

SPCP Zambia

February 2008

Background

UNHCR introduced the Strengthening Protection Capacity Project in Zambia (SPCP-Z) in March 2007, with the aim of addressing the gaps in refugee protection capacity and of expanding opportunities for durable solutions for refugees residing in Zambia.

The SPCP-Z is implemented over a three year period and is supported through a USD 3.2 million financial contribution from the Government of Denmark. The project is carried out with the full support and cooperation of the Government of Zambia (GRZ), which has for decades been engaged in efforts to protect and assist refugees.

Developments 2007

Comprehensive Action Plan to Improve Protection Capacity

The first key activity of the project was to undertake a protection capacity gaps analysis in Zambia, drawing from the results of participatory assessments, documentary research and input from the Government and partners.

The resulting gaps analysis, since published, formed the basis for a National Consultation in December 2007 with the participation of an extensive range of stakeholders, including representatives from GRZ, UN agencies, donors, international and national non governmental organizations (INGOs), local civil society groups and refugees.

The consultation process was very positively received by all participants, with a high level of engagement of all parties during both plenary and workshop sessions. Over one hundred recommendations were agreed upon to address protection concerns in the following key areas: law and administrative

practices; registration and documentation; security from violence and exploitation; equal protection before the law; enhancing self-reliance and expanding opportunities for durable solutions.

These recommendations are now being incorporated into a multi-year plan of action with concrete project interventions to remedy the gaps identified. This Plan of Action is being developed jointly by UNHCR, the GRZ and partners with finalization anticipated in the first quarter of 2008. The implementation of the projects identified within the Plan will then be the focus of the SPCP-Z throughout 2008/2009.

Meanwhile, the following strengthening capacity initiatives previously agreed upon are now underway.



Improved Legislative Framework

A key objective of the SPCP in Zambia is to assist the Government of Zambia to improve and develop national refugee legislation and administrative practice in line with international standards.

As an initial step, the SPCP organized a workshop for parliamentarians focusing on the shortcomings in current law and practice and key changes required in law and practice to fully conform to international standards. Subsequently, the National Consultations confirmed the need to improve the legislative framework as a priority, and recommended both extensive

consultation on the new draft bill and the need to harmonise laws in Zambia to eliminate current overlap and conflicting jurisdictions in regard to the management of refugee affairs.

UNHCR will be providing further specific technical advice and input on how Zambia refugee law and practice can be enhanced to support anticipated revisions to the present law.

Administrative Capacity Building

Efforts underway to enhance understanding of international refugee protection principles and better equip civil servants, magistrates, and members of civil society in protecting refugees include training workshops. One training workshop, recently conducted in Mansa, Luapula Province, was attended by 31 participants including immigration and border officials, refugee officers, Magistrates, prosecutors, lawyers, members of the Zambia Police Forces, as well as implementing partners and UNCHR staff. Issues covered included the link between protection and human rights, asylum policies and RSD procedures, detention of refugees/asylum seekers, the principle of non-refoulement, and durable solutions. The workshop produced a list of recommendations on these areas which will be considered as part of the development of SPCP-Z projects in 2008/09.

Improved Registration

The lack of accurate and up to date information on the numbers and profiles of refugees in Zambia is major protection concern, especially because it hinders the identification and facilitation of the most appropriate durable solution for refugees in Zambia. The SPCP-Z therefore has supported a comprehensive registration of the refugee population including those in camps, urban areas and those who have spontaneously settled.

From August until December 2007, 4700 urban based refugees and 8600 spontaneously settled refugees were

registered. The registration of camp based refugees in Mayukwayukwa and Meheba will be completed early in 2008.



These efforts all involve training of relevant civil servants, the installation of progress registration software in the Offices of the Commissioner for Refugees Office (COR), and the provision of necessary IT equipment thereby significantly improving the capacity of COR to conduct registration exercises in the future. Plans for providing all refugees with ID cards are currently being negotiated with the Government.

Access to Justice

Improving access to justice for refugees in Zambia is another priority area for the SPCP.

