

ANGOLA

INITIAL OBJECTIVES

- Protect and assist up to 13,000 refugees and asylum-seekers, the majority from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), living in and around the capital Luanda as well as in Bengo and Moxico provinces.
- Security and access permitting, work towards achieving lasting solutions for refugees through enhanced local integration and self-sufficiency as well as support for voluntary repatriation.
- As of June, assist the Government in providing protection and basic humanitarian assistance for up to 300,000 IDPs in Zaire and Uige provinces as well as in Viana, near Luanda.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS, PROGRESS ACHIEVED AND CONSTRAINTS

Refugees

Until their displacement in late 1999, most refugees had reached a certain degree of self-sufficiency in rural areas in the country's northern provinces. Currently, the majority (83 per cent) lives in Viana camp where they depend on humanitarian assistance, with smaller numbers living in Boa Esperança, Luanda and Moxico province. After a disruption in food distribution during the latter part of 1999, UNHCR and WFP agreed in January to ascertain the exact number of refugees in need of food assistance. A total of 7,788 refugees were registered in Viana, Boa Esperança and Luanda, of whom 66 per cent were under 18 years of age and 52 per cent were women and girls. Among those living in Viana camp, 1,800 Congolese refugees have recently expressed their desire to voluntarily repatriate to the DRC, but this has not been possible due to insecurity.

Refugees have received a regular supply of food through WFP since the beginning of the year. UNHCR has distributed soap, blankets and kitchen sets in an attempt to help them improve their living conditions. During the first quarter, refugees in Viana camp had access to

health services provided by a national NGO partner. However, when an international NGO (not funded by UNHCR) began offering health services to both IDPs and refugees, funds were reallocated for the purchase of urgently needed shelter materials (plastic sheeting and mud bricks) to help refugees improve their dwellings. Savings in the health sector also allowed the Office to fund the expansion of a health post in Viana camp as well as the establishment of a refugee community centre in Luanda (from which a variety of services will be provided to an increasing number of urban refugees). Meanwhile, after a review by UNHCR of their needs, refugees in Luanda and other urban areas continued to have access to medical services at the government hospital.

UNHCR supported 60 refugees (half of them adolescent girls) with income-generating activities through two national NGO partners. Progress in attaining self-sufficiency has been slow, especially for the adolescent group as they were often occupied with household chores. Sixteen male and ten female refugees attended vocational training courses (electrical installations, masonry, etc.). With a few exceptions, the trainees are either employed or self-employed and have received tool kits for their trades. UNHCR and its NGO partner will assess the impact of activities promoting self-reliance and local integration on the welfare of refugees and their families over the coming months.

About 400 refugee children were attending the primary school in Viana camp. An NGO partner recently added six classrooms to the school with active community participation and basic supplies were also provided. Although UNHCR continued to advocate with parents for the importance of primary education, only 20 per cent of refugee children were attending school.

To improve its response to refugee women and children, UNHCR has recently established four committees focusing on human rights, health, social and economic development and education to ensure that their need for protection is given due consideration in all community-based services. This mechanism will be

used to carry out needs and build a response strategy together with the refugees.

Although the national eligibility committee functions relatively well, a decision in April to restructure the immigration services and create a new department for refugees caused significant delays in the refugee status determination process. Seventy-five asylum applications were reviewed during the reporting period (some of them pending since last year) of which 27 were granted asylum. Once the new department for refugees becomes operational, UNHCR plans to organise training on refugee law and international protection for newly appointed staff.

IDPs

International attention to the plight of an estimated 3.7 million people in need of humanitarian assistance (1.5 million of which are IDPs) in Angola soared in January, when a special session on Africa at the UN Security Council called for stronger and more effective humanitarian measures. UNHCR was identified as one of the organisations able to assist, particularly since many of the displaced were in a “refugee-like” situation. In light of growing economic and social difficulties, the Angolan Government subsequently made a request to UNHCR for assistance to the IDP population. Consultations were launched with other UN agencies and an assessment mission comprising UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP was fielded in March by the UN Emergency Relief Co-ordinator. In line with the conclusions of an internal review to evaluate UNHCR’s role in IDP situations, and following the recommendations of a rapid assessment mission in April, the High Commissioner made a decision in June to launch a limited assistance programme for up to 300,000 IDPs in the provinces of Zaire and Uige and Luanda.

