Executive summary

The internal conflict in Burundi in 1972 drove a mass of people out of the country and the great majority fled into Tanzania. This conflict produced one of Africa's most prolonged refugee situations, in which 220,000 Burundians continue living in three designated settlements in western Tanzania, known as the “Old Settlements.” Ulyankulu settlement is in Tabora region, Katumba and Mishamo settlements are in Rukwa region. These people are distinct from refugees who came in later influxes and are hosted in five camps in northwest Tanzania.

In 2007, the Government of Tanzania indicated its intention to close the Old Settlements and the main parties involved expressed their desire to find a lasting solution to this refugee situation. The Governments of Tanzania and Burundi, and UNHCR established an Old Settlements Task Force assigned to develop a strategy for solving this protracted refugee situation.

This resulting programme is based on a 2007 census, individual registration, and a study of the Old Settlements. It has three principal components:

1. Voluntary repatriation to Burundi, the country of origin, for those who wish to return (up to 46,000 people, or 20% of the total).
2. Naturalization of those refugees who have expressed a desire to remain in Tanzania, subject to due naturalization processes (172,000 people, or 80% of the total).
3. Full social and economic integration of those naturalized in Tanzania.
In late February 2008, the voluntary repatriation of about 46,000 refugees will begin from the Old Settlements. UNHCR, in collaboration with the Ministry of Home Affairs and other partners will organize the repatriation by road and rail, using existing facilities and setting up additional structures, as needed. The Government of Burundi, together with UNHCR and partners, will facilitate reintegration at the reception end.

The process of naturalization will also begin in February 2008, for about 172,000 people, of whom 76,000 are over 18 years old. This will be conducted by Tanzanian central, regional and district Government authorities, and the Ministry of Home Affairs, assisted by UNHCR. The process will be facilitated through an agreed reduction of fees, and the streamlining and acceleration of clearance and security procedures.

Programme at a glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Comprehensive Solutions for Burundian refugees in Tanzania’s Old Settlements</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beneficiaries</td>
<td>220,000 Burundian refugees in Tanzania</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total requirements</td>
<td>USD 34,292,586</td>
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Working environment

The context

The Government of Tanzania established three settlements - Ulyankulu settlement in Tabora region and Katumba and Mishamo settlements in Rukwa region - for Burundian refugees who fled their country of origin in 1972. Each household was allocated a few acres of land for cultivation. UNHCR and its partners assisted with the installation of housing and communal infrastructure and initially met all basic needs. Quite rapidly, the Settlements achieved agricultural and economic self-sufficiency and by 1979, UNHCR began to phase out its operations. The refugees stopped receiving any form of international assistance in 1985.

The Government of Tanzania now administers the Old Settlements as Designated Areas under the Refugees Act of 1998, through the Ministry of Home Affairs. Districts provide services including health and education. The children follow the Tanzanian national curriculum in Kiswahili and English. The Old Settlements produce a significant agricultural surplus that contributes to the regional economy.
In June 2007, the Tripartite Commission of the Governments of Burundi and Tanzania, and UNHCR established an Old Settlements Task Force to find durable solutions of these people’s displacement and status. Subsequently, UNHCR organized a census and an individual registration, through which the intention of refugees was recorded. A detailed study was made of their social, demographic and economic situation.

The 220,000 Burundian refugees in the Old Settlements are in a different situation than those who arrived later. Refugees who left in the wake of 1972 events have lost all claims to their land and assets in Burundi. Many of them have been in Tanzania for 35 years or were born in the country (82 per cent); they have developed cultural, economic, and kinship ties throughout Tanzania. The refugees have attained self-sufficiency, and broadened their skills through formal and informal training.

The Needs

The degree of their assimilation in Tanzania notwithstanding, 20% (46,000 individuals) of the Old Settlements’ refugees indicated their wish to repatriate to their country of origin. While a few have returned to Burundi by themselves over the years (UNHCR’s current organized repatriation programme covers only refugees from camps in northwestern Tanzania), the majority of families do not have the means to repatriate on their own. Significant assistance is required to support the return of these 46,000 refugees, both in leaving Tanzania and in reintegrating into Burundi.

The Government of Tanzania has said that it will naturalize, according to its Citizenship Law, those 1972 Burundians who expressed their desire to remain in Tanzania but that it would need special donor support to facilitate the process. The Government has agreed to reduce fees and simplify the process for those 172,000 who registered an intention to seek naturalization, but it will require considerable assistance to cope with the volume of applicants. Most refugees cannot afford even the reduced fees. Good public information will also be required to ensure refugees are fully aware of the conditions of naturalization and on the processes involved.

