



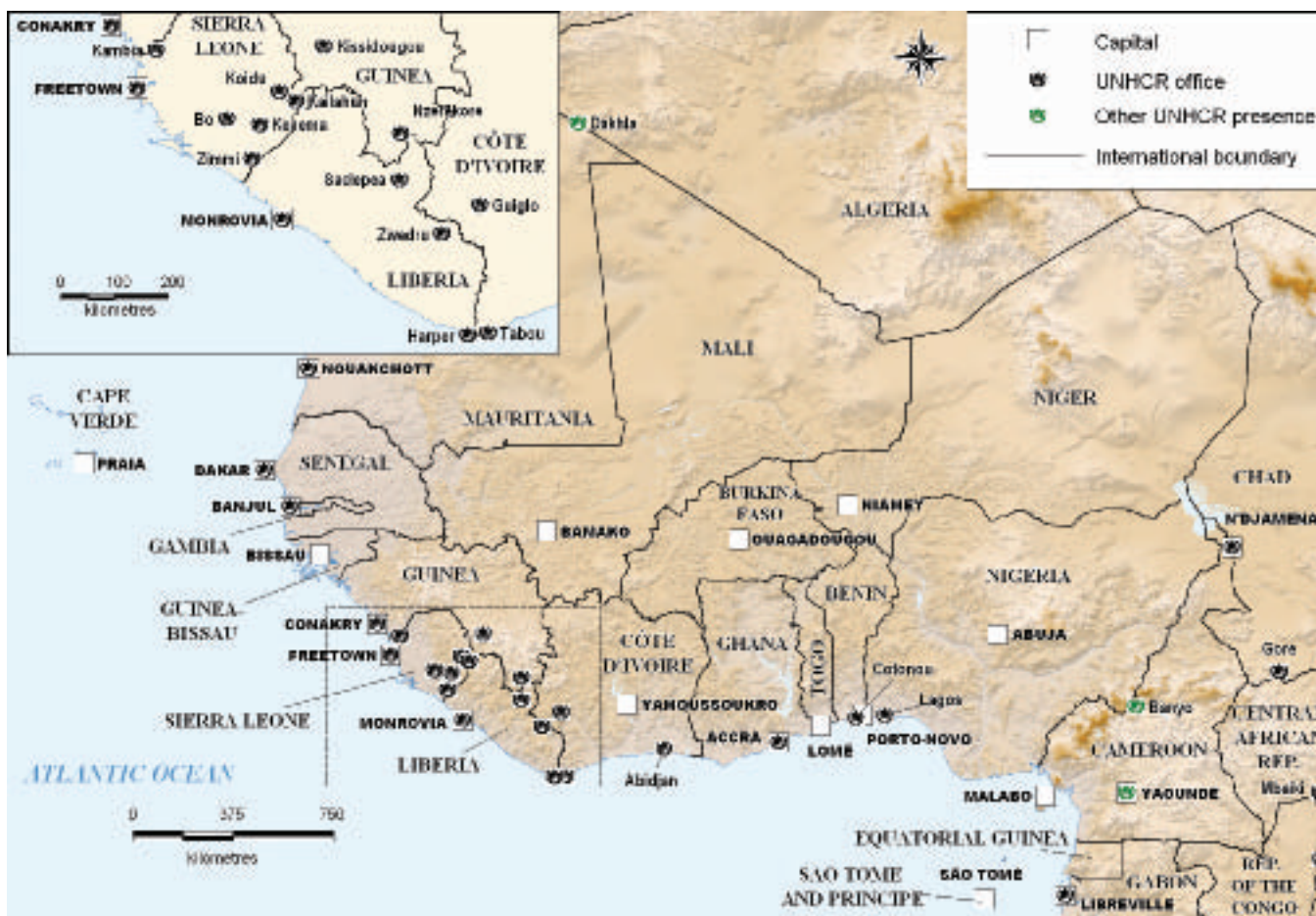
West Africa

Benin
Burkina Faso
Cameroon
Cape Verde
Côte d'Ivoire
Gambia
Ghana
Guinea
Guinea-Bissau
Liberia
Mali
Niger
Nigeria
Senegal
Sierra Leone
Togo

