

# SOUTHERN AFRICA

**Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia, Zimbabwe**

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## RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

During the first half of 2001, the political situation in many of the countries in the region remained largely unchanged. Progress has been made in the area of conflict resolution as many leaders of countries in conflict have been engaged in talks at different levels. In this context, the assumption of power by Joseph Kabila in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has significantly changed the dynamics in the region. The Lusaka cease-fire agreement has been revived, the UN peacekeeping force and observers have been deployed in the DRC, and the various groups involved in the fighting are beginning to disengage. Some have even returned home. Furthermore, the Special Envoy nominated by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) has been allowed to return in order to facilitate the inter-Congolese dialogue.

Despite these positive changes, the DRC peace process and security on the ground have remained fragile owing to the complexity of the conflict, and the multiplicity of armed groups and factions involved.

Angola remained embroiled in its long and protracted conflict that has caused insecurity in many parts of the country, thus increasing the number of refugees (in Zambia and Namibia in particular) and IDPs.

The conflicts in Angola and the DRC have had an impact on many of the countries in the region. Due to the protracted nature of these conflicts, the fragility of peace accords and the absence of support mechanisms in many countries of return, no major repatriation movement has taken place in the region.

Floods resulting from torrential rains in February and March caused devastation in Mozambique and Malawi. In a gesture of solidarity to the victims of floods, and following the appeals launched by both Governments to the international community, UNHCR released USD 50,000 from its Operational Reserve. The funds were used to procure and transport non-food items from South Africa to the two countries.

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES, PROGRESS AND CONSTRAINTS

Within the context of rightsizing the organisation (Actions 1, 2, and 3), UNHCR conducted a comprehensive review of its operations in the region during the months of March and April. Objectives were reviewed and efforts were made to bridge the gap between operational requirements and projected income, while still addressing the increasing needs in some countries of asylum. The results of the review reflect the fact that Southern Africa is still a volatile region, where UNHCR is facing increasing challenges. However, the review has also caused serious concerns for both refugees and staff members.

In Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe, a 20 per cent reduction of budget has clearly had a negative impact on refugee welfare. Access to appropriate shelter for refugees and asylum-seekers in Botswana has been limited. Basic assistance to asylum-seekers in South Africa has decreased overall. Food supply furnished to refugees and asylum-seekers was insufficient in countries such as Malawi and Zimbabwe, where there is no WFP involvement. With regard to administrative support, Action 2 has led to the discontinuation of 17 posts in Southern Africa and the closing of the Liaison Office in Swaziland.

## ACTIVITIES UNTIL 30 JUNE 2001

Operations in **Angola, South Africa** and **Zambia** are described in subsequent chapters.

In **Botswana**, UNHCR has been working to support refugees' economic independence and to find durable solutions, including voluntary repatriation, resettlement and naturalisation. During the first half of this year, 224 Namibian refugee children were attending the primary school, and 113 the secondary level. In the health sector, a high mortality rate was noted among refugees, as a result of HIV/AIDS. UNHCR has made substantive progress towards meeting the special needs of refugee women. The appointment of two senior female staff members to address the specific needs of women refugees has given this group the opportunity to be in close and confidential dialogue with UNHCR staff.

Activities were also targeted at the special needs of refugee children and adolescents. The greatest threat to the refugees in this age range is HIV/AIDS. With national prevalence rates at 32 per cent, UNHCR has made efforts to reinforce awareness through peer educators. This was complemented by the distribution of condoms at the local clinic as well as publications and leaflets. An abandoned nursery school was refurbished in the first quarter of the year and three professional teachers were recruited. Teaching and playing aids have also been procured. All pupils have received underwear in response to a recurring request.

**Malawi** continues to be affected by the conflict in the Great Lakes region, creating an average influx of 200-260 new asylum-seekers per month. Severe torrential rains have also affected Malawi, as approximately 400,000 Malawians were internally displaced. In a gesture of solidarity, UNHCR joined other UN agencies and contributed USD 25,000 for the provision of basic non-food items.

Among the constraints faced was the slow process of status determination. This delay has caused great anxiety among asylum-seekers who have been in the country for more than two years without proper status.

The general conditions for refugees, however, remained satisfactory. An average of 5,500 refugees has received food, accommodation and medical treatment. In addition, in an attempt to improve the self-sufficiency capacity of refugees, seeds and fertilisers have been distributed to some 70 families and micro-credit loans have been granted to 50 individuals. Also, in an effort to promote the understanding of international refugee law among government officials, NGOs, other UN agencies and scholars, UNHCR organised a training workshop on refugee law in Lusaka.

**Mozambique** has continued to experience an increase in the number of asylum-seekers during the first half of 2001. At the beginning of the year, the number of persons of concern to UNHCR in the country stood at 2,278. By 30 June, this figure had climbed to 4,216. The majority of the asylum-seekers has come from Burundi, the DRC, and Rwanda. Partly due to negative media reports, the public image of refugees has suffered and there is a growing trend of questioning the identity and motivations of those who seek asylum in Mozambique.

