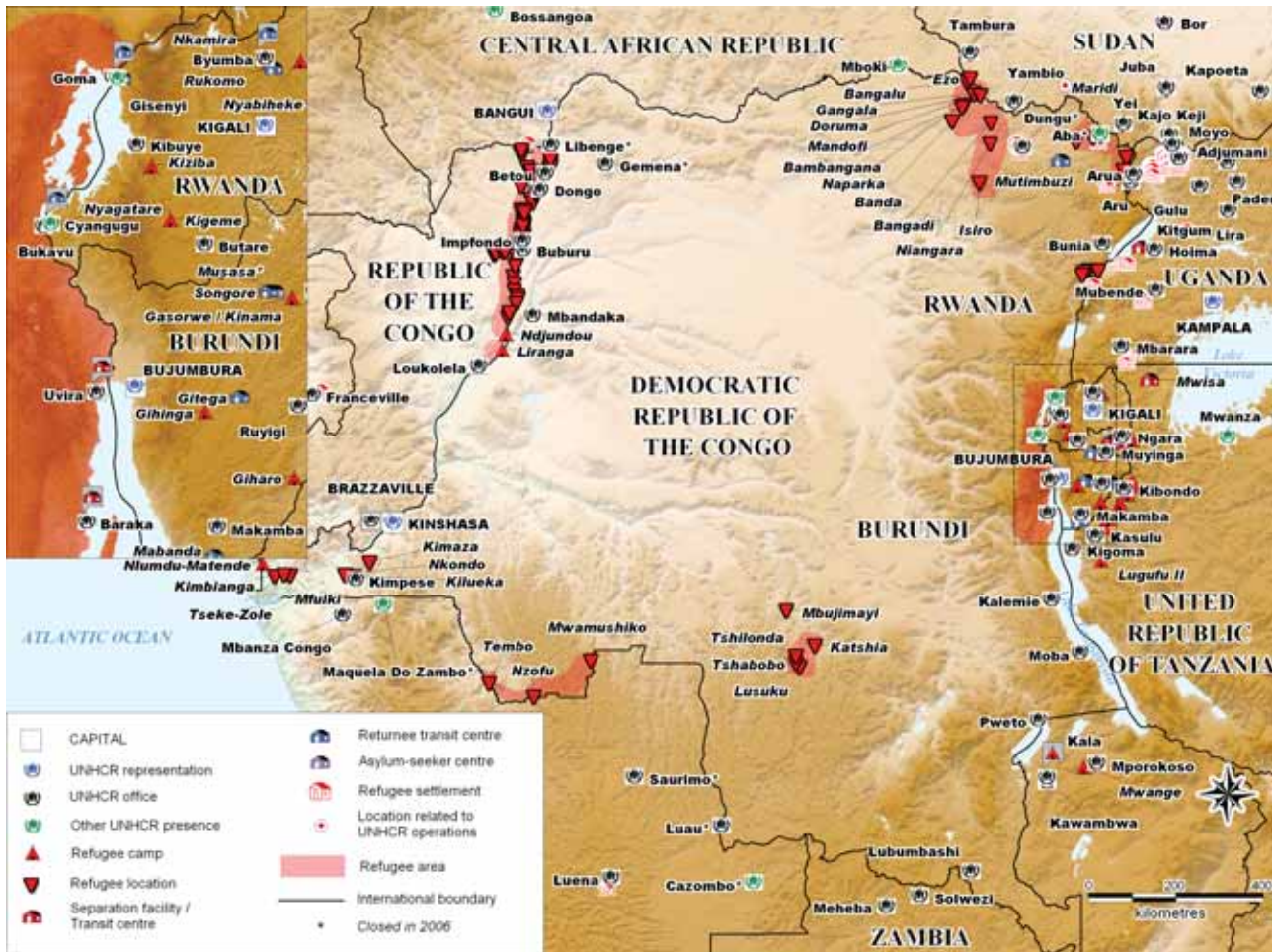


# Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)



## Operational highlights

- UNHCR organized the voluntary repatriation of close to 14,000 refugees to their homes in neighbouring countries.
- The Office received some 29,000 returning DRC refugees and gave them return packages to help them rebuild their lives.
- Community-based assistance benefited returnees, the displaced and the local population and improved the returnees' enjoyment of social and economic rights.
- The security of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and other war-affected populations improved in some locations as a result of action taken by UNHCR and other members of the Protection Cluster.

