



# **COUNTRY OPERATIONS PLAN**

**Country: Yemen**

**Planning Year: 2004**

# COUNTRY OPERATION PLAN 2004

## YEMEN

### **Part I: Executive Summary**

#### **(i) Context and Beneficiary Populations**

Yemen's proximity to the Horn of Africa continue to make the country vulnerable to population flows from countries in that region namely Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Sudan often on transit to the Gulf region. With a seacoast of 2400 km., and very limited financial and material resources, Yemen is unable to control these irregular movements.

The new arrivals in Yemen are received, registered, medically screened and given food at Mayfa'a Transit Centre. They are given temporary registration cards valid for one month, during which time they decide on where they would like to settle. The elderly and vulnerable new arrivals are assisted with transports to Kharaz Camp. Out of an average 1,000 monthly new arrivals, 100-150 refugees wishing to settle in the camp are transferred there. The camp population is expected to increase by 1,200-1,800 to total 12,100 at the end of 2004. 85% of new arrivals later show up at urban areas (Aden, Sana'a, Al Hodeidah and Taiz). They often contact UNHCR seeking legal counselling, financial and medical assistance. A large percentage of this group leave Yemen illegally to the GCC countries seeking employment, education and/or medical treatment.

Yemen signed the 1951 Geneva Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol in 1980. It continues to accept Somalis as refugees on a prima facie basis. The continuation of civil conflict combined with economic hardship and drought in the southern and central parts of Somalia has led to continuous arrivals into Yemen. In addition, Yemen is hosting UNHCR recognized Mandate refugees from Ethiopia (946), Iraq (229), Palestinians (149), Sudan (75), Eritrea (71) and Ethiopians of Oromo origin (539) granted prima facie status who live in Kharaz camp.

With regard to the ethnic composition of the Somali refugees 87% originated from the southern and central parts of Somalia. 39 % are below the age of 18. In terms of gender some 48% are women.

On 22 February 2000, the Yemeni Government through its Council of Ministers Resolution number 64 established an Inter-Ministerial **National Committee for Refugee Affairs (NCRA)** to co-ordinate its refugee policies. The Committee has also the responsibility to draft and develop a national refugee law and administrative procedures to deal with asylum seekers and refugees, cooperate with UNHCR in establishing a sustainable registration system for urban refugees and advise the government on all refugee related issues. UNHCR has been working closely with the National Committee to provide technical assistance to draft the national refugee law. The registration exercise started in May 2002 and provided UNHCR and the government of Yemen with an opportunity to update the number of Somalis in Yemen the number of refugees registered so far is of 2391.

UNHCR's operations in Yemen continue to focus on providing basic protection and essential care and maintenance including primary education, health and vocational training to camp refugees. Its role in the urban areas of Aden and Sana'a will be that of burden sharing with

the government to alleviate the pressure on its social structures caused by the presence of large number of refugees and legal assistance in terms of refugee status determination, basic health assistance for most vulnerable urban refugees in Aden and Sana'a. UNHCR assistance programme will also focus on developing and improving refugee skills through vocational and/or skills training courses that could be used in Yemen or in the country of return. Third country resettlement for eligible cases is undertaken on a case-by-case basis and covers close family reunion cases and vulnerable refugees as priority groups.

Capacity building of national authorities and local NGOs has become a main priority objective in UNHCR operation and intensive efforts will continue to focus on providing training and technical assistance to Government officials involved in refugees affairs to facilitate their role in assuming responsibilities in screening, registration and documentation of refugees, as well as in the development of a national refugee legislation. In this regard, UNHCR has provided financial support for the establishment of 6 registration centres in Yemen.

Repatriation activities are co-ordinated with UNHCR offices in the Horn of Africa. In this respect access to the country of origin information combined with regular up date and harmonization of policy with the relevant offices in the region provides the basis for refugee status determination and assistance.

The assistance programme in Yemen is implemented by five NGOs comprising two internationals and three nationals. UNHCR Yemen will continue its work to enhance the capacity of local/ national NGO while adhering to the basic operational modalities of PARinAC.

