

# Sierra Leone

## Main objectives

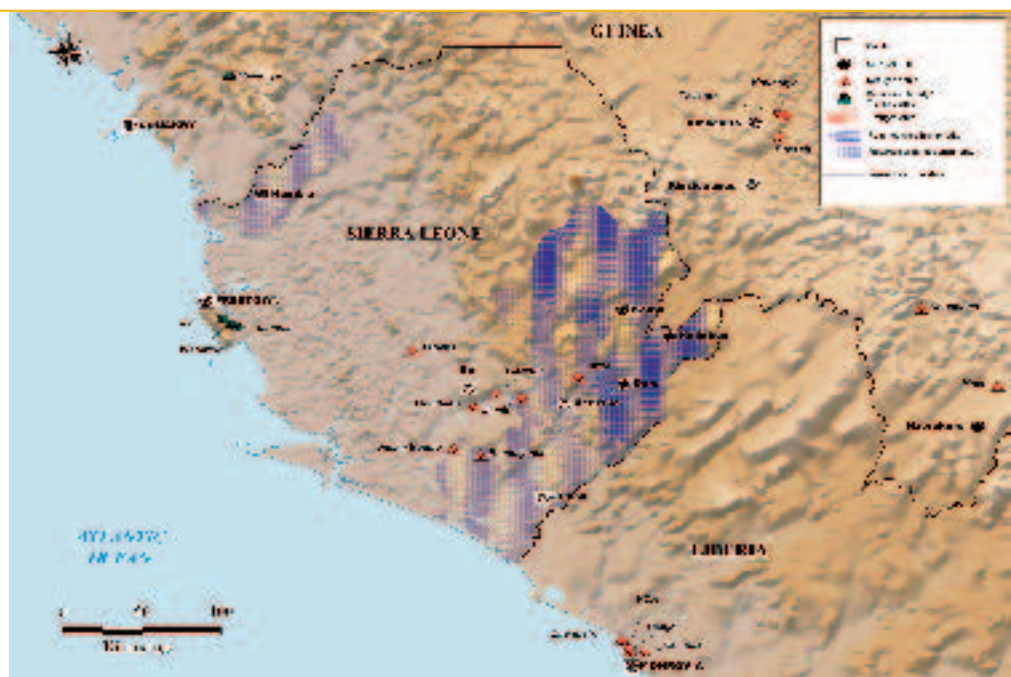
Facilitate the voluntary repatriation of 100,000 Sierra Leonean refugees in conditions of safety and dignity and support reintegration activities in areas of return; advocate the involvement of development agencies in longer-term programmes; adapt existing strategies and programmes to respond effectively to the continuing influx of Liberian refugees; provide limited assistance and international protection to 10,000 of the “old” population of urban Liberian refugees; help them to achieve long-term solutions through local integration or resettlement; enhance Government capacity to handle issues affecting refugees and asylum-seekers (enact refugee legislation, establish a protection and assistance framework, establish a body to handle refugee issues).

## Liberian refugees

From the original group of ‘new influx’ Liberian refugees registered in fully assisted camps, the initial population of 3,522 increased to 43,100 – all receiving care and maintenance assistance. In addition to this number a further estimated 12,000 refugees continued to reside in border areas of Kailahun and Pujehun districts – receiving some periodic protection assistance. They benefited from UNHCR support to village infrastructure in their areas of return. Another group of Liberian refugees, known as the urban or ‘old’ caseload, increased to 8,540 from 7,249 due to migration from border areas. These people were mainly in Bo, Kenema and Freetown and received protection, education and health assistance.

## Impact

- Overall, since September 2000, 212,620 Sierra Leoneans have returned, with 120,564 receiving



assistance from UNHCR (55,828 in 2002). A significant positive contribution to the restoration of communities was made.

- An information campaign on conditions prevailing in main areas of return enabled refugees to make informed decisions – an important element of ensuring the voluntary nature of repatriation.
- Making a significant impact on the capacity of return areas to support people coming back, UNHCR provided community-based reintegration assistance in the sectors of water and sanitation, health, education, shelter, and agriculture.
- In areas receiving large numbers of returnees, 2,742 benefited from income generation activities conceived with the intention of increasing the absorption capacity of the community as a whole.
- 39,578 Liberian new arrivals were transferred from border areas to camps; registration, security and health screening were carried out at transit centres and refugee camps. Five former returnee camps were rehabilitated and expanded and two new camps constructed. Infrastructure was rehabilitated or constructed in the vital sectors of water, sanitation and shelter. New arrivals, while *en route*, were provided with hot meals, medical screening and health care, with vulnerable people receiving special support.

