

Country Operations Plan

Country: GHANA

Planning Year: 2002

It was initially envisaged that the UNHCR Office in Ghana will provide programme and protection coverage in Benin, Burkina Faso, Niger and Togo which will no longer have a UNHCR presence as of 01 January 2002. Therefore, the relevant budgets to cover UNHCR activities in those countries without UNHCR's presence have been incorporated into the budget of UNHCR Office in Ghana. In this context, this document was prepared. Meanwhile and at the time of finalising this document (29.06.2001), it is being proposed that Benin would cover Burkina Faso, Niger and Togo while Ghana will remain as a liaison office responsible for its own country programme.

CONTEXT AND BENEFICIARY POPULATION	3
<i>Political Context.....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Security Situation</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Protection issues.....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>UNHCR's Role</i>	<i>3</i>
OVERVIEW OF EACH BENEFICIARY POPULATION	4
<i>Policy Issues</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Linkage to other countries within a defined "situation"</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Capacity and Presence of implementing partners.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Presence and Role of other UN Agencies.....</i>	<i>6</i>
SELECTED PROGRAMME GOALS AND OBJECTIVES.	6
<i>Name of Beneficiary Population: Urban Refugees</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Name of Beneficiary Population: Sierra Leonean Refugees</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Name of Theme: Secondary and Tertiary Education for Refugees in West Africa.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Name of Beneficiary Population: Residual caseload of Liberians in Ghana.....</i>	<i>7</i>

Part I: Executive Committee Summary

a) Context and Beneficiary Population

Political Context

Ghana set precedence in Sub-Saharan Africa when it changed an incumbent government through the ballot box in December 2000. The new government seems to be enjoying a lot of international goodwill from the donor community. In February 2001, the government increased fuel prices by 64% and promised to come out with a mechanism, which will automatically adjust fuel prices according to prevailing market rates. The government has also decided to join the Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC), since it has inherited an enormous internal and external debt. The HIPC initiative is expected to give the government relief from the payment of loans for some period.

Security Situation

The country is generally peaceful with no major security problems. However, since 1998, there has been systematic killing of women in Accra and its environs. To date a total of 30 women have been killed and the police have apprehended one self-confessed murderer; investigations are still ongoing. As is the case of some countries on the continent, armed robbery cases occur intermittently both in Accra and the regions. The police recently undertook an operation to retrieve all arms in the hands of unauthorised persons.

Protection issues

The UNHCR Liaison Office (LO) provides counselling to refugees and ensures that they are protected against abuse from the nationals and governments. Most of the refugees in Ghana, Benin, Togo, Burkina Faso and Niger fled their countries of origin as a result of civil wars, persecution and general fear for their lives. The Liberian residual cases in the countries of asylum claim that they cannot return to their country of origin due to their ethnic background (Krahn) and security problems. In the case of the Sierra Leonean refugees, rebels are still controlling most parts of the country and even though there is no war yet there is also no peace. The LO will assist the refugees to seek local integration and/or resettlement into third countries as a means of finding durable solutions.

In order to provide adequate international protection to the refugees, UNHCR will conduct training workshops geared towards improving the interviewing techniques of the Refugee Board members, as well as ensuring their mastery of refugee law and doctrine. Another capacity building measure will be the elaboration of simple and clear rules of eligibility determination procedures by UNHCR and convincing the States to adopt these.

UNHCR's Role

Ghana is host to over 12,000 refugees, most of whom are from Liberia and Sierra Leone. From 2002, Ghana will provide assistance to over 9,266 refugees from various parts of the continent seeking asylum in Benin, Togo,

Niger and Burkina Faso. UNHCR provides protection and assistance to these people and will continue to do so till the situations in their home countries improve to enable them return. The Sub-Regional LO will be providing protection and assistance to asylum seekers and refugees respectively. Education projects for tertiary post secondary and secondary will continue in 2002 for refugees in Ghana, Togo, Benin, Niger and Burkina Faso as well as those transferred from Guinea to Ghana.

