

COUNTRY OPERATIONS PLAN

NIGERIA

PLANNING YEAR **2002**

Part I: Executive Committee Summary

a) Context and Beneficiary Population(s)

- **Political context**

The UNHCR Branch Office (BO) in Nigeria works with the relevant authorities of the Nigerian Government at the Federal, State and Local Government levels, to ensure the protection and assistance of people of concern to the Office. Nigeria is a signatory to the 1951 UN Convention as well as the 1967 Protocol and to the 1969 OAU Convention. The Government has generous asylum policies and established eligibility-determination procedures. The BO provides technical advice in these processes.

The National Commission for Refugees (NCFR) is the government body responsible for refugee matters. It is fully funded by the Federal Government, and it employs lawyers and social workers deal with refugee matters on a day-to-day basis. The BO provides in-service training for NCFR personnel from time to time as necessary.

Nigeria has played a central role in the management and resolution of conflict in the ECOWAS region over the last two decades, notably through its financial and human resources contribution to ECOMOG, the peacekeeping arm of ECOWAS.

- **Security situation**

In spite of its population, size and complexity, Nigeria has not been a refugee-producing country. Periodically, ethnic and religious conflicts have caused internal population displacement but these have been contained.

A depressed economy resulting from years of military dictatorship and mismanagement has caused widespread unemployment and criminality but the refugee population has not been exposed to any special disadvantages because of their status.

- **Protection issues**

The country attracts asylum-seekers from the conflict areas of the region and beyond, because of its asylum policies. The majority of asylum-seekers and refugees are from Sierra Leone and Liberia, and the conflict in Guinea that started in the last quarter of 2000 has caused several of the refugees from these two countries to relocate themselves in Nigeria. Regional and international efforts to resolve the Sierra Leone/Guinea/Liberia conflict are ongoing.

Due to its own internal social, economic and political contradictions, Nigeria does not offer many options for durable solutions to refugees.

- **UNHCR's role**

The role of UNHCR is to coordinate assistance to refugees, and to ensure their protection. Through close collaboration with the NCFR and other government agencies at various levels, eligibility-determination process is kept on course, and assistance is ensured or those in worst need. It is going to be necessary to strengthen the capacity of the NCFR in

the eligibility determination function, so that the day to day involvement of the BO can be reduced to mainly supervision of standards.

Periodic in-service training for government and other service providers keeps personnel of these agencies up-dated on refugee law and doctrine, as well as on counseling and resource management.

The Office promotes collaboration with other Agencies of the UN family as one of the ways of enhancing the local integration in the community-hosting refugees. As the community receives benefits because it hosts refugees, the latter are more acceptable.

An individual voluntary repatriation assistance will be provided to Liberians.

- **Overview of each beneficiary population and/or theme being addressed**

BO Lagos planning figure for year 2002 is as follows:

| | Repatriation | Resettlement | Local Settlement | TOTAL |
|---------------------|--|---------------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| Sierra Leone | To be assisted under a regional repatriation project if any. | 50 | 1950 | 2500 |
| Liberia | To be assisted under a regional repatriation project if any. | 100 | 500 | 1600 |
| Chad | 0 | 0 | 200 | 200 |
| Others | | 200 | 250 | 450 |
| | | | | |
| TOTAL | | 350 | 2900 | 4750 |

- **Policy issues**

The Federal Government has provided funds for the construction of a UN House in the federal capital Abuja, to accommodate the main offices of all the UN Agencies in Nigeria. The building is expected to be functional by the end of 2002. The relocation of the Branch Office will also take place by the end of 2002. Due to the location of most refugees in Lagos and Ogun States in the southwest of the country, it has been proposed that the Representative and two support-staff be the only ones to relocate to Abuja. They will be in close touch with government ministries and the ECOWAS secretariat to which BO should be accredited. Protection and programme staff would remain in the Liaison Office in Lagos to provide assistance to refugees from close quarters.

With the assistance of the Resettlement section at UNHCR Headquarters, the profile of the refugee population will be drawn up to facilitate case-management in view of limited durable solutions and local integration options.