- At the request of the Sierra Leonean Government, UNHCR submitted a draft national refugee legislation for review by Parliament.

## Working environment

### The context

In January 2002, Sierra Leone's decade-long civil war was officially declared over. An unprecedented humanitarian, political and military effort by the international community helped to strengthen the peace process. Peaceful, national, parliamentary and presidential elections were held in mid-year. Bolstered by the support of 17,000 UN peacekeepers of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and international training initiatives, legitimate security was re-established under national police and armed forces throughout almost the entire country. As the Government gradually put its own forces in place, the security situation improved markedly. The disarmament and demobilisation of former combatants was largely completed throughout the country in 2002. Nevertheless, a massive rehabilitation effort is needed to create a viable environment for peaceful cohabitation, particularly in the main areas of return, where extensive devastation was revealed as soon as rebel control was relinquished.

In neighbouring Liberia, armed conflict between government forces and rebels produced a continuous flow of refugees into Sierra Leone throughout the year. The rising population of refugees placed enormous pressures on Sierra Leone's fragile recovery. Despite the monumental challenges posed by the needs of its nationals, the Government of Sierra Leone adopted a generous asylum policy towards refugees and collaborated closely with UNHCR in this regard. It kept its borders open, accorded asylum to the Liberians, who were recognised *prima facie* as refugees, and provided land for refugee camps.

### Constraints

Positive developments in Sierra Leone created a pull factor, with the result that Sierra Leonean refugees returned home earlier than had been anticipated. The ensuing movement in a country devastated by years of civil war – combined with the mass influx of Liberian refugees – tended to overwhelm existing infrastructure and available logistical and humanitarian resources. UNHCR's initial response to the Liberian influx was mounted using resources originally intended for the reintegration programme. Reintegration activities had therefore to be ruthlessly pruned back, allowing only the most basic of survival needs to be met, pending the establishment of a supplementary programme for the newly

Persons of Concern				
Main Origin / Type of Population	Total In Country	Of whom UNHCR assisted	Per cent Female	Per cent under 18
Liberia (Refugees)	63,500	56,500	51	45
Returnees (from Guinea)	40,800	21,700	-	-
Returnees (from Liberia)	34,600	33,700	-	-
Asylum-seekers	280	280	-	-

Income and Expenditure (USD) Annual Programme, Trust Funds and Supplementary Programme Budgets					
	Revised Budget	Income from Contributions <sup>1</sup>	Other Funds Available <sup>2</sup>	Total Funds Available	Total Expenditure
AB and TF	22,445,546	13,931,317	8,399,510	22,330,827	22,315,236
SB	7,409,424	2,946,022	3,695,196	6,641,218	6,641,218
<b>Total</b>	<b>29,854,970</b>	<b>16,877,339</b>	<b>12,094,706</b>	<b>28,972,045</b>	<b>28,956,454</b>

<sup>1</sup> Includes income from contributions restricted at the country level.

<sup>2</sup> Includes allocations by UNHCR from unearmarked or broadly earmarked contributions, opening balance and adjustments. The above figures do not include costs at Headquarters.

arrived refugees. Meanwhile, insecurity along the border with Liberia constrained the repatriation and reintegration operations. Most returnees could not return to places of origin in the vicinity of the border areas and monitoring could not be carried out effectively. Operational constraints were mitigated by substantial support from UNAMSIL comprising trucking, convoy co-ordination and the provision of security, including border patrols.

## Funding

Funding constraints were a source of major concern in Sierra Leone throughout 2002, and these severely compromised repatriation, reintegration and refugee assistance operations. Unfortunately, some implementing partners had to be called upon to pre-finance activities using their own funds (already specifically set-aside for other activities of their own). Almost all partners had, at times, to disregard earlier agreements with UNHCR and deliberately reduce the pace of relief assistance activities. In October, certain implementing partners announced their withdrawal from UNHCR operations because of the funding crisis, or they opted to implement only basic 'life-sustaining' activities.