Major developments

The crisis that erupted in Côte d'Ivoire in September 2002 continued to have implications for operations in neighbouring countries in 2003. While the anticipated mass exodus did not materialize, there was considerable upheaval in border zones of adjacent countries as sizeable numbers of refugees fled alongside economic migrants from West African States. Early in the year thousands of Ivorian and third country nationals fled to eastern Liberia together with Liberian and Sierra Leonean refugees. Many were subsequently uprooted by fresh conflict and forced into further displacement inside Liberia, into Guinea or back to war-affected areas in western Côte d'Ivoire. The Linas-Marcoussis peace agreement signed in January 2003 did not yield all of the results expected, and Côte d'Ivoire remains divided, with the north under the control of the *Forces nouvelles*.

In contrast, developments in Liberia in the latter half of 2003 gave rise to optimism about an eventual return to stability, particularly the departure of President Charles Taylor, the signing of a Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the installation of a National Government of Reconciliation. The deployment of a



United Nations peace-keeping force, charged *inter alia* with supporting the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants, augurs well for a gradual restoration of peace throughout the country, with positive ramifications for the sub-region. In neighbouring Sierra Leone the peace process stayed on track and conditions there allowed UNHCR to carry out a full-scale voluntary repatriation operation.

For the most part, the situation in other countries in the region remained stable. However, in Guinea-Bissau political instability (including cabinet reshuffles and the dissolution of the National Assembly) culminated in a *coup d'état* in September. In Senegal, following the decision of the *Mouvement des forces démocratiques de la Casamance* (MFDC) to abandon its armed struggle for the independence of the Casamance region, peace talks resumed between the leaders of the rebel group and the Government. This development could very possibly pave the way for the return of some 8,000 Senegalese refugees, some of whom have lived in Guinea-Bissau and the Gambia for more than two decades.

UNHCR pursued its cooperation and dialogue with the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS) in the context of the peacekeeping efforts in Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire. The establishment of a Department of Humanitarian Affairs within the ECOWAS Secretariat is a particularly welcome development which will help further strengthen collaboration between the two organizations.

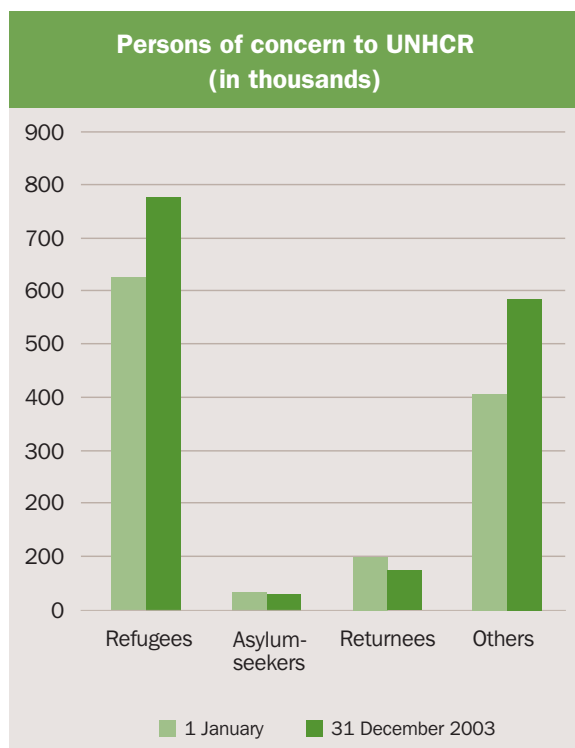
Challenges and concerns

Sporadic population flows compelled UNHCR and other humanitarian actors to shift operational priorities constantly in West Africa. The turmoil induced by conflict in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia resulted in such a blending of populations that it became difficult and impractical to distinguish between refugees, returnees and third country nationals in emergency response operations. Precarious conditions on both sides of the Côte d'Ivoire-Liberia border prevented access by humanitarian workers to needy populations amid reports of widespread human rights violations by warring parties. The

hazards were illustrated by the brutal killing of two aid workers in eastern Liberia in March, leading to the suspension of humanitarian operations in that area until the end of the year.

