

# Cambodia

## AT A GLANCE

### Main Objectives and Activities

Monitor the protection and reintegration of the 47,000 returnees within their communities; assist returnees to reach a level of security, social integration and economic self-reliance comparable to that of communities to which they return; establish linkages with assistance programmes run by longer-term development agencies to ensure seamless support during the phase out of UNHCR's programme; help national institutions strengthen their capacity to implement Cambodia's refugee legislation in accordance with its Convention obligations.

### Impact

- UNHCR consolidated reintegration efforts, handed over activities to UN agencies and NGO partners, and was able to close two offices (in Siem Reap and Battambang).
- Except for several individual land disputes, few protection incidents occurred. These were dealt with in co-operation with local authorities.
- In the absence of a legal framework for refugee protection, UNHCR continued to provide basic protection and assistance to refugees and to conduct refugee status determination.
- UNHCR actively advocated for the enactment of a national legal framework to implement the Convention and provided the Government with a draft sub-decree to the Immigration Law.



Main Refugee Origin/Type of Population	Persons of Concern			
	Total in Country	Of whom UNHCR assisted	Per cent Female	Per cent under 18
Returnees	47,000	47,000	-	-

Income and Expenditure (USD)				
Annual Programme Budget				
Revised Budget	Income from Contributions <sup>1</sup>	Other Funds Available	Total Funds Available	Total Expenditure
3,455,390	2,337,672	1,072,044	3,409,716	3,408,999

<sup>1</sup> Includes income from contributions earmarked 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.



## WORKING ENVIRONMENT

### The Context

Relative political stability – following the 1998 peace agreement between the Government and the former warring factions – continued to furnish a positive backdrop to the process of government reform and economic development. During 2000, the debate over the possible trial of former Khmer Rouge leaders, as well as the preparation for communal elections, now postponed to early 2002, were closely monitored by observers in light of their possible repercussions for social stability and national reconciliation. Interviews conducted in former Khmer Rouge areas indicate that populations in these locations do not generally anticipate renewed violence.

In its last year of reintegration interventions, UNHCR focused its efforts on the north-west of the country, where most returnees live. UNHCR signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the UNDP/UNOPS Cambodian Area Rehabilitation and Regeneration Project (CARERE) to ensure continuity of CARERE's activities in the provinces of Battambang, Oddar Meanchey and Pursat. Partnerships were also strengthened with the Provincial Rural Development Committees in these three provinces.

Cambodia continued to gradually rebuild its administrative structure. The Government rapidly drafted and adopted new laws. Legislation on land use and management has been drafted and is awaiting enactment. This is of direct interest to returnees. In view of the substantial number of basic legislation recently passed in Cambodia, or due to be passed, legislators have only paid relatively limited attention to refugee and asylum legislation.

### Constraints

The danger of landmines was the most serious challenge for UNHCR. Mines not only affected returnee and staff security, but also impeded project implementation and monitoring activities. UNHCR's activities in returnee areas in Samlot, Anlong Veng and Trapaeng Prasat districts were slowed down for several months after anti-tank mines exploded earlier in the year on two important access roads. Access to some returnee areas was further impeded by the deterioration of road conditions during the rainy season. Furthermore, key bridges along the road to Anlong Veng district were washed away in extreme flooding in September and October, making UNHCR's visits to the area very difficult for two months.

### Funding

The programme in Cambodia was affected as other UNHCR operations by the 20 per cent budget cut and

several activities initially planned in the north-west of the country were not implemented. In order to mobilise support for returnee areas after UNHCR phases out, a series of meetings were held to give information to longer-term development agencies and the donor community.

## ACHIEVEMENTS AND IMPACT

### Protection and Solutions

The number of land disputes in returnee areas decreased during 2000. UNHCR intervened with the competent authorities on identified cases. A meeting was held in July with the Ministry of Land Management as well as provincial civilian and military authorities to address the issue of eviction of returnees in O'Smach District of Oddar Meanchey Province due to a real estate construction project. The meeting helped clarify issues of compensation and the provision of plots of demined land to the families concerned. Pending the finalisation of the land law, UNHCR actively supported interim initiatives to defuse land disputes, such as the Provincial Land Dispute Resolution Committees and the Provincial Land Use Planning Units for Demined Land.

Apart from land issues, UNHCR encountered no instances of discrimination against returnees, or other problems that might threaten the future of reintegration. Nevertheless, UNHCR maintained a strong working relationship with a local human rights NGO and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Cambodia, and funded human rights training for the local authorities and investigations in returnee districts.

Although Cambodia has yet to fully implement the 1951 Convention by translating it into domestic legislation, there were no serious breaches of its basic provisions. The authorities continued to respect the documentation UNHCR gave to refugees, and the Foreigners' Department co-operated with UNHCR's office in Phnom Penh on individual protection cases where appropriate.