The Government is keen to relocate refugees from the settlements, who have over time encroached into forest reserves, and to rehabilitate these areas. Assistance will be needed for the repair of damaged ecosystems. Many of the refugees who intend to seek naturalization already have networks of trade and family contacts and plan to move elsewhere in Tanzania. For them, once naturalized, integration will be a relatively simple matter. Others are prepared to move where the Government suggests. They will need support, as will the communities that receive them, to ensure that local infrastructure and services are adequate, and that the receiving communities feel they are benefiting.

Some refugees will likely remain in the Old Settlements areas. Support is also needed to ensure the transfer of infrastructure in good condition and to assist those remaining and the surrounding communities that they will finally be integrating into.

UNHCR will provide the initial community-based and infrastructure support to the refugees and surrounding communities, and it will continue to engage key donors and UN “Delivering as One” partners to ensure a smooth transition and continuation of the programme as it takes on more fundamental developmental challenges linked to final integration.
Main objectives

- Help refugees make informed decisions on repatriation.
- Organize the voluntary repatriation of up to 46,000 Burundian refugees from the Old Settlements in safety and dignity starting in late February 2008.
- Help returnees reintegrate socially and economically in Burundi within six months of return.
- Help the Government of Tanzania complete the naturalization of some 172,000 Burundian refugees by the end of December 2008.
- Help naturalized refugees achieve basic socio-economic integration.
- Mobilize development resources for naturalized refugees and their host communities.
- Rehabilitate infrastructure and natural environments in those parts of the Settlements being returned to district use.

Strategies and activities

Repatriation

UNHCR will establish a Field Office at Mpanda settlement, with Field Units at Mishamo and Ulyankulu settlements. These will manage registration and repatriation activities. Refugees will be provided with information on the situation in Burundi and the repatriation process; go and see visits of refugees to Burundi and come and tell visits from refugees who have returned to Burundi will be organized. Refugees will be registered for repatriation and documentation and certificates will be issued to refugees prior to departure.

Prior to repatriation, UNHCR will undertake a formal assessment of unaccompanied minors and separated children’s best interests. Foster families will also be sensitized to prevent any abandonment of such children upon return. Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) concerns will be given special care prior and during repatriation.

UNHCR will construct departure centres and equip them with sufficient water and sanitation facilities. Refugees will be medically screened prior to departure to ensure their ability to endure long travel. Those with special needs will be identified and procedures put in place to ensure proper treatment during or upon return. Sick refugees will be provided with appropriate drug supplies. UNHCR will transport refugees, their belongings, including livestock, by road and rail from the settlements to Kigoma reception centre and onwards to Burundi. This will require extensive road repair and maintenance within the settlements and on the repatriation routes.

UNHCR will provide returnees with meals prior and during repatriation movements. In Burundi, UNHCR will enhance the reception capacity in the areas of return. Each returnee will receive a cash-grant of FBU 50,000 (about USD 45) through a network of cooperatives to help them address their immediate needs such as school fees and medicines, purchase of land for agricultural activities, shelter construction, and seeds and agricultural tools.

Vulnerable people among the repatriates will be assisted with shelters. UNHCR in Burundi plans to construct 4,000 shelters on behalf of 4,000 families.

In addition, returnees will benefit from monitoring activities and ID card distribution for adults. As land conflicts are frequently registered between returnees and members of host communities, the Office will provide legal assistance and mediation to repatriates.
Best interests determinations will be undertaken for all unaccompanied minors and separated children.

UNHCR in Burundi will negotiate with the office of the World Food Program to include the returnees of 1972 among the beneficiaries of food assistance. The aim is to provide the returnees with food packages for 6 months, as is the case of refugees repatriating from the camps in Tanzania.

**Naturalization**

UNHCR and its partners will carry out information campaigns in all three settlements to inform refugees on the procedure of naturalization and their obligations. The fast tracked naturalization process, which comprises five main steps, will take place at refurbished registration centres in the Old Settlements by Government officials.

1. Filling application forms: applicants will be photographed and will complete naturalization application forms at the centres with the assistance of immigration officers and naturalization clerks.

2. Certificate of sponsorship: applicants have to be sponsored by four Tanzanians by birth who know them very well. Tanzanians living or working in the Old Settlements, including staff of the Refugee Department, will be utilized for this purpose.

3. Oaths/ statutory declarations/ affidavits: an applicant for naturalization must make, before a qualified Commissioner for Oaths, various statutory declarations including a declaration regarding residence, oath of allegiance, and veracity of the particulars on the application form. All oaths and statutory declarations will be administered in the settlements. A legal service provider will be contracted and required to deploy all needed resources for this purpose in the settlements.

