

ZAMBIA

INITIAL OBJECTIVES

- Maintain emergency preparedness to protect and assist refugees who may arrive from neighbouring countries and support their integration into already existing refugee programmes.
- Pursue efforts to identify long-term solutions for rural and urban Angolan and Congolese refugees through local integration (or resettlement for a limited number) and help them achieve greater economic independence with a view to reducing UNHCR's assistance.
- Encourage a positive climate for asylum and help create a legally conducive environment for the protection and integration of refugees by assisting the Zambian Government to build capacity to handle refugee matters and promoting public awareness of refugees through the media and educational institutions.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS, PROGRESS ACHIEVED AND CONSTRAINTS

Angolan Refugees

As the war in Angola escalated towards the latter part of 1999, Angolans began arriving in Zambia in increasing numbers. By June, an estimated 25,000 new refugees had entered the country's south-western province, 10,000 of whom arrived following the fall of Jamba in Angola in January. This added to an estimated 150,000 existing Angolan refugees, the majority of whom have been living in Zambia for decades. Most Angolans have either settled spontaneously or are being assisted in camps. Of the latter group, some 40,000 live in Maheba in the north-west, 14,000 in Mayukwayukwa in the west and, since January, 10,000 in Nangweshi in the south-west.

To provide immediate relief during the influx in January, WFP arranged for an airlift to position food supplies in Kalabo transit centre,

near the Angolan border. This airbridge was used on the return leg to evacuate 2,300 of the most vulnerable refugees to Mayukwayukwa settlement. Difficult access and logistical constraints in moving refugees from the insecure border location of Sinjembela to already established (and more secure) settlements or camps prompted UNHCR and the Government to open a new camp in Nangweshi, 120 kms further inland. This led to improved access by humanitarian agencies to the thousands of refugees who were later transferred from Sinjembela with the assistance of IOM. UNHCR opened an office in Mongu town to decentralise operations and ensure closer monitoring. Three international NGO partners active in northern Zambia were requested to assist with camp layout and construction, as well as with the establishment of distribution and warehousing services, community and health services and adequate water/sanitation. A nutritional survey carried out in February on refugee children between six months and five years of age indicated that the global malnutrition rate was 29 per cent, with acute malnutrition at 12.7 per cent. By June, the situation had improved markedly with global malnutrition rates reduced to 6.8 per cent and severe malnutrition to 1.5 per cent.

In Maheba settlement (which has existed since 1971), newly arrived refugees were quickly integrated into the existing assistance programmes for Angolan, Congolese, Burundi and Rwandese refugees living there. Upon arrival, new refugees are allocated a 2.5 hectare plot of land and given agricultural tools and seeds to start food production. They receive monthly food rations until the first harvest, after which they are expected to become self-sufficient. The settlement comprises one secondary school, five primary schools and five clinics which are operated and staffed by the Government. During the period under review, the number of new arrivals exceeded UNHCR's initial planning figure of 1,000 and resources originally intended for local integration projects had to be re-directed to meet their needs. Nevertheless, a

micro-credit scheme was launched through an NGO partner, loan committees were established in several refugee zones and it is expected that refugees will soon start submitting loan applications. Agricultural and forestry activities for long-staying refugees also continued. Relocation of newly arrived refugees was problematic due to the long distances between the transit centres and the settlement and the lack of adequate logistical support. This situation was addressed in March when ten trucks were re-deployed from Albania to complement the existing fleet.

Mayukwayukwa settlement was, until late 1999, home to some 4,000 refugees, mainly from Angola. Another 10,000 Angolan refugees have joined to this group since then and several refugees with security problems have arrived from Lusaka or Mwanze camp in Mporokoso (northern Zambia). The emergency phase weighed heavily on UNHCR and its NGO partner as water systems had to be improved, the existing rural health post had to be extended and basic shelters had to be constructed where the new arrivals had settled. To address the situation, UNHCR contracted a second NGO to take over health activities in the new extension of the settlement while giving logistical support to the government-run health centre in the old section. A third NGO was contracted in June to provide community services and basic education.

One of the objectives of UNHCR's local integration strategy has been to explore the possibility for long-time refugees to eventually obtain Zambian citizenship through naturalisation. A lawyer was recently hired to carry out a study on the Zambian legal provisions for naturalisation. UNHCR is hopeful that the Government will positively consider the recommendations of this study to enable many second-generation refugees to become full-fledged members of Zambian society.

Another unforeseen development over the past months was the breakdown of the WFP food pipeline which affected all refugee camps and settlements in Zambia. More than 50,000 refugees in Zambia currently need food rations for

their survival. UNHCR has therefore been working actively with WFP to find a solution and contacts with donor governments and inter-governmental organisations have intensified both in Zambia and at the organisations' respective headquarters. By August, in-kind donations from major donors of 4.9 metric tonnes of maize, vegetable oil, beans, salt and high-protein biscuits had met the requirements of 30,000 recently arrived Angolan refugees, but WFP still requires 1.8 metric tonnes (or USD 780,000) to meet the needs of an additional 26,400 refugees.