The involvement of Liberian fighters in the Ivorian conflict fuelled anti-refugee sentiment, amid allegations of complicity with combatants. Negative attitudes were countered through intensive advocacy campaigns targeting host communities, refugees, governments and the public at large. UNHCR joined others in calling for a regional approach to disarmament and demobilization in order to prevent the migration of armed ex-combatants, in search of opportunities to offer their services elsewhere. Meanwhile, community-based programmes were strengthened, sensitizing and empowering communities to deal with SGBV issues. Nevertheless, there remains an acute need for further programmes to address the refugees' economic plight and improve general living standards.

In Sierra Leone, sustained humanitarian and recovery assistance will remain the key to lasting reintegration of returnees. Acute deprivation is compounded by widespread dilapidation of infrastructure and the absence of basic services. A massive rehabilitation and reconstruction effort will be needed to address the poverty-related causes of the civil war and foster peaceful cohabitation.



Progress towards solutions

UNHCR continued to promote voluntary repatriation of Sierra Leonean refugees and organized mass information campaigns to keep refugees informed of conditions in their places of return. During the year more than 33,000 were assisted to return.

The establishment of a settlement in Sierra Leone to facilitate the local integration of urban refugees represents an important breakthrough for this form of durable solution. In Côte d'Ivoire, major advances had been made towards local integration of refugees in the *Zone d'accueil des réfugiés* in the years preceding the civil war. However, these prospects have receded as the civil war has endured and the political climate degenerated. In 2003 UNHCR established special protection measures to resettle refugees who had suffered multiple displacements and were at particular risk, both from armed elements and growing anti-refugee sentiment in Côte d'Ivoire. Altogether, UNHCR assisted 2,535 refugees of various nationalities to resettle to third countries from Benin (33), Cameroon (26), Ghana (172), Guinea (534), Côte d'Ivoire (1,646), Liberia (22), Mali (7), Nigeria (78) and Sierra Leone (17) in 2003. Meanwhile, the programme for resettlement to Benin and Burkina Faso has not produced the expected results due to limited opportunities for the achievement of self-sufficiency.

Operations

The following paragraphs outline UNHCR's activities in West Africa by country, except for **Côte d'Ivoire**, **Guinea**, **Liberia** and **Sierra Leone**, which are described in separate chapters. It should be noted that the narrative and the financial reporting on the Central African Republic, Chad and Gabon are included in the chapter on Central Africa and the Great Lakes.

The Office in **Benin** oversees operations in Burkina Faso, Niger and Togo. All four countries enjoy relative political stability and have open policies regarding local integration of refugees. Benin is host to 5,034 refugees, of whom 1,135 are living in Kpomassè Camp. UNHCR provided assistance and protection to the refugees and supported them with programmes that will help them achieve self-reliance. In 2003, some 1,140 asylum-seekers from various African countries were registered, 197 of



Côte d'Ivoire: Thousands of Liberian refugees have been assisted by UNHCR to return home. Here, the buses are travelling from the Tabou transit centre. *UNHCR/N. Behring*

whom were formally recognized as refugees. Under the repatriation programme, 164 refugees were assisted to return to their countries of origin (Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of the Congo and Rwanda). Self-reliance projects were implemented for 97 persons. Of 371 school-aged children, UNHCR assisted nearly all who were in need of primary education, provided secondary educational grants for 259 students and post-secondary educational grants for another 83. Vocational training assistance was provided to 26 persons. An estimated 4,000 Beninese nationals returned from Côte d'Ivoire as a consequence of the conflict. During 2003, a high proportion of the asylum-seekers who arrived in Togo and Benin were of Ivorian nationality (182 and 362 people respectively). Special programmes had to be put in place for these unexpected groups.