Nonetheless, the conditions for refugees have been satisfactory during the first six months of the year. A total of 2,106 refugees located in Bobole, Linchinga, Maputo, Massaca and Nampula have been regularly receiving food from UNHCR as well as other basic assistance such as medical care and shelter. No cases of malnutrition have been reported. With regard to education, 154 students have been assisted to attend primary school and 64 to attend the secondary level. Durable solutions have so far been limited. Only seven refugees have been repatriated to their country of origin.

In February 2001, UNHCR organised a joint strategic planning meeting with the

Government. The purpose of the meeting was to undertake a comprehensive evaluation of the UNHCR programme in Mozambique and to draw up a plan of action for the years 2001/2002. It was agreed to gradually develop the Nampula refugee camp, which would be the only remaining refugee settlement by the end of 2002.

The disastrous floods of February and March also hit Mozambique, killing 82 people and displacing 80,000. UNHCR contributed to the relief effort by allocating USD 25,000 for the purchase of non-food items.

As a result of UNHCR's global review of its operations, the working group established by the High Commissioner recommended the upgrading of UNHCR's representational level in **Namibia** from a Liaison Office to a Branch Office, effective 1 July 2001. The recommendation was based on the increasing refugee population in Namibia. At the same time, the opening of field offices in Rundu and Osire was authorised, along with the creation of new posts. Furthermore, the decision was taken to lift the initial freeze of part of the budget for 2001, which will allow the Branch Office to achieve most of its initial objectives.

The number of Angolan asylum-seekers in Namibia was lower than the one originally projected. An average of 300 persons per month has been recorded, instead of 500 per month as expected.

During the first half of 2001, UNHCR has obtained the release of 350 refugees from police cells and has settled them in the camp. With the introduction of a new implementing partner, the health sector experienced a considerable improvement, particularly in curative health. As a result, referral cases from the Osire refugee camp to the hospital have decreased by 20 per cent. Community service activities were expanded with the recruitment of 32 new health workers and training on reproductive health.

**Zimbabwe** has continued to receive new arrivals from the Great Lakes region. As a result of Action 2, UNHCR has reduced its initial budget, resulting in a focus on essential protection activities and minimal assistance to vulnerable refugees.

The prevailing problematic economic and political conditions in the country have had a negative impact on the refugee situation. The country has seen an unprecedented rise in the cost of living with worsening inflation. The political and economic crisis has been compounded by unprecedented levels of HIV/AIDS infection and widespread decline in the quality of basic social services.

During the first half of the year, significant achievements have been recorded. Basic food rations have been provided to nearly 1,000 refugees in the camps and to new asylum-seekers in the Harare transit centre. School supplies have been provided in both urban and rural settlement areas. Education support has been provided to 100 primary school pupils, and to 71 students at the secondary level and in higher institutions. Additional 31 students were registered in vocational schools. Budget cuts and increases in school fees did not allow new applications. To address the specific needs of refugee women, 45 women have attended the Women's Sewing Club in Tongogara camp. Another 165 women have been supplied with monthly sanitary parcels. In order to promote refugee self-reliance, a group credit scheme has been established, as a new initiative tailored to assist over 200 low-income persons living in Tongogara camp.

## **OUTLOOK JULY-DECEMBER**

The overall objectives for the Regional Directorate for the second semester remain unchanged. The Office will continue to develop its contingency plans, with focus on the current peace talks in the DRC that could open a window to voluntary repatriation. The Office will also follow closely the situation in Zimbabwe and develop its

emergency response mechanism accordingly.

## FINANCIAL DATA (USD)

Country	Annual Programme Budget and Trust Funds				Supplementary Programme Budget			
	Initial Budget	Revised Budget	Total Funds Available <sup>1</sup>	Obligation Level	Initial Budget	Revised Budget	Total Funds Available	Obligation Level
Angola	4,234,182	4,260,581	2,181,469	1,531,540	11,455,054	5,427,220	5,682,746	2,100,000
Botswana	2,163,477	1,960,477	1,302,900	865,880	0	0	0	0
Malawi	972,289	978,389	717,679	415,200	0	0	0	0
Mozambique	1,061,741	1,195,941	694,200	450,160	0	0	0	0
Namibia	2,942,870	3,561,400	2,064,921	1,343,460	0	0	0	0
South Africa <sup>2</sup>	5,412,610	4,985,200	2,676,935	2,280,550	0	0	0	0
Swaziland	469,647	355,624	225,000	188,260	0	0	0	0
Zambia	12,187,833	13,691,805	8,595,922	6,299,120	0	0	0	0
Zimbabwe	1,163,769	1,026,039	654,950	497,495	0	0	0	0
Regional Projects <sup>3</sup>	268,000	268,000	100,000	100,000	72,780	0	520,834	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30,876,418</b>	<b>32,283,456</b>	<b>19,213,976</b>	<b>13,971,665</b>	<b>11,527,834</b>	<b>5,427,220</b>	<b>6,203,580</b>	<b>2,100,000</b>

<sup>1</sup> Includes income from unrestricted contributions, income from contributions restricted to the regional, sub-regional and/or country level, opening balance and adjustments.

<sup>2</sup> Includes administrative costs for the Regional Director's Office as well as operational and administrative costs in Comoros, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mauritius and Seychelles.

<sup>3</sup> Covers scholarships for refugee students in Southern African countries.