## Working environment

In 2006, the Democratic Republic of the Congo began to emerge from a prolonged crisis. Presidential and legislative elections were held successfully, and the inauguration of President Joseph Kabila in December marked the end of the transition period. However, in the first half of the year armed confrontations and generalized violence led to the internal displacement of an average of 88,000 people per month in the east of the country.

The situation improved in the second part of the year, with political progress, the continuation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process and the surrender of rebel leaders. These developments prompted the return of many IDPs and some refugees to Equateur province and areas to the east of the country – except Ituri district. The number of IDPs, 95 per cent of whom live in communities close to their villages of origin, decreased by 30 per cent, to 1.1 million. More than 41,000 refugees also returned to the DRC.

Still, civilians continued to be affected by sporadic fighting and human rights violations. Violence against women; the presence of unexploded ordnance and landmines; a lack of educational opportunities – leading to the exploitation of children, abuse, prostitution and delinquency; lack of health services and water; while there was discrimination against returning refugees and IDPs alike.

Poverty is widespread, and 80 per cent of the population lives on less than USD 10 per month. Inadequate health and education services have led to catastrophic child and maternal mortality rates and an average life expectancy of only 46 years. The average school-enrolment rate stands at 50 per cent.

## Achievements and impact

### Main objectives

UNHCR's objectives in the DRC were to facilitate the repatriation and reintegration of Congolese refugees; build the capacity of relevant national institutions and civil-society organizations; and help the Government develop a framework for the sustainable reintegration of returnees. The Office also sought to organize and facilitate the repatriation of Angolan, Burundian,

Sudanese and Rwandan refugees, while assisting those of them unable or unwilling to return to become self-reliant and integrate locally. Furthermore, UNHCR aimed to heighten awareness among refugees and returnees of sexual and gender-based violence and HIV and AIDS, and to rehabilitate the environment in refugee-affected areas.

Following the decision by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee to implement the cluster approach in the DRC, in early 2006, UNHCR and the UN peacekeeping mission MONUC assumed joint leadership of the Protection Cluster. UNHCR also served as co-leader of the Early Recovery Cluster with UNDP. These moves added two major objectives to UNHCR's programme. The first was to create a favourable protection environment and protect IDPs and other affected populations against violence and exploitation. This included advocacy; working with the authorities, humanitarian agencies and donors to address protection gaps; and supporting the establishment of a legal framework to deal with displacement in the DRC. The second objective was to promote and facilitate durable solutions for IDPs by creating conditions for their return and reintegration.

| Persons of concern            |                                      |                  |                           |                 |                   |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Type of population            | Origin                               | Total            | Of whom assisted by UNHCR | Per cent female | Per cent under 18 |
| Refugees                      | Angola                               | 132,300          | 2,200                     | 52              | 46                |
|                               | Rwanda                               | 37,300           | 200                       | -               | -                 |
|                               | Burundi                              | 17,800           | 800                       | -               | -                 |
|                               | Uganda                               | 13,900           | -                         | 53              | 55                |
|                               | Sudan                                | 6,200            | 1,900                     | 48              | 41                |
|                               | Republic of the Congo                | 800              | 200                       | 41              | 44                |
| Returnees (refugees)          | From the United Republic of Tanzania | 23,700           | 16,500                    | -               | -                 |
|                               | From the Republic of the Congo       | 10,000           | 10,000                    | -               | -                 |
|                               | From Zambia                          | 4,700            | -                         | -               | -                 |
|                               | From Burundi                         | 1,300            | 1,100                     | -               | -                 |
|                               | From Sudan                           | 900              | 800                       | -               | -                 |
|                               | From the Central African Republic    | 700              | 500                       | -               | -                 |
| IDPs <sup>1</sup>             |                                      | 1,075,300        | 1,075,300                 | -               | -                 |
| Returnees (IDPs) <sup>1</sup> |                                      | 490,000          | 490,000                   | -               | -                 |
| <b>Total</b>                  |                                      | <b>1,814,900</b> | <b>1,599,500</b>          |                 |                   |

<sup>1</sup> For those IDP and IDP returnees shown as assisted by UNHCR, the figures include all persons who benefited from protection activities under the Protection Cluster, which was co-led by UNHCR.