Burkina Faso hosted 466 refugees, including 48 who were integrated locally under the UNHCR-sponsored local settlement scheme, and 499 asylum-seekers originating from Burundi, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of the Congo and Rwanda. The crisis in Côte d'Ivoire drove 365,000 nationals of Burkina Faso back home, with severe consequences for the national economy.

UNHCR reopened the Office in **Cameroon**, which is host to 58,625 refugees, mainly from Burundi, CAR, Chad and DRC, and continues to attract a significant number of refugees and asylum-seekers each year.

157 refugees were repatriated, mainly to Chad, CAR and DRC. In July UNHCR resumed refugee status determination procedures for 6,188 asylum-seekers whose claims had been pending since the closure of the Office; 986 applications were processed, of which 461 were granted refugee status. Direct assistance was provided to the most vulnerable urban refugees, health care was available to all the refugees, and sanitary materials were provided for urban women refugees. Support for primary education was provided for 527 urban refugee children (223 girls), and support for secondary or higher education for 140 others. Sixteen refugees and a group of six refugee women received interest-free loans to develop income-generating activities. UNHCR established a presence in Banyo to carry out protection and assistance programmes for Nigerian refugees who fled to the area in 2002 following ethnic clashes in Taraba Province, Nigeria. 16,893 Nigerian refugees were registered during a census in November. Food was provided by WFP while UNHCR continued to assist this population with domestic and shelter items, health care, rehabilitation of the water system, and basic primary education for 1,080 refugee children.

UNHCR re-opened its office in **the Gambia** which is host to 7,465 refugees, mainly from Senegal, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Central African countries. A registration of refugees was conducted jointly by the Government and UNHCR in June, following which identity cards were issued to 3,000 refugees to facilitate their movement. A tripartite agreement was

signed between the Governments of the Gambia, Sierra Leone and UNHCR on 31 October for the voluntary repatriation of Sierra Leonean refugees. Some 3,225 medical consultations took place, 150 women received sanitary materials, 948 children were assisted to attend school, and 52 youths embarked on vocational training courses. Some 105 refugees, mainly women living in Basse and Bambali sites, and 29 in Banjul town, were assisted to attain greater self-reliance through income-generating activities.

Ghana is host to some 47,695 refugees. The majority (42,388) are Liberians while the remainder are from Togo, Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire, CAR, Chad, DRC, Rwanda, Congo, Nigeria and Cameroon. In partnership with the Government and NGOs, efforts to enhance the protection regime and ensure adequate levels of protection and assistance improved the situation of refugees considerably. A comprehensive registration exercise in the second half of the year showed that Ghana's refugee population numbered 47,695, with the 41,853 Liberians residing in Buduburam Refugee Settlement constituting Ghana's largest refugee concentration. Major challenges included bringing basic health, sanitation and education facilities up to acceptable minimum standards. Six classrooms were constructed to accommodate 240 pupils, and school supplies such as textbooks, exercise books and furniture were provided. Communal latrines and bathhouses were constructed and run by refugee committees. The clinic serving the community was extended to increase its capacity and stocked with drugs. An ambulance was also procured. HIV/AIDS-awareness activities were undertaken and counselling services provided and a specialist local NGO was engaged to assist survivors and design a comprehensive plan to combat SGBV through education and awareness raising. In Krisan Settlement, which offers scant opportunity for self-reliance, 1,651 refugees were provided with monthly food rations in addition to community-based assistance in other sectors. Refugees residing in urban areas in Accra were provided with subsistence allowances and a new transit centre was commissioned. Support and training were provided to government bodies dealing with refugee matters. The Ghana Refugee Board started refugee status determination activities.