## Achievements and impact

### Protection and solutions

UNHCR is assisting the Government of Sierra Leone to issue a "Declaration on the Rights and Security of Returnees" and to conclude tripartite voluntary repatriation agreements with main countries of asylum. These documents will be used to sensitise a wide range of government and community actors to the rights of returnees and the modalities for voluntary repatriation in safety and dignity. Systematic monitoring of returnees was undertaken by UNHCR, government counterparts, implementing partners and other NGOs.

As Sierra Leone moves towards lasting peace and normality, UNHCR has urged the Government to assume responsibility for matters, such as refugee status determination, which fall within the sovereign domain of the State. UNHCR has provided the Government, at its request, with the draft

refugee legislation for consideration by Parliament, and is helping to establish a protection and assistance framework.

At the operational level, the Government's policy was that, for reasons of security, refugees should be accommodated only in UNHCR-funded refugee camps, rather than in communities. The Government took a proactive stand on separating Liberian combatants from civilian refugees by conducting security screening and building a separate internment facility for combatants. UNHCR worked with the Inter-agency Co-ordination Committee for Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse on standards of accountability, community and agency reporting mechanisms, training and mass information campaigns. UNHCR recognises, however, that it has not been able to address certain root causes of exploitation, including the reality that grossly inadequate assistance will compound the vulnerability of beneficiaries to abuses such as "survival prostitution".

The imperative need to deploy rapid humanitarian and recovery assistance in Sierra Leone cannot be overstated. Indeed, prospects for long-term peace and stability hinge on the reduction of poverty, economic growth and good governance. UNHCR is co-operating closely with the other UN humanitarian agencies in the CAP process, with development agencies under the umbrella of UNDAF, and with UNDP and the World Bank in the implementation of the "4Rs" strategy. UNHCR's reintegration activities are focused primarily on providing relatively short-term inputs that lead into the programmes of development actors, and on facilitating the deployment of development programme funds, by building the capacity of the Government and partners.

### Activities and assistance

**Community services:** A total of 70 Community Development Committees were formed or reactivated. Some 2,500 persons benefited from the services of six Peace Centres established for the counselling of victims of sexual violence and for peace-building initiatives in returnee areas. Over 1,000 young people and women were trained in various skills. Some support was provided to 32 women's groups by means of micro-credit loans. More than 70 per cent of the members of these groups were engaged in sus-

tainable remunerative activity. Among Liberian refugees, medical and psychological assistance was provided to vulnerable individuals and survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. UNHCR raised awareness of human rights issues, reproductive health and HIV/AIDS risks. Skills training activities were implemented in the camps, benefiting some 1,350 refugees. An 11-member child protection unit was set up in Jembe camp. 40 refugee children were traced and re-united with their families. Some 20 per cent of the traumatised children received counselling.



A returnee from Guinea living in a temporary settlement for IDPs and returnees.  
UNHCR / L. Taylor

**Crop production:** Some 37,000 returnees and host community farm families in 449 locations were supported with 345 metric tons of seed rice, 98 metric tons of groundnuts, 6,500 assorted vegetable kits, 6,500 tool kits and 2,000 plastic watering cans, to enable them to resume the cultivation of their traditional farmlands. Four acres of land were made available to 50 refugees and their host communities to grow farm produce (mainly potatoes) for sale and consumption. Training was provided to 30 refugee

farmers from Jimmi Bargbo and Bandajuma refugee camps and the host communities in farming technologies and food production skills to help increase yield and market value. Negotiations continued with the Government on farmland allocation to refugees in camp areas. These will be formalised once refugee legislation is signed (final draft under review by the Government). Meanwhile, informal arrangements were reached with local authorities to make land available to refugees interested in cultivation near the camps.

**Domestic needs/household support:** More than 24,000 plastic sheets and rolls, 22,000 blankets, 21,500 mats, 15,000 jerry cans, 15,000 kitchen sets, 14,000 lamps and 55,000 bars of soap were distributed to more than 75,000 returnees. Similarly, 45,000 Liberian refugees in camps received plastic sheets, buckets, blankets, mats, jerry cans, kitchen sets, lamps and soap.

**Education:** The complete rehabilitation and reconstruction of 53 schools benefited more than 5,000 pupils in returnee areas in Kono, Kambia and Kailahun districts. Non-formal primary education was provided for 402 war-affected/disadvantaged girls in Daru and Koidu. Educational support services

were provided to over 52 schools, benefiting more than 17,400 students and 371 teachers. This included equipment and supplies, training and youth activities. As part of UNHCR's policy to support the re-establishment of line Ministry co-ordination, the offices of three district inspectors for schools in Kambia, Koidu and Kailahun were built with co-funding from UNICEF. UNHCR provided educational assistance for almost 18,000 refugees ('new' arrivals), and 2,450 ('old' refugee group) in primary and secondary schools. DAFI scholarships were granted to three students for higher education.