SPCP has supported a mobile court session held in Mayukwayukwa in September, 2007. This court not only heard outstanding criminal cases, but the Magistrate also spoke to the camp neighbourhood watch and the reproductive health group on sexual offences and the required mechanisms to report and respond to them. This led to lively debate about the conflict between the law and traditional practices within the camps. The lecture served as a valuable tool through which to raise awareness about these important issues.

SPCP-Z has also provided legal texts to the mobile court at Mayukwayukwa and to the Magistrates' Courts in Kawambwa and Mporokoso, gratefully received as necessary legal reference material required by the sitting Magistrates. In 2008-2009, mobile courts at all refugee camps and settlement will continue to receive the support of SPCP.

More recently, the SPCP-Z has supported the a local NGO, the Legal Resources Foundation, to expand legal services to refugees including provision of free counseling, and representation in criminal and civil cases. The project will also provide for systematic monitoring and interventions for refugees and asylum seekers in detention.

Gender Based Violence Prevention and Response

The need to address the prevalence of gender based violence (GBV) in the camps and in Lusaka is recognized as a critical priority, and a number of complementary initiatives have been undertaken.

In the camps, refugee leaders, youth, teachers, police and government representatives have participated in training sessions where the focus was on GBV prevention and response mechanisms as well as principles of child protection. One of the sessions was a "Training of Trainers" to contribute to greater sustainability and community ownership in the ongoing dissemination of GBV information and knowledge. This program is ongoing.

In addition, awareness raising activities geared towards a broader audience in the refugee communities is another key activity. For instance, during the international "16 days of activities against violence against women", SPCP-Z conducted information activities to highlight the problems women face and engaged the communities in discussions around the rights of women and children, GBV, the traditional dispute settlement mechanism, and HIV Aids. The

campaigns also engaged refugee men and youth and were received very positively by all stakeholders. Another example is an information campaign launched in Mayukwayukwa where 2000 copies of a 'GBV Prevention and Response' leaflet in four different languages were distributed in December 2007. An assessment will be undertaken in March 2008 to determine whether the number of cases of GBV reported increased following the leaflet distribution. If deemed effective, the information campaign will be replicated in other camps.



At a more strategic level, UNHCR recently organized a workshop in Lusaka with a range of stakeholders including Zambia Red Cross Society, the Zambia Police Victim Support Unit, the Peace Centre and representative refugees and operational partners such as GRZ. The aim was to discuss key gaps in protection and response to GBV and identify means to collaboratively work to address them.

Public Information

UNHCR has publicized the SPCP activities implemented through the media, which has served to raise the profile of protection issues in Zambia and to try to create a positive environment in which to move forward. Discussions are on-going as to how to promote tolerance between refugees and host communities using public information as a tool. These activities

will be incorporated into the project in 2008.

During the World Refugee Day Celebrations (June 20th), SPCP-Z supported four radio programmes on a local popular radio station (Pheonix) to promote awareness about refugees and the objectives of the SPCP project. There was also a World Refugee Day Ceremony held in Lusaka involving all GRZ partners, other implementing partners, and the refugees themselves.

In addition, an information leaflet has been disseminated in four different languages and radio broadcasts were organized, explaining the new measures, such as requirement of travel documents and voluntary repatriation forms, relating to the spontaneous repatriation of Angolan refugees following the closure of the organized voluntary repatriation programme in Zambia.

Way forward

Consultations on the SPCP-Z Proposals are underway both with stakeholders in Lusaka and in the field. To date, consultations are indicating priority areas of work to include the legislative framework and administrative practices (adoption of the **new Refugee Bill**, including **RSD** procedures), **security and equal protection** before the law, **education** (increasing student to teacher ratios, reducing drop out rates) health (**malaria** treatment and prevention, **nutrition and safe motherhood**) and initiatives to promote economic **self reliance**. It is hoped that proposals will be finalized and ready for submission to the donor by mid-March 2008.

More information on the Strengthening Protection Capacity Project, including the SPCP-Zambia initiative, can be found at www.unhcr.org/spcp