Guinea-Bissau is host to 7,551 mostly rural refugees of Senegalese origin who live in the north in Jolmète site. Despite the lack of an official

counterpart within government authorities in Bissau and due to political instability followed by a *coup d'état* in 2003, UNHCR continued to support the *ad hoc* eligibility commission which processed 87 new applications (of which 25 cases were granted refugee status, 23 were rejected and the rest required further interviews). With UNHCR's assistance, 75 Sierra Leonean refugees repatriated voluntarily to their country. Some 250 refugees received medical assistance, and sanitary materials were distributed to 200 women. In Jolmète site, 152 children attended primary school. In Bissau only six children were assisted for schooling due to the breakdown of the national education system following political instability. Refugees in Jolmète site produced food and are close to reaching food self-sufficiency. Five micro projects were financed, benefiting 26 women.

Mali hosted some 10,009 refugees from Burundi, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, DRC, Liberia, Mauritania, Nigeria, RoC, Sierra Leone, Togo and other countries in Africa. UNHCR deployed a full-fledged emergency team to Mali in March to protect and assist 1,504 Ivorian refugees who fled the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire. They were recognized as refugees on a *prima facie* basis and settled in two camps, Loulounie and Faragouaran. Mali also received 712 asylum-seekers from various African countries; 132 of their applications were processed and 84 were granted refugee status. Efforts were made to assess potential durable solutions for some 6,150 Mauritanian refugees who had resided in Mali for a long period of time. Medical assistance was provided through 2,261 consultations to urban refugees and 970 consultations to Ivorian refugees in camps. Food distribution was carried out for 356 Ivorians and 40 other refugees of various nationalities. More than 200 women received sanitary materials. Some 331 refugee children (42 per cent girls) were given primary education. Ninety per cent of the site-based population is involved in agriculture and more than four tons of food was harvested after the rainy season.

Niger hosted 328 refugees of whom 138 were Chadians in Gouré. Most of the refugees originated from Chad and the DRC. Vocational training was provided for 21 urban refugees; 35 children received scholarships for primary education, and 13 for secondary education. Self-reliance projects were implemented for 10 persons.

Nigeria hosts 9,180 refugees, mainly from Liberia, Sierra Leone, Sudan and Chad, of whom 6,500 are

living in Oru Camp. Over 3,000 Liberians fled to Nigeria in the second half of 2003. In response, UNHCR put in place a special programme. Regular camp maintenance was undertaken as well as the construction of additional facilities and housing. Some 450 vulnerable refugees received food and non-food items. Market gardening proved profitable in the camp where tools, seedlings and tubers were distributed to the refugees. Health care services were made available to all refugees. 260 schoolchildren received primary education in the camp and in the urban centres. Four francophone refugees were assisted with foreign language training. Some 130 refugees of various nationalities benefited from vocational training such as hairdressing, tailoring, secretarial work and catering. Training and workshops were conducted for relevant staff in the camp, with counselling for target groups, in order to reduce the incidence of SGBV. Under the repatriation programme 100 Sierra Leonean refugees were assisted to return to their country of origin.

The Office in **Senegal** coordinated operations in the Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Mali and Senegal. Senegal has a refugee population of 22,992, mainly from Mauritania, Liberia, Rwanda, Burundi and Sierra Leone. Some 2,266 asylum-seekers from various African countries were registered, 58 of whom were granted refugee status. Efforts were made to assess potential durable solutions for Mauritanian refugees. Some 2,981 urban refugees received a medical consultation. Financial assistance was extended to 36 vulnerable refugees. UNHCR awarded 25 post-secondary scholarships to refugees on the basis of educational merit. Another 66 young people attended vocational training courses. Assistance was provided for 2,111 children in primary education in rural areas (and another 34 in Dakar). In rural areas, 311 women (and another 21 in urban areas) benefited from UNHCR's micro-credit scheme to stimulate small-scale trade.