The World Food Programme provides basic food ration for all refugees in Kharaz camp, school feeding programme in the camp, supplementary food for the Refugee Health Clinic in Kharaz and Basateen Clinic in Aden and Mayfa'a transit centre.

## **(ii) Principal Programme Goals and Objectives in 2004**

UNHCR's operations will focus on international protection and basic material assistance, and institutional capacity building of the national authority. In addition, efforts will be made to assist the government in enacting refugee legislation. National NGOs staff will benefit from various locally organized training sessions to strengthen their capacity; promotion of durable solution through seeking repatriation and/ or local integration as well as the consolidation of care and maintenance assistance for the camp refugees will be pursued. In this context emphasis will be put on self-sufficiency projects including agricultural ones, income generation and vocational training for both camp and urban refugees.

In formulating these objectives, the following will be taken into account;

- (1) The Influx from Somalia still continues and Yemen will continue to receive an average of 1,000 new arrivals a month.
- (2) There will be an increase in the number of new arrivals of Ethiopian origin (Oromos). This movement is likely to continue given the difficult economic situation in Ethiopia.
- (3) There are an estimated 100,000 Iraqi refugees in Yemen although the majority are not of concern to UNHCR. Iraqis arriving Yemen do not require a visa but are given 6 months temporary permit, which is renewable until they regularize their stay. A small number apply for asylum.

(4) In line with recommendations of the Refugee Children's Unit in HQ, UNHCR recruited an International UNV Community Services Officer towards the end of 2002. Previous missions to Yemen by Senior Nutritionist and Nutrition Consultant from the Community and Health Section in HQ made useful recommendations to improve refugee welfare specially children and women. In 2004, the Community Services Officer will continue to train concerned NGO staff in best practices so that they can develop and implement an effective programme aimed at early detection and prevention of sexual abuse or exploitation of refugees. In this regard, refugee women and children will be provided legal protection and involved in awareness raising campaigns. These activities will be promoted through the media and in workshops. The programme will also encourage active participation of women in camp committees such as Food distribution and Refugee committees and participation and/or employment in facilities set up to serve refugees.

The school feeding programme especially for kindergarten children from ages of 1 to 3 years by providing biscuits, milk, etc. will be enhanced. In the camp, efforts will be made to establish a Children and Adolescents Committee where they will discuss their own problems and concerns in confidence. It is foreseen that income-generating activities for adolescents will be formed in areas such as handicrafts after acquiring necessary skills in the training centres run by implementing partners. To address the issue of over crowded classrooms at the lower grades, 2 new classrooms for children will be constructed and equipped with the necessary school equipment and supplies, children will continue to benefit from uniforms comprising shoes, school bags and toys to encourage attendance and reduce drop out rates. The playground constructed in 2002 will be extended to accommodate more activities for the children to play and pass their leisure time.

(5) UNHCR will continue to work with NGOs in the spirit of PARinAC to implement planned activities in favour of refugees in areas of material assistance, international protection and seeking durable solutions. In 2004 implementation arrangements will be through five NGOs (2 international and 3 national) namely; Interaction in Health Development in Sana'a and Triangle Generation Humanitaire, Save the Children Sweden, Charitable Society for Social Welfare, Society for Humanitarian Solidarity in Aden (Basateen) and Lahj(Kharaz camp). With regard to capacity building of local NGO staff, programme management workshops designed to improve effective monitoring will be organised.

(6) Effective collaboration with National Sub-Committee for Refugee Affairs will continue in 2004 so that the Sub-Committee can assume its responsibility in the protection of refugees. Particularly UNHCR will continue to provide technical support to the government so that it can enact a refugee law.

(7) Collaborative efforts with locally based embassies of traditional resettlement countries to promote third country resettlement for eligible cases will continue while local initiatives to fund raise through traditional donors and NGOs in the GCC countries will be promoted so as to bring additional resources to strengthen the assistance programme in Yemen.