**Food:** More than 50,000 returnees received 'wet feeding' (ready-prepared meals) from kitchens at way stations *en route* during repatriation movements. Monthly food rations were provided to some 50,000 returnees in temporary settlements and hosting communities (before repatriation to their places of origin). Supplementary feeding and therapeutic feeding support were provided for highly malnourished children in four centres. Through WFP and other food pipeline agencies almost 48,000 refugees received full food rations – basic dry rations on a monthly basis in the camps.

**Forestry:** A total of 175 awareness raising sessions and demonstrations were held in more than 49 communities with up to 1,300 participants attending each time. More than 50 teachers from 20 schools were given training on environmental education; 300 people were taught how to produce clay-based energy-saving stoves. Approximately 5,000 such 'eco-stoves' were built, considerably reducing the need for firewood. Tree nurseries in communities and camps were established with 80,000 tree seedlings (local and exotic species).

**Health/nutrition:** Eleven clinics in Kailahun, Kono and Pujehun districts were rehabilitated. The restoration of primary health care delivery services included: the provision of incentives and the training of 300 traditional birth attendants, 20 training of trainers workshops on HIV/AIDS; the provision of equipment, drugs and staff support to more than 27 clinics. Primary health care services were carried out at the Jui transit camp for returnees, with some 2,800 patients treated at the camp clinic (41 per cent of them children under five years of age). A national NGO, the Reproductive Health Group, provided reproductive health services through ten clinic

sites in Kono district. Among Liberian refugees, primary health care delivery services were extended to some 2,200 patients (42 per cent of whom were children under five), with antenatal care provided to some 44 pregnant mothers and a further 188 referrals. In Bo District, 28 units of blood were donated to needy patients (mainly refugees). A blood bank was set up at the Bo Government Hospital.

**Income generation:** Assistance was provided to over 2,700 beneficiaries (of whom 79 per cent were recent returnees and 72 per cent women) in the districts of Kambia, Kailahun, Pujehun, Kenema, Port Loko and the Western Area. Support was given to 200 refugees in Jimmi Bargbo and Bandajuma with tools and materials.

**Legal assistance:** Protection of refugees and returnees was assured through the implementation of the refugee, repatriation and reintegration project. Through its field presence, UNHCR ensured close monitoring and the safe return of refugees. UNHCR has contributed positively to the Sierra Leonean Government's initiative on refugee legislation. Land claims were documented and dealt with in some chiefdoms in Kailahun and Kono Districts.

**Operational support (to agencies):** Operational support was provided by UNHCR to 24 implementing partners who handled programmes for Sierra Leonean returnees and/or the 'new' Liberian refugees.

**Sanitation:** In Kono and Kailahun, returnees had access to sanitation facilities at way stations, and in the returnee communities. Sanitation was improved through the construction of latrines, refuse disposal, hygiene education in all refugee camps in Bo, Moyaniba and Kenema districts. 620 temporary family latrines and 320 showers were also constructed. Similarly, transit centres in Jui, Waterloo and Zimmi had access to improved sanitation. Hygiene education was conducted in host communities.

**Shelter/other infrastructure:** 45 communities in returnee areas were assisted with shelter materials (plastic sheeting, nails and tools). Seven way stations were constructed and maintained in Kono, Zimmi, Port Loko, Baiima, Dauda and Blama. A 25-km gravel road was rehabilitated and culverts installed

to replace timber-decked bridges. For refugees, almost 4,000 shelters (some 300 transit/temporary booths, and over 3,500 family and individual booths), 78 kitchens, four peace centres, four market stalls, and access roads and drainage were constructed and hosted more than 51,000 Liberians.

**Transport/logistics:** UNHCR supported the movement of 100,000 returnees and their personal effects to their places of origin, in conditions of safety and dignity. In addition, nearly 39,600 newly arrived refugees were transferred from border areas through way stations to refugee camps and relief items were delivered. UNHCR used its own truck fleet and hired buses, as well as trucks on loan from various agencies including UMASIL. UNHCR provided 37 trucks (two equipped with cranes), two water tankers, 90 light vehicles, 100 motorcycles and 40 generators for these operations. Warehousing, mechanical workshops and fuelling services were also provided.