## Protection and solutions

As a leader of the protection cluster, UNHCR established a protection working group at the national level and subsidiary protection groups in the seven major areas of displacement. Better coordination among humanitarian actors and the military wing of MONUC, helped focus greater attention on human rights abuses by armed groups and the army and led to measures that improved security for IDPs and others affected by the conflict. These measures included targeted MONUC deployments to protect civilians, the establishment of safe areas and the identification and removal of officers accused of human rights violations. Joint assessments and strategic planning helped address the need to promote ethnic reconciliation, deal with housing, land and property disputes and strengthen the judicial system.

UNHCR supported the voluntary repatriation of close to 14,000 refugees to their countries of origin. The Office ensured that the refugees were informed of the situation in their places of origin and of the assistance available to them through radio broadcasts and “go-and-see visits”. Prior to return, UNHCR registered and issued documents to those willing to return, organized medical screening and liaised with countries of origin to ensure care for refugees with special needs. The Office also provided transport to reception facilities in the countries of origin. Since these refugees were scattered in different provinces and in isolated settlements, UNHCR established assembly points and transit centres and transported returnees by truck, bus and chartered aircraft.

Meanwhile, more than 41,000 DRC refugees returned from neighbouring countries, mainly to Equateur, South Kivu and Katanga provinces. Of these, some 29,000 travelled with UNHCR's assistance. New tripartite agreements were negotiated and signed with Sudan and Zambia, and a draft agreement was agreed on with Burundi. Throughout the process, the Office continued to assess return areas. Upon arrival in the DRC, returnees were registered and received a package consisting of food, domestic items and agricultural inputs. They were then transported to their villages of origin, where they benefited from community-based reintegration assistance. UNHCR also monitored the situation of the returnees after their return.

## Activities and assistance

**Community services:** Repatriating refugees were screened to identify those with special needs. Such individuals received special care during repatriation, and a referral mechanism was set up for follow-up in the country of return. All known victims of sexual and gender-based violence benefited from legal, medical and psychosocial assistance. In Equateur, all perpetrators of sexual violence were brought to court. Unaccompanied

minors, who repatriated on their own or those who were abandoned by their foster families upon return, were placed in a special transit centre pending placement with foster parents or reunion with their families. ICRC helped with family tracing, and most children were reunited with their families.

**Crop production:** UNHCR distributed FAO seeds, tools and fishing kits to about 70 per cent of the returnees at transit centres. Twenty-three agricultural educators were trained. Eighty-five groups made up of returnees and the local population in South Kivu (1,700 people) received 465 goats.

**Domestic needs and household support:** All returning refugee households received kits containing plastic sheeting, kitchen tools, mats, blankets, mosquito nets, buckets, jerry cans and soap, as well as rope, pickaxes, shovels and nails. Women and girls received hygiene kits and newborns received baby kits. Emergency return kits with clothing, plastic sheets and construction material were distributed to 2,200 IDP returnee households with special needs, complementing UNICEF distributions. In Bunia, UNHCR provided clothing to 50,000 IDPs in the Gety and Kagabe camps.

**Education:** UNHCR distributed uniforms, school materials and UNICEF kits to more than 15,500 pupils in the main villages of return. Some 300 schools and 1,000 teachers received teaching materials and school furniture, and more than 850 pupils were assisted with state-exam fees. Although reduced school fees were negotiated in exchange for UNHCR assistance to schools, the returnees' difficulty in paying school fees remained a major obstacle to education. Furthermore, 550 refugee children in urban areas received scholarships. In a bid to support the local integration of Angolan refugees, UNHCR rehabilitated and equipped three schools.

**Food:** Returning refugees received three hot meals per day in way stations and transit centres. UNHCR procured some food to complement the WFP food ration and to distribute for the journey home. The Office also distributed a three-month food ration provided by WFP to all returnees.

**Forestry:** Environmental commissions were created in the main villages of return in Equateur and South Kivu, where two seminars on environment and water standards were conducted and tree seeds were distributed. Environmental commissions were also established in villages in Bas-Congo, where Angolan refugees have settled, and 103 hectares of land were reforested. At least 55 per cent of the population participated in environmental protection campaigns in these locations.

**Health and nutrition:** UNHCR distributed drugs and medical equipment to 20 health institutions, including three hospitals, covering a population of five million



UNHCR/S. Schulman

Rebuilding a life back home. Congolese returnees in Baraka, South Kivu.

people. Moreover, HIV and AIDS-awareness teams operated in return zones, schools, military camps, beaches and other danger spots.