Togo hosted 12,729 refugees and 325 asylum-seekers, of whom 1,187 urban refugees received material assistance including primary and secondary education for 256 students, and micro-credit assistance for 73 persons. Some 11,000 refugees from Ghana resided in rural parts of northern Togo where they are locally integrated.

Funding

The Annual Programme budget for West Africa (USD 79,580,382) increased by 14 per cent to USD 90,515,419 by December. In addition, two Supplementary Programmes were established in the course of the year for a total of USD 33,531,406: to relocate Liberian refugees from Kouankan Camp for security reasons (USD 4,520,001) and to respond to the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire (USD 29,011,405). UNHCR's projects presented in the UN *Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeals for West Africa* amounted to USD 112,485,990.

Contributions that were earmarked for Annual Programmes amounted to USD 56,052,085 representing 62 per cent of total requirements. Transfers from unearmarked and broadly earmarked funds brought the total funds available to USD 88,684,655. Meanwhile, UNHCR received USD 18,983,766 for Supplementary Programmes in 2003, representing 57 per cent of requirements. However, these levels of funding did not have negative consequences for the Supplementary Programmes. Security concerns in Kouankan camp were deemed to have been eliminated following improvements in the situation in Liberia: the relocation operation was therefore called off. Likewise, the supplementary appeal to respond to the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire was based on the assumption that nearly 100,000 Ivorian refugees would flee to neighbouring countries. The anticipated mass exodus did not take place. UNHCR thus received sufficient funds to mount effective emergency operations for persons affected by the war in Côte d'Ivoire, and extended the programme to respond to the crisis that confronted humanitarian agencies in Monrovia in August (see chapters on Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia).

Voluntary contributions - Restricted / Earmarked (USD)					
Earmarking ¹	Donor	Annual programme budget		Supplementary programme budget	
		Income	Contribution	Income	Contribution
Benin					
	Norway	40,600	40,600	0	0
Cameroon					
	United States of America	100,000	100,000	0	0
Côte d'Ivoire					
	Andorra	0	0	71,259	71,259
	Canada	0	0	326,797	326,797
	Germany	586,854	586,854	0	0
	Ireland	0	0	268,528	268,528
	Japan	1,000,000	1,000,000	0	0
	United States of America	1,399,000	1,399,000	0	0
Ghana					
	United States of America	468,000	468,000	0	0
Guinea					
	<i>Association Française de Soutien à l'UNHCR (FRA)</i>	8,980	8,980	0	0
	European Commission	1,031,336	1,031,336	0	0
	Germany	293,427	293,427	0	0
	Ireland	537,057	537,057	0	0
	Italy	456,100	456,100	0	0
	Japan	2,000,000	2,000,000	0	0
	Norway	596,177	596,177	0	0
	Private donors Italy	133,880	133,880	0	0
	<i>Stichting Vluchteling (NET)</i>	257,143	257,143	0	0
	United Kingdom	469,484	469,484	0	0
	United States of America	3,760,000	3,760,000	0	0
Liberia					
	Angelina Jolie (Ms), USA	25,000	25,000	0	0
	<i>Association Française de Soutien à l'UNHCR (FRA)</i>	35,577	35,577	0	0
	Germany	0	0	100,000	100,000
	Italy	457,143	457,143	114,286	114,286
	Japan	1,000,000	1,000,000	0	0
	Luxembourg	347,336	347,336	0	0
	Netherlands	189,000	189,000	0	0
	Norway	1,504,267	1,504,267	0	0
	Private donors Italy	28,082	28,082	0	0
	Spain	4,312	4,312	0	0
	United States of America	2,200,000	2,200,000	0	0
Nigeria					
	Germany	62,717	62,717	0	0