**Water:** In returnee areas, UNHCR constructed and rehabilitated 94 water points for 40,000 persons. 329 chlorinated wells serving about 27,900 persons were rehabilitated or constructed. 38 water point technicians were trained including some women. Adequate quantities of safe drinking water were provided to more than 44,000 Liberian refugees in camps. This was achieved mainly through the maintenance and construction of 53 water points (including 10 which were deepened). The quality and quantity of water supplies were tested on a monthly basis.

## Organisation and implementation

### Management

A total of 206 persons served UNHCR in the Sierra Leone operation in 2002. There were 47 international staff (including one JPO, eight UNVs, and seven on secondment from different agencies), and 159 national staff.

### Working with others

UNHCR's programme implementation partners consisted of the Government and UN agencies, as well as many NGOs. The main government partner

was the National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA – formerly NCRRR), which UNHCR supported by providing funds for staff and logistics. UNHCR also worked closely with other UN agencies on the UN Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP), advocating the restoration of state authority, good governance and economic recovery so as to create an environment of adequate protection in main areas of return and the areas hosting refugees. UNHCR advocated that refugee and returnee issues be kept high on the agenda of the Government and other UN agencies, through the Office's active participation in drafting the UNDAF (2006-2007).

More specifically, UNHCR co-operated with:

- UNDP, in the "4Rs" process. UNDP and UNHCR are jointly designing, planing, co-ordinating and submitting proposals for transitional funding. UNDP's work relates to good governance, youth, IDPs, reintegration of ex-combatants, civil society, community capacity-building, reconciliation, micro-finance, shelter, feeder roads and support to district administration. UNHCR's input is designed to lead into and complement the work of UNDP.
- The World Bank, which, as the other principal partner in the "4Rs" process, will make a substantial contribution in Sierra Leone, starting in 2003 in the sectors of health, education and community empowerment.
- UNICEF, with which UNHCR has a MOU for activities in the sectors of education, child protection, health, water and sanitation. Specific joint projects included rebuilding district educational infrastructure and supplying teaching materials to schools previously rehabilitated by UNHCR.
- WFP, which co-ordinated the feeding of Liberian refugees, and the provision of returnee food packages by various food pipeline agencies. Joint participation in the annual Joint Food Assessment Mission (JFAM).
- OCHA, which co-ordinated the assessment and compilation of information regarding sectoral recovery in main areas of return. Maps and tabulated information were produced by the Geographic Information System and the Sierra Leone Information System (SLIS) – a joint UNHCR-OCHA project.

## Overall assessment

UNHCR in Sierra Leone worked in a complex, rapidly changing environment characterised by a high degree of destruction creating critical needs in returnee areas; a new refugee influx; staff shortages; and financial limitations. In addition, the allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse added a further layer of complexity and, although UNHCR and partners were ultimately cleared of culpability, much time and energy was invested in responding to the needs of the investigation process.

With stringent financial constraints and additional demands due to a substantial refugee influx during 2002, UNHCR in Sierra Leone could not meet all original objectives. Priorities were thus re-tuned towards essential life-saving basic assistance to refugees and the transportation of returnees. With the help of operational partners providing complementary health, water and sanitation and other services, (with non-UNHCR funding), refugees were given basic humanitarian assistance. Protection and community-based assistance were provided to Sierra Leonean returnees (brought directly from Guinea and Liberia to their final destinations by means of transport allowances) and newly arrived Liberian refugees accommodated in camps. Internal relocation movements were concluded and temporary settlements in host communities were phased out, giving way to established refugee camps.

The actual impact of many of UNHCR's activities also depended on relief and development assistance provided by other actors. UNHCR's impact on facilitating and instigating development inputs, working towards durable solutions in the returnee context, was reduced.

UNHCR has phased out activities for returnees in camps and host communities. This has largely been replaced by efforts made to closely co-ordinate reintegration activities by the Government, the World Bank and other development organisations. It is hoped that by the end of 2003, the necessary resources will become available to enable UNHCR to phase out assistance to the residual (old) caseload of Liberian refugees. As regards newly arrived refugees, efforts will be made to ensure that some level of self-sufficiency can be achieved in camps.