**Income generation:** More than 5,000 families benefited from income-generating projects. In South Kivu, 3,200 returnees were trained in various skills, and tools and supplies kits were distributed to more than 4,300 people working as hairdressers, carpenters, masons, cobblers, bicycle mechanics and radio repairers. Micro-credits were granted to 60 groups, which included people with special needs. All loans were fully repaid.

**Legal assistance:** Protection-monitoring teams assessed the situation of displaced persons and returnees and negotiated solutions when needed with local authorities, the military and local communities. UNHCR also intervened directly on behalf of individual returnees and IDPs on various issues, including the incorporation of former state employees in the civil service, illegal detentions, housing and land conflicts, and sexual and gender-based violence. UNHCR ensured that returning refugees were registered and had adequate documentation.

Mine-awareness programmes were conducted in transit centres. In Equateur, UNHCR trained returnees to identify and remove mines and other unexploded ordnance. Training sessions on subjects such as human rights, internal displacement, returnees, property law

and sexual and gender-based violence were organized for local authorities, the police, the judiciary and the immigration authorities. UNHCR also supported local efforts to fight sexual and gender-based violence and promote peaceful ways to settle housing and land conflicts. As a result, 95 per cent of such disputes were settled out of court.

For the repatriation of Rwandans, a contract was signed with security agencies and the police to provide security at transit centres. Local authorities and civilian guards ensured protection at assembly points.

**Operational support (to agencies):** To ensure effective management of operations, UNHCR covered some of the administrative costs of its implementing partners. The Office also organized audits of implementing partners' accounts.

**Sanitation:** Transit centres were cleaned and regularly disinfected and had the necessary latrines, bathing areas and refuse pits. Returnees at the centres were also sensitized on hygiene issues.

**Shelter and infrastructure:** UNHCR constructed 650 houses for extremely vulnerable families. In Equateur province, the Office rehabilitated more than 100 km of roads and constructed a school and a maternity ward. In South Kivu, UNHCR repaired Mushimbakye harbour as well as a hospital, a dispensary and six health posts. To prepare for the return of refugees from Zambia, three

bridges and ten kilometres of the Moba-Mwanza road in Katanga were repaired. UNHCR also built a workshop in Pweto and four transit centres in Pweto, Pepa and Moba.

**Transport and logistics:** Congolese returnees were transported from transit centres near the border to their final destination by truck and light vehicles. UNHCR covered the air fares for returnees when needed. It also transported refugees returning to Sudan, Angola and Burundi. The vehicle fleet was maintained by workshops equipped with spare parts and fuel depots, and 70 per cent of the fleet was operational at all times. UNHCR also managed warehouses for food and non-food items. Losses in warehouses were kept to a minimum.

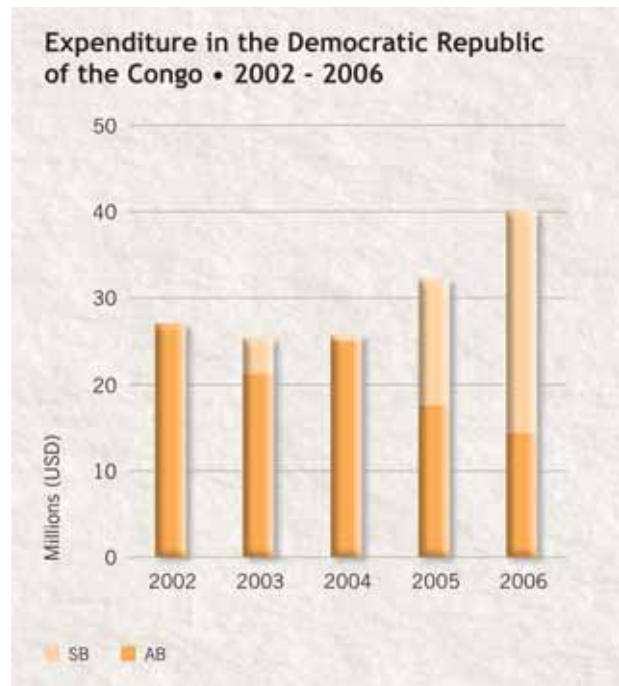
**Water:** UNHCR ensured that at least 20 litres of water per person per day were available in transit centres. In Equateur, it installed hand pumps in six schools, and dug wells and set up water pumps in the main areas of return.

