



COUNTRY OPERATIONS PLAN

OVERVIEW

Country: Mozambique

Planning Year: 2006

2006 COUNTRY OPERATIONS PLAN
MOZAMBIQUE

Part I: Overview

1. Protection and socio-economic operational environment

A recent registration exercise confirmed a reduction in the population of concern from approximately 10,000 to 5,848. Out of this population only 1,274 are recognised refugees, with the remaining 4,574 having asylum claims pending. Approximately 4,500 of the population reside in Marratane settlement, located in northern Mozambique near Nampula, the site established in 2003 by the Government of Mozambique as the location for all refugees. The remainder of the population resides in urban areas, which is permitted by the authorities as long as no assistance is required. More than 75% of the refugee/asylum-seeker population is made up of Congolese (DRC) with smaller numbers of Rwandese and Burundians.

Due to the continuing flow of new arrivals from the Great Lakes region, it is anticipated that the population of concern will increase to approximately 6,900 by the end of 2005, of which 5,200 will be assisted in Marratane settlement. The number of refugees and asylum seekers in 2006 will depend primarily on the situation in the Great Lakes region. Currently, it is expected that up to 1,250 persons will repatriate to DRC during the course of the year, however, this is contingent on stability in DRC, particularly in South Kivu.

UNHCR continues to provide protection and assistance to asylum seekers and refugees in Mozambique, primarily in Marratane settlement. The quality of assistance provided has increased with the introduction of three new implementing partners in the settlement – World Vision, Oxfam and Save the Children, as well as local NGO Estamos in the border area of Lichinga. Nevertheless, a shortage of resources makes it difficult for UNHCR to ensure all beneficiaries are sufficiently supported with food, shelter, potable water, health care and education.

The Mozambique programme has made substantial advances with respect to resettlement following the deployment of a full time resettlement consultant to Nampula. The United States and Canada have approved 240 and 90 cases for resettlement recently.

While repatriation opportunities for most refugees and asylum seekers in Mozambique are poor, UNHCR continues to facilitate repatriation on a case by case basis, particularly for the few Angolans and Rwandans in Mozambique. UNHCR is also anticipating working with the authorities to develop a legal framework for Congolese and Burundian refugees, given the improving situation in those countries.

The Government of Mozambique and UNHCR continue to make significant efforts to provide physical protection for refugees from conflicts within the refugee communities, as well as from conflict between refugees and the local population so as to lessen xenophobia. Security in the settlement has improved over the past two years, particularly with the deployment of female refugee guards (“Sungu Sungu”) and police. This has also enabled an improved response to SGBV cases.

In 2006, additional land will be requested from the Government of Mozambique for Marratane settled to ensure an environment more conducive to self-reliance, where refugees would be able to build their homes and grow food for themselves.

In 2006, there will be significant demands on UNHCR to substantially expand the government's capacity to enable it to take a much increased level of responsibility for the management of refugee affairs in Mozambique. At the same time, UNHCR will work to enhance the capacity of local NGO which are expected to progressively assume a greater role in the provision of services in Marratane settlement.

2. Operational goals and potential for durable solutions

Currently, realistic durable solutions are limited primarily to local integration and resettlement. However, repatriation may increasingly become a viable option, given the recent positive developments in the Great Lakes region. Nevertheless, the situation is fragile and could quickly change. Therefore, in 2006 UNHCR in Mozambique will continue to pursue as well operational goals related to capacity building for self-reliance of asylum-seekers and refugees. In addition, a strong emphasis will be placed on increasing the capacity of the Government of Mozambique to conduct RSD.

Derived from UNHCR's Global strategic objectives, the following are the overall strategic goals of 2006 Mozambique refugee programme:

- Deliver mandated protection for refugees and asylum seekers in Mozambique, and protection and assistance services to those residing in Maratane. To improve their security and material welfare focusing particularly on the policy priorities relating to women and children, HIV/AIDS, the environment, and addressing minimum standards of emergency humanitarian assistance in the sectors of nutrition, shelter, health care, water, sanitation and food.
- Protection for refugees and asylum seekers in urban areas will continue to be provided while they are assisted on a case by case basis. UNHCR with the government will ensure that the established protection standards of treatment for refugees, especially women, girls and children, are secured and critically needed services exceptionally provided. This includes provisions for protection delivery in exceptional security cases, including secure accommodation. Protection action to stem abusive arrests and detention will also be provided.
- Operationalising the Refugee Act and institutionalizing government protection and management structures: effectuating a government-based system for reception of asylum seekers, their registration, refugee status determination, issuance of documentation under the authority of the government, prevention of arbitrary arrest and detention of refugees, etc.
- UNHCR will continue to provide support to the government in terms of facilitating the work of the Eligibility Commission. The office will also continue to provide technical advice on issues of refugee documentation (ID cards, Status and travel document). In June 2005, 1,274 decisions on status have been approved. However, there is still a backlog of 4,574 cases to be processed and approved by the Mozambican government.

- The office will continue to pursue other appropriate durable solutions, as viable: Angolan and Rwandan voluntary repatriation will be encouraged and promoted. Voluntary repatriation for Congolese and Burundian refugees will be facilitated to safe areas. A legal frame work for the repatriation of Burundi and DRC refugees will be put in place. Resettlement cases for submission to third countries will continue to be prepared on a case by basis.
- Legal assistance for SBGV victims will be strengthened in order to reinforce their protection.
- UNHCR and international implementing partners will build the capacity of local NGOS to replace international partners in 2007.
- Self-reliance activities will vigorously be promoted for refugees, focusing on vocational/skills training, agriculture and micro-credit for refugees already in business and wishing to expand and refugees who were trained and have developed a viable business proposal for assistance.
- Basic assistance will be provided to all refugees and asylum-seekers in Marratane.
- A survey will be conducted on both the Marratane and urban refugees' caseload to determine their socio-economic status.
- Continue the empowerment of women by increasing their participation in all refugee activities and leadership.
- Continue to create awareness on environmental issues by including it in the school's curriculum and continuing the ongoing tree planting activity.
- A special effort will be made to develop new programs on reconciliation and peace education for all refugees especially women and adolescent girls.
- Encourage the participation of refugees in all aspects of camp life and in the project management circle.
- Foster partnership and complementarities between UNHCR and other actors in Mozambique, particularly NGOs and other UN agencies.
- Enhance the role and capacity of the government to assume a primary management and delivery role in protecting and assisting refugees.
- Continue to give priority to ethical conduct by humanitarian personnel in line with UNHCR's Code of Conduct and other instruments mandating ethical conduct.
- Raise awareness on the refugee programme in Mozambique among the public at large, civil society and special stakeholders such as the donor community.