### Offices

#### Freetown

Bo

Daru

Kailahun

Kambia

Kenema

Koidu

Zimmi

### Partners

#### Government Agencies

National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA)

#### NGOs

African Concern

American Refugee Committee

Bo/ Pujehun Rural Development Associates

Catholic Relief Services

Caritas (Kenema)

Concern Worldwide

Environmental Foundation for Africa

Family Home Movement

Forum for African Women Educationalists

*Initiative pour une Afrique solidaire*

International Islamic Youth League

International Medical Corps

International Rescue Committee

Lutheran World Federation

*Médecins Sans Frontières* (Belgium)

Methodist Church (Sierra Leone)

Norwegian Refugee Council

OXFAM (UK)

Peace Winds (Japan)

Save Heritage and Rehabilitate the Environment

Save the Children (UK)

Sierra Leone Red Cross Society

Talking Drum Studio

World Vision International

#### Others

*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit*

FAO

Financial Report (USD)						
Expenditure Breakdown	Current Year's Projects			Prior Years' Projects		
	Annual Programme Budget	Supplementary Programme Budget	Total	Notes	Annual Programme Budgets	Notes
Protection, Monitoring and Co-ordination	3,178,627	1,094,865	4,273,492		335,909	
Community Services	951,784	16,392	968,176		378,813	
Crop Production	73,012	0	73,012		167,143	
Domestic Needs / Household Support	861,986	852,217	1,714,203		39,816	
Education	1,153,654	12,195	1,165,849		724,648	
Fisheries	0	0	0		85,907	
Food	45,569	4,708	50,277		14,035	
Forestry	111,130	1,142	112,272		21,565	
Health / Nutrition	535,648	195	535,843		328,825	
Income Generation	530,165	0	530,165		233,814	
Legal Assistance	285,321	29,483	314,804		42,535	
Operational Support (to Agencies)	2,689,067	229,137	2,918,205		1,157,173	
Sanitation	198,794	52,333	251,127		155,988	
Shelter / Other Infrastructure	914,416	805,580	1,719,996		487,428	
Transport / Logistics	4,858,073	1,290,004	6,148,077		1,047,743	
Water	520,658	92,685	613,342		398,077	
Transit Accounts	41,952	0	41,952		220	
Instalments with Implementing Partners	2,186,034	1,520,671	3,706,705		(3,801,213)	
<b>Sub-total Operational</b>	<b>19,135,891</b>	<b>6,001,607</b>	<b>25,137,498</b>		<b>1,818,423</b>	
Programme Support	2,356,788	457,930	2,814,718		179,955	
<b>Sub-total Disbursements / Deliveries</b>	<b>21,492,679</b>	<b>6,459,537</b>	<b>27,952,216</b>	<b>(3)</b>	<b>1,998,378</b>	<b>(5)</b>
Unliquidated Obligations	822,557	181,681	1,004,238	(3)	0	(5)
<b>Total</b>	<b>22,315,236</b>	<b>6,641,218</b>	<b>28,956,454</b>	<b>(1) (3)</b>	<b>1,998,378</b>	
<b>Instalments with Implementing Partners</b>						
Payments Made	12,101,509	3,060,488	15,161,997		1,160,381	
Reporting Received	9,915,475	1,539,817	11,455,292		4,961,594	
<b>Balance</b>	<b>2,186,034</b>	<b>1,520,671</b>	<b>3,706,705</b>		<b>(3,801,213)</b>	
Outstanding 1st January	0	0	0		4,143,628	
Refunded to UNHCR	0	0	0		213,056	
Currency Adjustment	0	0	0		14,032	
<b>Outstanding 31 December</b>	<b>2,186,034</b>	<b>1,520,671</b>	<b>3,706,705</b>		<b>143,391</b>	
<b>Unliquidated Obligations</b>						
Outstanding 1st January	0	0	0		2,287,332	(5)
New Obligations	22,315,236	6,641,218	28,956,454	(1)	0	
Disbursements	21,492,679	6,459,537	27,952,216	(3)	1,998,378	(5)
Cancellations	0	0	0		76,190	(5)
<b>Outstanding 31 December</b>	<b>822,557</b>	<b>181,681</b>	<b>1,004,238</b>	<b>(3)</b>	<b>212,764</b>	<b>(5)</b>
Figures which cross-reference to Accounts:						
(1) Annex to Statement 1						
(3) Schedule 3						
(5) Schedule 5						