## Constraints

Insecurity and difficult logistics hampered the delivery of protection and assistance. All UNHCR field offices operate in locations where movements are restricted and subject to stringent security measures. Many staff put up with difficult conditions in isolated duty stations where medical facilities are inadequate or non-existent. Forty staff had to be evacuated for medical reasons in 2006. As a result, UNHCR has found it difficult to find personnel to work in these locations. Moreover, from March to August navigation is almost impossible on the Oubangui River, which slows down return and assistance to Equateur. A landslide in South Kivu forced UNHCR to suspend repatriation movements to that region for part of 2006. The almost non-existent road network also hurts operations in the DRC.

## Financial information

Unpredictable funding and late contributions hampered operations. As a result of the shortfalls, the returnee programme was implemented in phases as resources became available. For most of the year UNHCR functioned with a very limited budget that barely covered the return movement and the return package, and almost no reintegration assistance. While more funds were received in the third and fourth quarters, implementing partners could not increase their capacity at short notice. Another problem was the rigid earmarking of funds, which did not allow the Office sufficient flexibility.



The annual programme budget for the DRC reached a peak in 2003, along with the large-scale repatriation of Angolan refugees. Expenditures then gradually declined as repatriation operations became smaller and camps and refugee sites were closed. On the other hand, the supplementary budget has increased in the last two years. This was due to the expansion of the reintegration programme and the addition in 2006 of programmes for the repatriation of Sudanese refugees and the protection and assistance of IDPs.

## Organization and implementation

### Management

UNHCR operated from 15 offices: the representation in Kinshasa, three offices in Equateur Province (Mbandaka Dongo and Buburu), one in Bas-Congo (Kimpese), two in Province Orientale (Aru, Bunia), the Goma office in North Kivu, three offices in South Kivu (Bukavu, Uvira and Baraka) and four offices in Katanga (Lubumbashi, Kalemie, Moba and Pweto). In Equateur, two offices were closed in early 2006. The total workforce comprised 289 individuals (69 international staff, including 21 United Nations Volunteers, and 220 national staff.)

### Working with others

UNHCR participated in various information-sharing and planning forums initiated by the Humanitarian Coordinator. These included the Humanitarian Action Group, which was mainly a humanitarian advocacy forum; the Programme Management Team, which was

also led by the Humanitarian Coordinator; the Security Management Team; and the Operations Management Team. UNHCR also participated in sectoral cluster meetings, both in Kinshasa and the provinces, and co-led the Protection and Early Recovery clusters. The Office also contributed to the elaboration of the country action plan/poverty reduction strategy for the country, in addition to being a full participant in the Humanitarian Action Plan.

## Overall assessment

UNHCR achieved noteworthy results in finding durable solutions for refugees in the DRC and for returnees. This was so despite the complexity of operations to protect and assist refugees from seven neighbouring countries, in addition to assisting with the return and reintegration of Congolese refugees in four main provinces. Additionally, it took lead roles in the Protection and Early Recovery clusters while coping with the vastness of a country where logistics were a big challenge and security was weak. It still remains for UNHCR to strengthen its capacity to evaluate the impact of its activities on returnees and IDPs and improve coordination with neighbouring countries in the context of repatriation.

| Partners  |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Implementing partners</b>  |  |
| <b>Government agencies:</b> Government of North Kivu, National Commission for Refugees.   |  |
| <b>NGOs:</b> <i>Action Humanitaire Afrique, Actions et Interventions pour le Développement et l'Encadrement Social, Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development, Association pour le développement social et la sauvegarde de l'environnement, Atlas Logistique, Caritas Katanga, Catholic Relief Services, Comité de développement intégré, Danish Church Aid, Regroupement des institutions du système de financement décentralisé du Congo, Search for Common Ground.</i> |  |
| <b>Others:</b> <i>Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit.</i>  |  |
| <b>Operational partners</b>   |  |
| <b>Government agencies:</b> Defence Ministry, Ministry of Women and Social Affairs, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Human Rights, Police Department.  |  |
| <b>Others:</b> FAO, ICRC, ILO, UNDP, OHCHR, UNICEF, UNESCO, UNOCHA, WFP.  |  |

## Budget, income and expenditure (USD)

|                             | Final budget <sup>1</sup> | Income from contributions <sup>2</sup> | Other funds available <sup>3</sup> | Total funds available | Total expenditure |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--|------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| AB                          | 22,276,400                | 8,441,601                              | 6,732,900                          | 15,174,502            | 14,389,221        |
| DRC SB <sup>4</sup>         | 54,545,729                | 18,820,097                             | 5,946,997                          | 24,767,094            | 17,188,892        |
| South Sudan SB <sup>5</sup> | 856,344                   | 0                                      | 692,115                            | 692,115               | 692,115           |
| IDP SB <sup>6</sup>         | 13,745,094                | 10,409,129                             | (728,640)                          | 9,680,489             | 7,936,687         |
| <b>Total</b>                | <b>91,423,567</b>         | <b>37,670,827</b>                      | <b>12,643,373</b>                  | <b>50,314,201</b>     | <b>40,206,915</b> |

<sup>1</sup> The supplementary budgets do not include a 7 per cent support cost that is recovered from contributions to meet indirect costs for UNHCR.

