

Expenditure breakdown	Current year's projects			Prior years' projects	
	Annual programme budget	Supplementary programme budget	Total	notes	Annual and Supplementary programme budgets
Protection, Monitoring and Coordination	5,553,320	667,008	6,220,329		169,214
Community Services	536,593	0	536,593		375,881
Crop Production	409,068	0	409,068		154,453
Domestic Needs/Household Support	375,504	21,320	396,824		195,047
Education	975,154	0	975,154		638,053
Fisheries	769	0	769		1,149
Food	8,122	42,871	50,993		14,187
Forestry	86,548	0	86,548		54,720
Health/Nutrition	980,848	13,785	994,633		688,027
Income Generation	109,835	0	109,835		35,531
Legal Assistance	209,825	318,824	528,649		43,018
Livestock	0	0	0		1,511
Operational Support (to Agencies)	1,315,176	355,870	1,671,046		999,534
Sanitation	57,744	2,148	59,892		67,254
Shelter/Other Infrastructure	172,281	60,004	232,285		138,337
Transport/Logistics	2,190,000	1,988,811	4,178,811		1,283,914
Water (non-agricultural)	153,382	4,035	157,417		118,095
Instalments with Implementing Partners	2,807,263	510,826	3,318,089		(3,910,270)
Sub - total Operational	15,941,432	3,985,502	19,926,933		1,067,655
Programme Support	4,791,110	17,675	4,808,786		121,080
Sub - total Disbursements / Deliveries	20,732,542	4,003,177	24,735,719	⁽³⁾	1,188,735 ⁽⁵⁾
Unliquidated Obligations	487,136	201,291	688,427	⁽³⁾	0 ⁽⁵⁾
Total	21,219,678	4,204,468	25,424,146	⁽¹⁾ ⁽³⁾	1,188,735
Instalments with Implementing Partners					
Payments Made	9,378,641	1,328,460	10,707,101		1,909,586
Reporting Received	6,571,378	817,634	7,389,012		5,819,855
Balance	2,807,263	510,826	3,318,089		(3,910,270)
Outstanding 1st January	0	0	0		4,030,102
Refunded to UNHCR	0	0	0		106,871
Currency Adjustment	0	0	0		(12,962)
Outstanding 31 December	2,807,263	510,826	3,318,089		0
Unliquidated Obligations					
Outstanding 1st January	0	0	0		1,560,881 ⁽⁵⁾
New Obligations	21,219,678	4,204,468	25,424,146	⁽¹⁾	0
Disbursements	20,732,542	4,003,177	24,735,719	⁽³⁾	1,188,735 ⁽⁵⁾
Cancellations	0	0	0		372,146 ⁽⁵⁾
Outstanding 31 December	487,136	201,291	688,427	⁽³⁾	0 ⁽⁵⁾

Figures which can be cross-referenced to the Accounts:

- (1) Annex to Statement 1
- (3) Schedule 3
- (5) Schedule 5