Decisions are yet to be taken with regard to the possible relocation of Sierra Leonean refugees from Guinea to Nigeria. Once these are taken, the Nigerian Government will be approached with a request that they provide more land for refugee settlement.

• **Linkages to other countries within a defined “situation”**

The Sierra Leone/Guinea/Liberia conflict is the main source of refugees in the region. Close contact is kept with countries of origin in the eligibility-determination process and the other countries of asylum are kept informed of general trends.

• **Capacity and presence of implementing partners**

The National Commission for Refugees (NCFR) would be the most ideal Implementing Partner (IP) but it is headquartered in Abuja, very far from where the majority of the refugees live. It has a limited presence in Lagos which facilitates collaboration in the initial stages of eligibility-determination, and it does the day-today administration of the refugee camp at Oru where there are services for social and protection counseling.

The Nigerian Red Cross Society is in charge of food distribution in the camp, and administers two health clinics – one in the camp and one for urban refugees.

The Ijebu-north Local Government that provides land for the Oru camp co-runs with UNHCR the primary school in the camp. Ijebu North Local Government also runs water and sanitation services.

• **Presence and roles of other UN agencies and international bodies**

The results of the "Action 2" point to a need to prepare ground for the handling of refugee matters by governments and local NGOs, with minimum HCR support. In the case of Nigeria, the NCFR (National Commission for Refugees) is the Government arm responsible. There will have to be reconsideration of their presence in Lagos closer to the operations and strengthening their presence to act more independently as the BO will have to move to Abuja with other UN agencies by year-end. Eligibility determination, day to day counselling and assistance to individual cases as well as oversight on the activities of other service-providers will have to devolve to NCFR.

The Nigerian Red Cross Society will remain in charge of food and health sectors in the Camp and in Lagos for one clinic.

The Ijebu North Local Government that provided the land for Oru camp runs the primary school in the camp with UNHCR assistance and is also responsible for water and sanitation in the camp.

b) Selected Program Goals and Objectives

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| Name of Beneficiary Population: Liberians and Sierra Leoneans Refugees | |
| Main Goal: Voluntary Repatriation of the Liberians and Sierra Leoneans | |
| Principal Objectives | Related Outputs |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To seek opportunities for possible return by keeping countries of origin under review. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information-sharing mechanism with counterparts in countries of origin maintained. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refugees continuously informed. • Registers of those volunteering for repatriation established/maintained. |
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| Name of Theme: Refugees at Risk - All nationalities | |
| Main Goal: Resettlement | |
| Principal Objectives | Related Outputs |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To utilize the resettlement as a protection tool. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The suitable caseload for an eventual resettlement in view of lack of durable solutions in Nigeria evaluated. • Resettlement countries actively encouraged in considering those found suitable. |

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|--|---|
| Name of Theme: Refugees - All nationalities | |
| Main Goal: Local Settlement | |
| Principal Objectives | Related Outputs |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage the active refugees in productive activity to supplement assistance provided taking into account special needs of women and children. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small-scale agriculture/fisheries through loans/grants to individuals and groups promoted. • Bursaries and scholarships for children in fields of study that could lead to self-support introduced. • Engagement in self-employment through loans/grants promoted. • Care and maintenance of identified vulnerable individuals, especially for women-headed families provided. |

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| Name of Theme: Education – DAFI | |
| Main Goal(s): Post Secondary/University Education | |
| Principal Objectives | Related Outputs |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The needy and deserving refugees acquire good education/skills to locally integrate and compete on the job-market. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensitization campaign carried out. • Refugees attended school. • Allowances paid. • Fees paid. |
| Main Goal: Build/Increase capacity of NCFR and NGOs | |
| Principal Objectives | Related Outputs |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To prepare ground for handling of day-to-day matter to NCFR and NGOs as BO plans to move to Abuja by year-end. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening of NCFR presence in Lagos/ location of operation • Volume of refugee day to day matter being handled by NCFR. |