<sup>2</sup> Includes income from contributions earmarked at the country level.

<sup>3</sup> Includes allocations by UNHCR from unearmarked or broadly earmarked contributions, opening balance and adjustments.

<sup>4</sup> The SB figures apply to the Repatriation and Reintegration of Congolese Refugees in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

<sup>5</sup> The SB figures apply to the Return and Reintegration of Sudanese Refugees to Southern Sudan.

<sup>6</sup> The SB figures apply to the IDP operation.

| Financial Report (USD)                             |                         |                   |                   |                          |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Expenditure breakdown                              | Current year's projects |                   |                   | Previous years' projects |
|  | AB                      | SB                | Total             | AB and SB                |
| Protection, monitoring and coordination            | 5,290,710               | 5,796,567         | 11,087,278        | 0                        |
| Community services                                 | 210,101                 | 704,275           | 914,377           | 425,870                  |
| Crop production                                    | 17,240                  | 69,345            | 86,585            | 7,070                    |
| Domestic needs and household support               | 286,637                 | 4,655,609         | 4,942,246         | 4,037                    |
| Education  | 164,689                 | 249,152           | 413,840           | 241,042                  |
| Food   | 8,222                   | 32,435            | 40,657            | 2,990                    |
| Forestry   | 48,703                  | 40,398            | 89,101            | 26,710                   |
| Health and nutrition                               | 409,328                 | 1,004,072         | 1,413,400         | 240,678                  |
| Income generation                                  | 38,786                  | 172,346           | 211,132           | 218,575                  |
| Legal assistance                                   | 328,227                 | 2,338,908         | 2,667,135         | 192,971                  |
| Livestock  | 0                       | 27,822            | 27,822            | 42,275                   |
| Operational support (to agencies)                  | 545,732                 | 2,099,882         | 2,645,614         | 848,453                  |
| Sanitation   | 1,365                   | 265               | 1,630             | 2,893                    |
| Shelter and infrastructure                         | 92,139                  | 465,184           | 557,323           | 452,888                  |
| Transport and logistics                            | 1,207,645               | 2,405,312         | 3,612,957         | 904,587                  |
| Water  | 7,561                   | 32,398            | 39,959            | 4,977                    |
| Instalments with implementing partners             | 1,225,988               | 5,424,506         | 6,650,494         | (3,616,016)              |
| <b>Sub-total operational activities</b>            | <b>9,883,072</b>        | <b>25,518,477</b> | <b>35,401,549</b> | <b>0</b>                 |
| Programme support                                  | 4,506,149               | 299,217           | 4,805,366         | 0                        |
| <b>Total expenditure</b>                           | <b>14,389,221</b>       | <b>25,817,694</b> | <b>40,206,915</b> | <b>0</b>                 |
| <b>Cancellation on previous years' expenditure</b> |                         |                   |                   | <b>(204,287)</b>         |
| <b>Instalments with implementing partners</b>      |                         |                   |                   |                          |
| Payments made                                      | 3,311,224               | 11,763,617        | 15,074,840        |                          |
| Reporting received                                 | (2,085,236)             | (6,339,111)       | (8,424,347)       |                          |
| <b>Balance</b>                                     | <b>1,225,988</b>        | <b>5,424,506</b>  | <b>6,650,494</b>  |                          |
| <b>Previous years' report</b>                      |                         |                   |                   |                          |
| <b>Instalments with implementing partners</b>      |                         |                   |                   |                          |
| Outstanding 1st January                            |                         |                   |                   | 3,888,406                |
| Reporting received                                 |                         |                   |                   | (3,616,016)              |
| Refunded to UNHCR                                  |                         |                   |                   | (201,656)                |
| Adjustments  |                         |                   |                   | (15,442)                 |
| <b>Balance</b>                                     |                         |                   |                   | <b>55,292</b>            |