



COUNTRY OPERATIONS PLAN

OVERVIEW

Country: Chad

Planning Year: 2006

2006 Country Operations Plan for Chad

Part 1: OVERVIEW

1. Protection and socio-economic operational environment

UNHCR's office in Chad was closed in 2001 owing to budgetary pressures and a relatively small, residual refugee population in settlements in the south and in urban centres such as the capital N'djamena. The office was reopened in 2003 and dramatically expanded in 2004 to accommodate in eastern Chad the influx of approximately 200,000 refugees from Darfur, Sudan. Throughout 2004 and 2005, the eleven camps in eastern Chad (a twelfth, Gaga, is scheduled to open by mid-2005) have enjoyed the lion's share of the attention of UNHCR itself and the UN agencies and NGOs present in Chad. Owing to its emergency nature, the eastern Chad operation –representing nearly 95% of total UNHCR expenditures in Chad-- is funded through a Supplementary Budget (SB) and consequently does not formally form part of the instant Country Operations Plan (COP).

Several of the major challenges in the eastern Chad operation define also the programming priorities for UNHCR's operations in the south and in urban centres. Environmental degradation, the lack of infrastructure and economic opportunities, the particular vulnerability of women and the absence or inadequacy of education and health services are as evident in the south and urban centres as in the east. Only the relatively easier access to water in the south (with the notable exception of Damanadji) and in the capital and the total absence of international attention distinguish the situation of refugees in southern Chad from those in the east.

Chad is a seriously impoverished country ranking 167th out of the 177 countries included in 2004 UNDP's Human Development Index (which is based on average life expectancy, school enrolment and adult literacy, and Gross Domestic Product per capita). According to the UN's Early Warning Country Analysis of June 2004, it is a country characterized by food insecurity owing to recurrent drought and pests, unstable agricultural output, a weak manufacturing and industrial sector, lack of skills and education, low standard of living and lack of access to basic resources (particularly in rural areas) and poor transport and communications infrastructure. Layered on to or sustaining and perhaps causing these deficiencies are poor governance, excessive concentration of political power in a few hands and one minority tribe, the Zaghawa, corruption and mismanagement and small but ongoing rebel activities in the north and east seemingly supported by Libya and Sudan respectively.

The discovery of oil and the completion of the Chad-Cameroon oil pipeline in 2003 promises to diversify Chad's reliance on cotton, livestock and gum exports and substantially increase national revenue, though the oil is of a heavy type not commanding top dollar. In order to win World Bank financing for the pipeline, Chad agreed to dedicate 80% of oil revenues to five priority development sectors: education, health, rural development, infrastructure, and water/environment. Some external observers worry that fine print in the agreement or repudiation by the central government could nullify the agreement and thus the much needed funds. Others,

including foreign government representatives very familiar with the agreement, do not share this fear.

In any case, Chad, despite its poverty and weak governance, has demonstrated remarkable receptivity to the approximately 30,000 refugees from Central African Republic (CAR) in the south, the approximately 5,000 refugees from Sudan, the two Congos and elsewhere in urban centres, and the approximately 215,000 refugees from Sudan in the east. Chad is a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol as well as the 1969 OAU Refugee Convention. As observed by the independent expert Monica Pinto in her 27 January 2005 report for the UN Human Rights Committee, it is also party, *inter alia*, to the two major human rights covenants, the Conventions for the elimination of racial discrimination and discrimination against women, the torture Convention and the Convention and associated Protocols dealing with the rights of the child.

There is no national refugee legislation though there is a national refugee authority, CNAR (Commission Nationale d'Accueil et de Reinsertion des Refugies). All refugees residing in camps, i.e. Sudanese in the east and CAR refugees in the south, are recognized on a *prima facie* basis. Refugees from either of these countries who wish to live in urban areas, notably the capital, N'djamena, are provided protection only. Assistance is extended only if the refugee concerned is willing to relocate to a camp. Refugees are recognized under the 1951 Convention by a committee composed of national authorities and chaired by CNAR.

In addition to the government's formal receptivity to refugees, the local populations in areas accommodating refugees, despite often abject poverty, have also proven highly accommodating. There are tensions, particularly in the east, over water and grazing and job opportunities, but ethnic and linguistic and other affinities appear to overcome such difficulties in the south. Refugees in urban populations simply do not receive much –nothing, in material terms, from the host government-- and have not consequently engendered resentment in the indigenous population.

There are significant problems in the south due to poor governance. Underpaid, under-trained and under-professional police (gendarmes) are known to extort from and on occasion wrongfully and arbitrarily detain and mistreat populations under their notional care, including refugees. There are also tensions in periods of food scarcity and over access to education and health which, for refugees, is more readily available than for local populations owing to the insufficient educational infrastructure (schools and teachers) and (relatively) high school fees for nationals.

Protection activities relating to sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) will remain a priority in both southern and urban programming. The women's vigilance committees established in the two southern settlements will be reinforced and closer liaison with domestic human rights NGOs will improve the likelihood of prosecutions for gender-related violence as well as women's access to legal assistance.