4. Security clearances: applicants for naturalization are normally required to appear before, and obtain positive recommendations of, the defence and security committees at village, ward, division, district and regional levels. As local government structures and the related defence and security committees do not legally exist in the Old Settlements, a single special committee will be formed for each settlement to scrutinize applicants for naturalization.

5. The final step is the payment of fees and stamp duty. UNHCR will support the concerned government officials missions to the settlement and will pay the legal fees and stamp duty on behalf of refugees.

**Local integration**

The process will begin with a detailed district-level analysis in priority areas, followed by relocation support and targeted infrastructure and rehabilitation assistance in areas of stay or relocation of refugees. UNHCR will help improve water systems and health clinics to avail quality services to refugees and local communities in which they will settle, and conduct HIV and AIDS education and awareness campaigns. UNHCR will also support local communities to improve formal education institutions as well as vocational training centres, focusing in particular on creating a positive environment for girls’ education. Parts of the national road network will be rehabilitated to improve market access for naturalized refugees and the local communities. The Office will also support the authorities to incorporate the settlements under local administrative structures. Furthermore, UNHCR will support agricultural extension services to address issues of land overuse and to improve farming practice. Environmental preservation and rehabilitation will be enhanced through the promotion of fuel efficient stoves, tree planting, forest protection and awareness campaigns on good natural resource management. Support will be extended to those communities where former refugees will locally integrate in order to mitigate environmental degradation in these areas.
Challenges

The registration, movement and assistance of a large number of refugees, in a safe and dignified manner, from three centres which have not been part of any international programme of assistance since 1985, in the space of a few months, will entail complex logistics, works on restructuring and rehabilitating roads and buildings.

The refugees must be kept informed about the situation in their country and areas of origin and will need information about their options. There remains a degree of residual fear, uncertainty and doubt among the refugees. The Governments of Tanzania and Burundi, and UNHCR must jointly plan and implement targeted mass information activities.

The reception and absorption capacity in Makamba and Bururi Provinces of Burundi will be particularly heavily tested by the number of returnees.

The opportunity for a facilitated naturalization process is time-bound, and providing adequate resources to complete it by the end of 2008 is critical to achieving success in this programme.

The final integration of the refugees who will be naturalized in Tanzania is the largest challenge, which will require long term support through the UN “Delivering as One” process and from major development partners.

Key targets

Repatriation
- All voluntary repatriation candidates are registered and well informed about the situation in Burundi; best interests determinations are undertaken for all unaccompanied minors and separated children.
- Some 46,000 refugees are transported in safety and dignity to Burundi with their personal belongings, including livestock. Cash grants of FBU 50,000 (about USD 45) are paid to each returnee.
- Refugees with special needs are identified and receive assistance during the return journey and upon return. Some 4,000 families receive shelter.
- No cases of SGVB are reported prior to and during the repatriation process; no abandonment of unaccompanied minors or separated children are reported upon return.
- All adults are provided with ID cards.
- More than 80 per cent of conflicts between returnees and members of host communities are solved.
- All returnees experiencing conflict are identified and receive legal assistance and mediation.

Naturalization
- 172,000 refugees are registered and assisted in the naturalization process in a secure environment.
- Refugees are well informed on naturalization procedures and obligations.
- Expedited naturalization procedures are in place. All oaths are taken and legal and stamp fees paid.

Local integration
- Suitable parts of the settlements are assisted to be incorporated as villages under local administrative structures.
- Community-based projects of support to the local infrastructure through the UN “Delivering as One” approach and other development processes are implemented.
- Environmental rehabilitation in needed parts of settlements is carried out.

Coordination

The biannual Tripartite Commission meetings between the Governments of Tanzania and Burundi, and UNHCR will continue as the main policy setting and coordinating body.

The Old Settlements Task Force, established by the Tripartite Commission, comprising UNHCR and representatives of the Ministry of Home Affairs Tanzania and the Burundi Embassy in Tanzania has been and will continue to be the central coordinating body for Old Settlements operations.

UNHCR will coordinate activities on both sides of the border through extension of its existing repatriation programme.

Tanzania is a pilot country for the UN “Delivering as One” process. As the final integration programme begins, UNHCR will continue to coordinate very closely with UN agencies through the UN “Delivering as One” process at the Dar es Salaam level.
Partners

**Government of Tanzania**: Ministry of Home Affairs - Refugee Department, Ministry of Home Affairs - Immigration Department, Rukwa and Tabora regional authorities, Mpanda and Urambo district authorities.

**Government of Burundi**: Ministry of Public Security, Ministry of Solidarity


**Others**: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ)

**“Delivering as One” Partners**
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*A seven per cent support cost is recovered from contributions against supplementary programmes to cover indirect costs for UNHCR.
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