UNHCR provided the Government with a draft sub-decree to the Immigration Law on the recognition and status of refugees in Cambodia. After discussions with the authorities, UNHCR's promotion efforts focused on creating the necessary political will, through training of government officials and the involvement of civil constituencies in advocacy work. Pending the adoption of domestic refugee legislation and the establishment of adequate procedures, UNHCR continued to carry out refugee status determination. A total of 215 persons



applied for asylum, representing a 400 per cent increase on the previous year. This increase was due to the new climate of peace in Cambodia. UNHCR facilitated the local integration of recognised refugees through training and basic activities conducive to self-reliance, and promoted the resettlement of persons whose local integration was not deemed feasible.

## Activities and Assistance

**Community Services:** Counselling, emergency household kits, clothing and shelter supplies were provided to female-headed returnee households and other vulnerable categories of returnees. The provision of insecticide to the returnee communities prevented the spread of malaria. Through a governmental partner and a UN agency, commune and village development committees were established in seven communes in Battambang and Oddar Meanchey Provinces. They received training in community development planning, taking into account the needs of women and children. The seven communes cover a total population of 25,000 persons in 53 villages. Returnee communities received education on health, hygiene and nutrition. UNHCR contributed to capacity-building for national NGOs involved in community services.

**Crop Production:** A total of 5,260 basic farming kits, 20 tonnes of rice seed, 5,885 vegetable seed kits and 5,364 fruit trees were distributed to 11,497 returnee and local families in the four target districts in the north-west of the country. In these districts training was provided on

agricultural techniques, such as vegetable production and fish farming.

**Domestic Needs/Household Support:** A cash allowance was paid to 135 asylum-seekers and refugees unable to support themselves.

**Education:** Ten schools and four community activity centres were constructed in areas housing large numbers of returnees, benefiting a total of 21,300 pupils. The schools were equipped with basic furniture and 9,000 pupils received school kits, educational materials and uniforms. Teacher training was provided for 458 teachers selected by the Ministry of Education. A total of 50 refugees (children and adults) received primary and secondary education, vocational and language training. Through these activities

and income-generating grants, UNHCR sought to strengthen the prospect of local integration and reduce dependence on social and economic assistance.

**Health/Nutrition:** Medical supplies, medicines and equipment were provided for existing health posts and centres in areas with a high concentration of returnees. A temporary health centre was constructed and equipped with basic medical supplies and furniture in the district of Veal Veng in Pursat province through a government partner. In Battambang, Oddar Meanchey and Pursat 16,100 families benefited from health assistance projects.

**Legal Assistance:** A Cambodian human rights agency was contracted to undertake human rights training for a total of 625 local authorities and police officers in areas with large numbers of returnees. UNHCR's support for land management initiatives helped slow down deforestation in these areas by reducing land disputes and evictions which would lead to further land clearance. UNHCR conducted activities promoting refugee law, including seminars on UNHCR's mandate for government officials, and published documents relating to refugee protection in the Khmer language.

**Livestock:** A total of 1,500 chickens were distributed and nine communal hen houses constructed for the benefit of 6,000 families, including 300 of the most vulnerable families. A poultry vaccination campaign was organised in 59 villages. A total of 70 agricultural representatives, selected from among the community, were trained in basic veterinary skills.

*Operational Support (to Agencies):* This included the cost of visits by embassies to returnee areas, public information activities and a lessons learned review of the reintegration programme.

*Shelter/Other Infrastructure:* Three demining agencies were contracted to undertake site clearance, road clearance, landmine awareness training and mine disposal in returnee areas. The agencies cleared more than half a million square metres of land. Four concrete bridges, seven culverts and 5.7 km of laterite roads were also built to improve access to returnee locations. These activities provided a safe and accessible environment for some 31,000 residents, and, more globally, the entire population of the surrounding districts.

*Transport/Logistics:* A small aircraft was chartered for a donors' visit to remote project sites in the north-west of Cambodia.

*Water:* Returnee communities benefited from the construction of 144 borehole wells with pumps, as well as training on safe water use and the establishment of maintenance committees; more than one thousand 400-litre water jars were distributed. These activities benefited 9,700 families and, more particularly, women, the group most commonly engaged in water collection.

## ORGANISATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

### Management

The Office in Cambodia remained under the supervision of the Regional Office in Bangkok. Field offices in Battambang and Siem Reap maintained contacts with returnee communities and closely collaborated with local authorities and humanitarian agencies. The office in Phnom Penh regularly liaised with central authorities. As planned, the two field offices were closed in December. By the end of the year, the number of staff had been reduced from 23 to nine (one international, one JPO, and seven nationals). In addition, locally recruited United Nations Border Relief Organisation staff members assisted UNHCR in its monitoring and assistance activities. Two RedR engineers were successfully deployed in the field offices to ensure technical integrity of infrastructure projects.