Earmarking ¹	Donor	Annual programme budget		Supplementary programme budget	
		Income	Contribution	Income	Contribution
Sierra Leone²					
	<i>España con ACNUR (SPA)</i>	0	361,142	0	0
	European Commission	4,085,750	4,213,167	0	0
	France	104,384	104,384	0	0
	Germany	1,766,784	1,766,784	0	0
	Japan	3,000,000	3,000,000	0	0
	Netherlands	472,500	472,500	0	0
	Norway	3,374,690	3,374,690	0	0
	Private donors Italy	189,081	189,081	0	0
	Private donors Netherlands	114	114	0	0
	Switzerland	1,163,973	1,163,973	0	0
	UK for UNHCR (GBR)	31,443	31,443	0	0
	United Kingdom	793,651	793,651	0	0
	United States of America	4,890,000	4,890,000	0	0
Togo					
	Norway	41,700	41,700	0	0
West Africa					
	<i>Association Française de Soutien à l'UNHCR (FRA)</i>	16,425	16,425	0	0
	Belgium	537,730	537,730	0	0
	Canada	335,570	335,570	536,913	536,913
	Denmark	1,594,896	1,594,896	1,076,923	1,076,923
	<i>Deutsche Stiftung (GFR)</i>	0	0	53,821	53,821
	Finland	939,283	939,283	0	0
	France	1,177,856	1,177,856	0	0
	Germany	0	0	437,057	437,057
	Italy	0	0	173,872	0
	Japan	3,000,000	3,000,000	0	0
	Luxembourg	617,143	617,143	0	0
	Netherlands	0	0	500,000	500,000
	Norway	0	0	689,655	689,655
	Poland	0	0	10,000	10,000
	Sweden	7,981,756	7,981,756	2,295,171	2,295,171
	Thailand	0	0	10,000	10,000
	United Kingdom	0	0	469,484	469,484
	United States of America	700,000	700,000	11,850,000	11,850,000
	USA for UNHCR (USA)	245,884	245,884	0	0
Total		56,052,085	56,540,644	18,983,766	18,809,894

¹ For more information on the various earmarkings, please refer to the donor profiles.

² In addition to the above-mentioned contributions earmarked for Sierra Leone, several private donors in Switzerland donated USD 17,746 through the World Refugee Day's Fund Raising Concert in UNHCR's headquarters.

Budget and expenditure (USD)

Country	Revised budget			Expenditure		
	Annual programme budget	Supplementary programme budget	Total	Annual programme budget	Supplementary programme budget	Total
Benin	1,042,786	92,214	1,135,000	931,240	62,395	993,635
Cameroon	1,520,973	0	1,520,973	1,472,076	0	1,472,076
Côte d'Ivoire	10,157,037	5,122,745	15,279,782	10,146,654	5,130,973	15,277,627
Gambia	718,433	0	718,433	670,920	0	670,920
Ghana	3,214,218	760,264	3,974,482	3,140,667	759,876	3,900,543
Guinea Bissau	42,800	0	42,800	42,779	0	42,779
Guinea	26,129,217	4,876,034	31,005,251	25,652,820	2,539,569	28,192,389
Liberia	7,422,725	3,197,754	10,620,479	7,303,990	3,194,529	10,498,519
Mali	51,750	0	51,750	49,662	0	49,662
Nigeria	1,187,491	86,125	1,273,616	1,158,911	64,684	1,223,595
Senegal	1,554,777	421,621	1,976,398	1,544,057	313,846	1,857,903
Sierra Leone	35,245,603	0	35,245,603	34,388,998	0	34,388,998
Regional projects ¹	2,227,609	16,916,965	19,144,574	2,109,787	10,091,672	12,201,459
Total	90,515,419	31,473,722	121,989,141	88,612,561	22,157,544	110,770,105

¹ AB: Includes care and maintenance, voluntary repatriation and resettlement assistance for urban refugees in the subregion, as well as scholarships for refugee students in West African countries.

SB: Includes emergency assistance to Liberian returnees from Côte d'Ivoire, as well as emergency assistance to Ivorian asylum-seekers in West Africa.

Note: The Supplementary programme budgets do not include a 7 per cent charge (support costs) that is recovered from contributions to meet indirect costs for UNHCR.