Overview of Each Beneficiary Population

The UNHCR Office in Ghana has been providing assistance to refugees from West Africa and other parts of Africa from the early 1990's. As a result of the seven-year civil war in Liberia, several of its nationals fled to neighbouring countries, to seek refuge. Ghana was no exception and at the peak of the war Ghana was host to about 20,000 Liberian refugees. The refugees were hosted in a camp about 34 Kms from Accra in a village called Gomoa Buduburam, which was provided by the government of Ghana. UNHCR provided protection and care and maintenance assistance to about 15,000 of the refugees at the Gomoa Buduburam camp. In June 1997 when "democracy" was restored to Liberia, culminating in the election of President Charles Taylor, UNHCR facilitated the repatriation of over 500 Liberian refugees' back to their country of origin. By the end of 1999, a total of 3,597 refugees had taken advantage of organised repatriation, which span a period of two years.

UNHCR continued to provide protection and local settlement assistance to over 9,000 Liberian refugees in the Buduburam camp till the end of June 2000. In order to ascertain the number of refugees, who may still be of concern to the Government of Ghana and the UNHCR, the government of Ghana undertook a screening exercise to identify those who qualify for protection and assistance. Out of over 9000 Liberian refugees in the country, the government has recognised only about 4000, whom they believe still qualify for refugee status in Ghana. The Refugee Board has requested for identity cards to be given to the newly recognised refugees to enable them live in the country. The government has not yet informed LO on the action to be taken concerning the other 5,000 plus refugees who were not recognised. The future of the Buduburam camp has also not yet been decided. The government is making arrangements to relocate the recognised refugees from Buduburam to another camp.

An allocation has been made to provide local settlement assistance to the residual caseload, and any new influx in a new camp. The LO will facilitate the local integration of the 4000 residual Liberian refugees in Ghana. Sub-regional LO will ensure that the refugees are provided with assistance for skills training and also for starting micro-businesses. The LO will also continue to pursue resettlement opportunities for the Liberian refugees.

Since 1990 Sierra Leone has been engaged in a civil war involving rebels and the government. In 1997 the military in Sierra Leone took over power from the democratically elected government of President Ahmed Tejan Kabba. The

military junta instituted a rule of terror in Sierra Leone killing several people, mutilating and amputating the limbs of civilians. Ghana like other countries in the sub-region received an influx of Sierra Leonean refugees. Between 1997 and February 2001 over 2000 Sierra Leonean refugees have been granted refugee status in Ghana, about 1800 are living in a camp in Kisan in the Western Region of Ghana about 300 Kms west of Accra. The refugees in the camp are provided with protection and care and maintenance assistance. They are also encouraged to learn skills and engage in viable income generating activities.

Though a peace agreement was signed in July 1999 rebels are still controlling most parts of Sierra Leone. The government of Sierra Leone has proposed that elections be held in December 2001, while the rebels have also signalled that all hostilities would cease and the rebel movement would be converted into a political party. Conditions in Sierra Leone are likely to improve if the rebels commit themselves to the peace process.

The Sierra Leonean refugees will continue to receive assistance in 2002 with reduced food rations. At the same time a regional repatriation programme will be established to enable those refugees who want to return to their country of origin do so.

A residual caseload of 1,088 Togolese refugees has been in Ghana since September 1997. These Togolese are ex-military, ex-militia and ex-politicians with their families. Out of the number, 416 are in the Kisan camp in the Western Region and are being provided with assistance. The rest have integrated into the local communities in the Volta Region. Durable solutions in the form of third country resettlement are being sought for these people. Meanwhile, they would be provided with assistance and encouraged to integrate into the local community and engage in farming activities and informal employment if resettlement to a third country is not achieved for them in the year 2002. Those in the Volta Region will be provided with protection and counselling to facilitate their integration.