Congolese Refugees

Due to the volatile security situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo as well as the political and military constraints related to the implementation of the Lusaka Peace Agreement, a monthly average of 1,000 Congolese refugees continued to arrive in the northern part of Zambia. This brought the total number of Congolese refugees to over 40,000 and prompted UNHCR to update its contingency plans for Luapula (Kala) and the Copperbelt (Lufwanyama).

Most Congolese refugees have settled in Mwanze camp located in the Mporokoso district of the country's northern province. The assistance programme in Mwanze is no longer in an emergency phase and plans are being made to start activities fostering increased self-reliance and to transform the camp into a local settlement. The Government has promised to make 10,800 hectares of land available to the refugees, enabling them to engage in agricultural activities as a means to achieve self-reliance in food production and reduce dependency on WFP food rations. The continuing trickle of new arrivals and an exceptionally high turn-over of implementing partner staff contributed to some delays. UNHCR worked with a national NGO to distribute food and non-food items, provide adequate water and sanitation and ensure access to basic health services.

Although the re-deployment of one NGO partner's resources to Nangweshi camp led to a delay in many activities in Mwanze, the construc-

tion of schools and other learning centres, a health clinic, a distribution centre and a registration centre is almost completed. Repair and rehabilitation of the access road resumed through a private sub-contractor after some delays due to the rainy season. In June, UNHCR organised a programme and project management workshop for recently recruited NGO staff and enhanced reporting mechanisms were put in place.

A few Congolese refugees have also expressed their desire to adopt Zambian citizenship and UNHCR will consult with the Ministry of Home Affairs on the feasibility of the process.

Urban Refugees

UNHCR continued to work with two NGOs (one national and one international) to advance the local integration of refugees in Lusaka and other urban centres. Though their numbers are estimated at over 10,000, UNHCR only assisted a small number with free medical treatment and drugs at the Kamwala clinic while others were helped to obtain work permits and trade licences. More than 360 refugee children were supported with scholarships for primary and secondary education. Of this group, 15 attended vocational training schools and four studied English.

UNHCR's objective is to encourage refugees to become less dependent on assistance through activities fostering self-reliance and local integration. However, opportunities for refugees to enter the formal employment sector have been limited due to the high unemployment rate among nationals and the high fees requested for work permits. Furthermore, a large number of refugees still need medical assistance, since their proposed integration into the national health services has not been successful and many refugees are still treated like aliens despite having obtained refugee identity cards. UNHCR is also concerned about growing xenophobia against refugees and arrests of new arrivals and refugees without identity cards. Workshops for government officials on refugee law and protection and increased coverage of refugees in the national media have helped to sensitise the Zambian population to the plight

of refugees, but many obstacles remain to successful integration.

UNHCR has continued to offer scholarships in professional fields (such as teaching and nursing) where the country lacks qualified manpower and to date all graduates in these fields have been able to find employment with the Government. The Office is currently supporting 56 refugees in various professional schools and, as a complement to the skills-training courses available for refugees at the Makeni centre, UNHCR issued micro-credits on a group-lending basis to a number of refugees. However, the non-performance of the first three refugees who were granted loans has seriously undermined the scheme and it is therefore likely to be terminated shortly. Credit facilities remain accessible through a national micro-finance provider with whom UNHCR concluded a referral agreement in 1998.

Plans to resettle up to 100 refugees were largely exceeded when 97 per cent of the 228 persons of mixed Hutu/Tutsi origin for whom the Office was seeking solutions were approved for resettlement. In addition, 31 Congolese refugees were resettled and one Angolan refugee family left under an emergency resettlement programme.

REVISED OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITY ACTIVITIES FOR JULY - DECEMBER

The initial objectives for Angolan and Congolese refugees remain unchanged. One of the top priorities will be to advocate acquisition of Zambian citizenship for long-staying Angolan and possibly also individual Congolese refugees. Furthermore, UNHCR will:

- Update its contingency plan and maintain emergency preparedness to adequately protect and assist any new arrivals until the end of the year and identify possible new sites or extend Meheba settlement to provide additional capacity;
- Continue the strategy for self-reliance and

local integration of refugees in rural areas through support for self-sufficiency in food production and advocacy for the inclusion of refugees into national health structures;

- Extend the economic rights of urban refugees to reduce dependency and speed up the provision of identity cards to them;
- Develop a joint programme together with WFP, FAO and the World Bank for self-sufficiency of long-staying Angolan refugees in rural settlements and urban areas;

- Sensitise government officials to refugee matters through training, assist in revising the Refugee Bill and advocate for a rapid adoption of the draft Refugee Act;
- Work to obtain resettlement opportunities for the remaining seven refugees of mixed Hutu/Tutsi origin; and
- Reinforce links with the University of Zambia and advocate the incorporation of refugee issues into the humanities curriculum.

FINANCIAL DATA (USD)

| | Initial Budget | Revised Budget | Total Funds Available* | Total Funds Obligated |
|-----------|----------------|----------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| AB and TF | 5,938,363 | 12,461,272 | 4,690,522 | 4,492,100 |

*Includes income from unrestricted contributions, income from contributions restricted to the region/country, opening balance and adjustments.