Findings indicated that IDPs in the three target areas were in desperate need of protection and humanitarian assistance. Most were living in over-crowded inhumane conditions, without access to food, medical care, water or sanitation. An emergency response team was deployed in May to begin to address their most critical needs. Guidelines were prepared (or Minimum Operating Standards based upon the principles of voluntary relocation, obliga-

tory mine clearing, acceptable security conditions and the availability of basic services and agricultural land) for the relocation of IDPs living in congested warehouses to camps and other more accessible sites and letters of intent were signed with a number of potential NGO partners. An initial allocation of USD 2 million from the Operational Reserve was approved and a special funding appeal was launched in early July.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Reintegration (MINARS), which co-ordinates refugee and IDP issues, welcomed UNHCR’s involvement and local authorities in Uige (where UNHCR opened an office in June) are ready to co-operate in improving the protection of an estimated 170,000 IDPs in the province. Plans are under way to begin registration and documentation of the population in the area. Similarly, two new sites, declared free of landmines and other unexploded ordnance, have been identified in the government-controlled areas of Uige and Negage for IDP settlements. Agricultural land will be made available by the Government to enable IDPs who decide to relocate to these sites to improve their food security.

Most of the 47,000 IDPs in M’Banza Congo are living among the resident population, although some live in camps in M’Banza Mazina and N’Zolani. In Maquela Do Zombo, some 20,000 IDPs also include returnees from the DRC (of whom up to 7,000 reportedly returned recently on their own). Approximately 2,000 IDPs are accommodated in a transit centre in Viana.

UNHCR has concentrated on assessing and planning for IDP needs, particularly with regard to basic life-sustaining assistance. Furthermore, as the need for non-food items is urgent, an international order has been placed for 25,000 blankets, 7,500 plastic sheets, 32 metric tonnes of soap, 17,700 kitchen sets and 50,700 jerry cans.

To date, agreements have been signed with two NGO partners to rehabilitate the maternity ward and the water system of the Uige provincial hospital as well as eight health posts. Another NGO will be responsible for camp management, community health services and sanitation in Viana. Two NGOs will be responsible

for providing access to primary and secondary education in the provinces. Another NGO will be involved in the distribution of non-food items, the provision of agricultural implements and improvements to infrastructure. All activities will be carried out with the active participation of the Angolan population to ensure "ownership" as well as sustainability when UNHCR withdraws. Women are key players in the process and special services (reproductive health, prevention and assistance for HIV/AIDS and landmine victims) are currently being developed together with UNFPA.

The security environment in Angola restricts the scope of humanitarian interventions. UN agencies and NGOs are only able to operate in government-controlled areas and even there, access is sometimes limited due to military activity. In addition to the hazards posed by the ongoing civil war, the poor state of the roads and the presence of landmines makes it necessary to rely primarily on air transport to move staff and relief items. The limited capacity of many airstrips further complicates the delivery of assistance. As the cost of fuel, aircraft leasing, insurance and pilots' salaries is high, cash flow could become critical unless donors respond positively to UNHCR's funding appeal.

REVISED OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITY ACTIVITIES FOR JULY-DECEMBER

Refugees

The initial objectives for refugees remain unchanged. Priority will be given to improving refugee shelters and health services as well as making the refugee community centre in Luanda operational. Refugees in Viana will also be able to benefit from services made available for IDPs (see below).

IDPs

UNHCR requires USD 8.4 million for its IDP programme in Angola in 2000. The pro-

gramme, which will extend over a period of 18 months, targets up to 300,000 IDPs, refugees and returnees. In addition to the newly opened field office in Uige, another office will soon open in M'Banza Congo. However, the opening of an office in Maquela Do Zombo has been deferred to 2001. Within the limits of an unstable security environment, UNHCR's priorities for the next six months will be to:

- Help IDPs gain access to basic health services (including reproductive health care for women and nutritional supplements for children), clean water, adequate sanitation and shelter; and provide essential domestic items and clothing to destitute households;
- Address the most fundamental human rights of IDPs, such as the right of residence and freedom from forcible relocation, the right to physical security, protection from abuse and extreme hardship/suffering (especially for women and children) and the right for families to reunite;
- Gradually shift from emergency assistance to activities intended to enhance the IDP population's social and economic rights through inputs to education, community services, agriculture and income-generating activities, particularly for women;
- Strengthen the capacity of the Government and civil society to respond to the basic needs of IDPs, and help the Government establish national standards and mechanisms for their protection, including a civil registry and documentation; and
- Analyse and share information on IDPs with other agencies, and work to identify gaps and ensure complementarity of activities within a community-based approach to protection and assistance.

FINANCIAL DATA (USD)

	Initial Budget	Revised Budget	Total Funds Available*	Total Funds Obligated
AB and TF	2,555,084	5,339,307	3,281,518	3,222,700
SP	0	8,427,692	0	0
TOTAL	2,555,084	13,766,999	3,281,518	3,222,700

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