In spite of it being surrounded by unstable governments/countries, Ghana remains peaceful and has thus attracted a significant number of asylum seekers. Since these asylum seekers do not arrive en mass but in small numbers, some of them have to spend several weeks and months in transit quarters before they are interviewed. Most of these refugees are transferred to the Kisan camp for assistance; however, there may be some, who due to their political profile would not be able to live in the camp. These people as well as those in need of assistance while in Accra, Togo, Benin, Niger and Burkina Faso will be provided with assistance from an urban refugee project.

Those refugees who qualify will be enrolled at recognised institutions to train in viable and marketable skills with short training periods. They will then be provided with material grants to enable them start micro-businesses to become self-sufficient in the shortest time possible.

Policy Issues

In February 2000 a regional policy on termination of assistance was taken. Subsequently, all assistance to Liberian refugees in Ghana, including those in Krisan was terminated. The government conducted a screening exercise to establish the number of refugees who still require some form of assistance and those who will be considered as immigrants from other ECOWAS countries.

Linkage to other countries within a defined “situation”

All countries in the Sub-region co-ordinate and share information to ensure uniformity in operations for the achievements of objectives.

Capacity and Presence of implementing partners

UNHCR has been working closely with implementing partners to provide assistance to the refugees in Ghana, Togo, Benin, Niger and Burkina Faso. From 2002 the implementing capacities will be strengthened to enable the partners take up the additional responsibilities that would be handed over to them. Training programmes will be identified for the implementing partners to help them execute their duties more effectively in 2002.

Presence and Role of other UN Agencies

UNHCR is part of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) with an objective to enhancing joint programmes, collaboration and co-ordination among UN Agencies with the view to improving efficiency and effectiveness of UN development assistance in Ghana. The UNDAF comprises funds from both programme and specialised agencies. The heads of all UN agencies in Ghana form the team. The major challenge revolves around development targets based on “vision 2020” of the last government which seeks to make Ghana a middle level income country by the year 2020.

Selected Programme Goals and Objectives

Name of Beneficiary Population: Urban Refugees	
Main Goal: Care and Maintenance Assistance for Refugees living in Ghana, Togo, Benin, Niger and Burkina Faso	
Principal Objectives	Related Outputs
-Provide new refugees with protection assistance for up to one year in line with guidelines on urban refugees.	-Asylum seekers and recognised refugees benefit from protection and relief assistance. -

Name of Beneficiary Population: Sierra Leonean Refugees	
Main Goal: Care/Maintenance and Repatriation for Sierra Leonean Refugees	
Principal Objectives	Related Outputs
-Provide protection and assistance to Sierra Leonean and other refugees in Krisan camp, while encouraging self-sufficiency.	-Recognised refugees in the Krisan camp provided with basic assistance to engage in income generating activities.

-Repatriate refugees in safety and dignity to Sierra Leone.	-Refugees willing to return home to be repatriated if conditions are conducive in Sierra Leone.
Name of Theme: Secondary and Tertiary Education for Refugees in West Africa	
Main Goal: Provide education for needy and qualified refugee students in secondary/polytechnic and Universities in Ghana.	
Principal Objectives	Related Outputs
Qualified Sierra Leonean refugee students from Guinea and the other refugee caseload in Ghana provided with education.	Education provided for secondary and University refugee students.

Name of Beneficiary Population: Residual caseload of Liberians in Ghana	
Main Goal: Local Settlement Programme for Liberian Refugees	
Principal Objectives	Related Outputs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Increase self-sufficiency of the remaining Liberian refugees through agricultural activities in a new site. -Provide protection and skills training to Liberian refugees, with a view to facilitating their local integration within the Ghanaian community. - Providing avenues for refugee employment in order to achieve self-sufficiency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Remaining Liberian refugees get involved in agricultural activities in the new site and not rely on UNHCR's basic assistance -Residual caseload of Liberian refugees trained in marketable and viable skills to facilitate their integration. - Refugees gainfully employed and not reliant on food assistance.