UNHCR is not aware of refugees in urban areas being subject to extortion or wrongful detention. The most common forms of exploitation of refugee and other women in urban centres relate to economic desperation. Accordingly the most effective protection derives from amelioration of women's economic circumstances. In Chad,

of course, this is not easy. Nevertheless, women and children will continue to receive priority for the limited assistance available, with an emphasis on transformative income generation and skills training opportunities.

2. Operational Goals and potential for Durable Solutions

Consistent with UNHCR's global strategic objectives, the *Agenda for Protection and the Durable Solutions Framework*, UNHCR Chad intends in 2006 to:

- Ensure continuing protection to individually and *prima facie* recognized refugees in both camp and urban settings and assistance at a level consonant with mandated responsibilities and available resources
- Liaise with UNHCR Sudan to facilitate return of approximately 8,000 of estimated 10,000 Chadian refugees in El Geneina (Sudan) area
- Identify and ready refugee sub-populations willing to repatriate in safety and dignity to northern CAR, including an estimated 19,500 CAR refugees (12,000 assisted; 7,500 spontaneously) in southern Chad
- Prepare for the return and assist in the speedy reintegration of refugee populations from neighbouring countries, in particular 1,300 Chadian refugees in Central African Republic (who opted not to repatriate in the 2001 repatriation and to whom UNHCR CAR does not enjoy access owing to security reasons) and 3000 Chadian refugees in western Sudan
- Promote self-reliance where repatriation or fully fledged local integration are not yet possible
- Activate the process of local integration for about 10,500 refugees who will not repatriate but opt to stay in Chad, in cooperation with local authorities, local communities and refugees and development actors.
- Increase significantly attention to and resources for the refugee situation in the south by mobilising donor, NGO and particularly UN agency involvement (under the umbrella of the Humanitarian Coordinator) and establishing or strengthening strategic partnerships, such as with FAO
- Prioritize support for environmental and host community programming which in turn prioritize women and children
- Maximize opportunities for improved management and oversight
- Ensure Code-of-Conduct compliant behaviour by all UNHCR and Implementing Partner staff

UNHCR's office in N'djamena, Chad, will collaborate closely with UNHCR CAR in Bangui (whose new Representative has been determined and will be taking up the post soon) to determine the viability of repatriation in safety and dignity of (1) CAR refugees in Chad and (2) Chadian refugees in CAR. Prospects for the former group will be enhanced if the March 2005 election results are deemed to be as free from irregularity by the CAR population as they have been by international observers and if this in turn leads to a credible, legitimate, stable government receptive to the return of its citizens presently residing as refugees in the two refugee settlements in southern Chad, Amboko (UNHCR Field Office Gore) and Yaroungou (UNHCR Field Office Damandji).

In 2003, UNHCR conducted a survey of the intention of refugees in the south to return. The vast majority indicated they did not. In 2004, however, sentiment appeared to change. Following extensive consultations on the issue with partners, government authorities and the refugees themselves, UNHCR's thoroughly informed local staff supervised by field heads in place for several months ascertained that approximately two thirds of the 30,000 refugees would repatriate to CAR if the situation were sufficiently stable. It is not yet clear whether the requisite degree of stability will be perceived by the refugees to have been achieved in 2005. Most, UNHCR believes, will wait until 2006 and the new school year and planting season, before returning. UNHCR will endeavour to ready itself for an earlier return should the refugees be willing to return in significant numbers in 2005. It is imagined that only those with close family links or land or the least attractive integration prospects in Chad will return.

The remaining population will be assisted in integrating locally. The likelihood of successful integration is tied to the viability of the local settlements and thus assistance will where possible be directed to community-based services and made available to host populations. As noted, UNHCR anticipates playing a catalytic role in attracting fundamentally needed development resources to the region from UN agencies, donors and NGOs. The refugees in southern Chad and their local hosts represent an opportunity for the international community to address concurrent relief and development needs, ideally leading to a multi-actor commitment to, inter alia, achieving in the region the UN's millennium development goals.

In both cases (i.e. repatriating and non-repatriating populations) care and maintenance will be required in the near term though with a strong focus, prioritizing women, on self-reliance activities and environmental regeneration and sustainability. Reforestation is particularly important in light of the denudation of the host environments by refugees in need of fuel.

UNHCR will maintain its policy of not providing assistance to Sudanese and CAR refugees in urban centres in order not to create a draw to such centres. The capital and other cities in Chad could not cope with such an influx and governmental and local population receptivity to refugees would assuredly perish. UNHCR will, as obliged by its mandate and confirmed by EXCOM conclusions, provide protection to such refugees, for example, endeavouring to forestall unjustified detention or refoulement.

Urban refugees of other nationalities will receive assistance on the basis of identified need and the availability of resources. Such assistance will focus on self-reliance activities such as skills training and income generation, including micro-credit, and will prioritize women. Educational assistance for children will ordinarily be limited to two-time assistance, to ensure retention in enrolment, after which it is anticipated that remunerative employment based on enhanced skills will allow for parents to assume school fee obligations for their children. Medical and subsistence assistance will be available on an emergency basis only.

There is currently no resettlement from Chad and no program of resettlement is expected to be established in 2005 though in appropriate cases individual submissions could be made.