### Working with Others

UNHCR in Cambodia engaged a total of 19 implementing partners, 18 of which were involved in the reintegration projects. Of these, ten partners were international and eight were national. One interna-

tional NGO was contracted to provide assistance to asylum-seekers and refugees.

In the case of urban refugees and asylum-seekers, UNHCR collaborated with the OHCHR as well as local human rights NGOs, whilst promoting refugee law among relevant government departments. UNHCR was also an active player in the UN Country Team and several working groups such as those on HIV/AIDS, the demobilisation of soldiers and good governance, to ensure that UNHCR's concerns were taken into account in other agencies' programmes.

## OVERALL ASSESSMENT

The year 2000 represented the most substantial and complex phase of UNHCR's programme; it built upon the achievements of 1998-1999, whilst ensuring a successful phase down and handover of activities to implementing partners and other development actors. To identify shortcomings and disseminate good practice among other country operations, UNHCR undertook a lessons learned review of reintegration programmes in Cambodia, Laos and Viet Nam.

In 2000, UNHCR increased the number of linkages with development agencies to promote the self-reliance and long-term reintegration of populations in the north-western districts. Implementing partners were chosen for their technical as well as fund raising capacity, in view of the funding required upon completion of UNHCR's reintegration assistance. In Samlot District, Battambang Province, this aim was realised and the programmes of all implementing agencies are continuing during 2001 with non-UNHCR funding. In Oddar Meanchey Province, however, longer-term funding support from major donors did not materialise to the extent expected in early 2001. Increased donor support is of critical importance in this still fragile province, where instability and population displacements could swiftly follow any significant withdrawal of programmes by development agencies. UNHCR will continue to monitor returnee areas from the office in Phnom Penh and to actively advocate support for development in 2001.

Although no tangible results were yielded for the adoption of refugee legislation in 2000, UNHCR's promotional efforts nevertheless enhanced the dialogue with the Government so as to include more global issues of refugee protection and asylum in Cambodia. These activities also created a better understanding among concerned government officials of UNHCR's mandate and the basics of international refugee law.

## Offices

### Phnom Penh

Battambang (closed in December)

Siem Reap (closed in December)

## Partners

### Government Agencies

Provincial Rural Development Committee

### NGOs

Action Against Hunger

*Action Nord Sud*

Cambodia Family Development Services

Cambodian Mines Action Centre

DEEP Village Water Supply Programme

Dutch Relief Agency

EMERGENCY Life Support for Civilian War Victims

*Enfants réfugiés du monde*

Halo Trust

Jesuit Refugee Service

Mines Advisory Group

*Teuk Saat*

ZOA Refugee Care (Netherlands)

### Other

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

United Nations Children's Fund

United Nations Development Programme

United Nations Volunteers

Financial Report (USD)				
Expenditure Breakdown	Current Year's Projects		Prior Years' Projects	
		notes		notes
Protection, Monitoring and Co-ordination	344,197		0	
Community Services	174,208		56,946	
Crop Production	238,719		71,254	
Domestic Needs / Household Support	51,146		48,963	
Education	326,652		318,459	
Health / Nutrition	95,233		141,166	
Legal Assistance	33,293		6,066	
Livestock	16,105		0	
Operational Support (to Agencies)	44,515		105,139	
Sanitation	0		2,700	
Shelter / Other Infrastructure	435,343		359,578	
Transport / Logistics	8,922		41,072	
Water	250,914		68,626	
Instalments with Implementing Partners	790,713		(1,101,501)	
<b>Sub-total Operational</b>	<b>2,809,960</b>		<b>118,468</b>	
Programme Support	576,356		56,847	
<b>Sub-total Disbursements / Deliveries</b>	<b>3,386,316</b>	(3)	<b>175,315</b>	(6)
Unliquidated Obligations	22,683	(3)	0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,408,999</b>	<b>(1) (3)</b>	<b>175,315</b>	

### Instalments with Implementing Partners

Payments Made	2,547,423		357,616	
Reporting Received	1,756,710		1,459,117	
<b>Balance</b>	<b>790,713</b>		<b>(1,101,501)</b>	
Outstanding 1 January	0		1,227,782	
Refunded to UNHCR	0		126,281	
Currency Adjustment	0		0	
<b>Outstanding 31 December</b>	<b>790,713</b>		<b>0</b>	

### Unliquidated Obligations

Outstanding 1 January	0		185,799	(6)
New Obligations	3,408,999	(1)	0	
Disbursements	3,386,316	(3)	175,315	(6)
Cancellations	0		10,484	(6)
<b>Outstanding 31 December</b>	<b>22,683</b>	<b>(3)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(6)</b>

Figures which cross reference to Accounts:

(1) Annex to Statement 1

(3) Schedule 3

(6) Schedule 6