



COUNTRY OPERATIONS PLAN

Executive Committee Summary

Country : Morocco

Planning Year : 2006

2006 Morocco Country Operations Plan

Part I: Executive Committee Summary

(a) Context and Beneficiary Populations

Political context

Due to its geographic location as well as vast borders, Morocco has become a point of transit for many asylum-seekers as well as for economic migrants heading for Europe, mainly from Sub-Saharan countries, of which many are affected by conflict situation. The challenge for Moroccan authorities will, therefore, be the development of an effective migration management system that entails control and screening of illegal migrants which, also makes the requisite distinction between individuals seeking better economic conditions and those in genuine need of international protection.

Protection Issues

Morocco has signed and ratified the 1951 Convention, the 1967 Protocol and the OUA Convention. However, the authorities have neither adopted a refugee law nor established a procedure in order to deal with asylum seekers and refugees. A decree adopted in 1957, which regulates all issues relating to refugees and asylum seekers, is still in force but not being implemented.

Two third of the asylum seekers from Sub-Saharan countries who approach UNHCR Morocco do not have legal documents. During 2005 the number of asylum seekers approaching UNHCR increased to 400 cases.

UNHCR will give priority to improve the refugee legal framework, in particular to seek the adoption of a new law on refugees in accordance with the 1951 Convention and to support the authorities to put in place the procedures and structures to deal with asylum issues. For this purpose, training and other technical support will be further developed with the concerned authorities as well as with local NGOs.

Beneficiary populations

On 31 December 2004, the total number of refugees/asylum seekers hosted by Morocco and registered by HCR-Rabat was: 2,127, however, the number of refugees assisted by UNHCR Rabat is: 115 refugees. They are from the following countries: Sierra Leone, Algeria, Palestine, Syria, Ukraine, Chad, Congo, Lebanon, Ivory Cost, Angola, Gambia and Tunisia. 90 % of the refugees are in the City of Rabat. 10% are located in other Cities.

UNHCR expect the number of refugees and asylum-seekers to increase in 2006 up to 200 refugees and 600 asylum-seekers.

UNHCR Role

Pending the adoption of new refugee legislation and the establishment of an eligibility procedure, UNHCR Morocco will continue to carry out refugee status determination of asylum seekers (RSD) and ensure protection of refugees and asylum seekers against arrests, detention, deportation and refoulement. UNHCR Morocco will also continue to provide legal assistance to refugees, particularly for obtaining some legal

documents or refugees summoned by courts due to the lack of legal documents for their stay in Morocco.

UNHCR Morocco will ensure the access to basic health-care and life-saving medical assistance to the vulnerable cases among these asylum seekers/refugees. This component, as well as the subsistence allowance provided to the most needy beneficiaries. This task will be carried out by an implementing partner (NGO). This NGO, with the assistance of UNHCR, will carry out a survey in order to check the situation of the assisted refugees and target the most vulnerable cases.

In 2006, UNHCR will continue to ensure skill training projects (vocational training) in order to facilitate socio-economic integration for refugees. The purpose will be to achieve self-sustainability. UNHCR's partner will also implement this programme.

In 2006, UNHCR Rabat will continue to provide educational assistance to refugee and asylum seeker children enabling them to have access to the primary and secondary education.

UNHCR Rabat will continue to seek to identify resettlement solutions for refugees, focusing mainly on most vulnerable cases like women and unaccompanied minors.

In 2006 UNHCR capacity building in Morocco will be devoted to support the legal assistance activities. The aim will be to raise awareness among both the authorities and the public, including universities and national NGOs dealing with refugees, to refugee and asylum issues, international and domestic legislation procedures and rights and duties of refugees and asylum seekers.

The Lack of employment opportunities in the country of asylum constitutes a constraint and assistance is provided to refugees by UNHCR Rabat on the basis of a monthly allowance or exceptional financial aids to address vulnerable cases. Allowances are meant to cover accommodation, food, transportation and clothing. Needy asylum seekers are also assisted under this sector to avoid irregular movement. Aid for education to all refugee children and vocational training.

Medical Assistance is also provided to cover medicine costs and visits to specialised doctors, hospitalisation, pregnancies, as well as imperative dental treatments and Vaccinations.