



COUNTRY OPERATIONS PLAN

Country: Republic of Congo

Planning Year: 2004

Part 1: Executive summary

a) Context and beneficiary populations

The year 2002 was marked by contradictory developments in the search for socio-political and economic stability. On the one hand remarkable advances were made in the democratic process while on the other there were significant consequences of Pastor Ntoumi's rebel attacks in the Pool region on peaceful, innocent civilians.

Presidential and legislative elections took place during the first quarter of 2002, after the constitutional referendum, to the great satisfaction of observers and the Congolese people. Afterwards, the new Congolese Parliament was constituted and a new government was appointed in August 2002. This progressive setting up of the leading democratic institutions was crowned by the appointment of the President of the constitutional court in January 2003. The constitutional referendum, which laid the foundations for the democratic process, was adopted through the strong determination of different Congolese political actors following the Inter-Congolese Dialogue held in March 2001 under the auspices of Gabonese President Omar Bongo.

Despite the inclusive nature of the Dialogue, not all the members of the opposition in exile were participants. As a result armed conflict resumed in March 2002, thereby breaking off the two-year truce observed between Government Forces and the Ninja rebels. From then on, other rebel attacks were perpetrated in different areas of the Pool region, in the vicinity of the city of Brazzaville and over the important railway link between the capital and Pointe-Noire. The peak was reached on June 14th 2002 when a band of Ninjas launched an attack against the military air base and the international airport of Brazzaville. The consequences of this armed conflict obviously impacted the humanitarian angle with approximately 80,000 displaced people in the Pool region living in extremely precarious conditions. Atrocities and abuses committed by the belligerent parties were reported. The rupture of the regularity of the train between Pointe-Noire and Brazzaville affected economic and social livelihoods. Fuel and essential commodities became rare, or non-existent, for the Congo which produces oil.

Aware of the situation, the Congolese authorities undertook to settle crisis in Pool. In November 2002, Congolese from the Pool and from different areas of the Republic set up a peace committee through the Parliament. The President of the Republic extended amnesty to all Ninjas who surrendered, giving a deadline of one month, from November 18th till December 18th, 2002. Humanitarian corridors were opened for the rebels coming out of the forests. Some 400 young Ninjas responded to this appeal and surrendered to the State. Furthermore, the United Nations system proceeded with an evaluation of the security situation in Congo. This assessment led to a reduction of security phases in different HCR operational areas, ie. Brazzaville, Pointe-Noire and the north where the refugee sites of Betou, Loukolela and Imfondo are located.

The combined efforts of 2002 resulted in the signature of a ceasefire agreement between the Ninja rebel movement and the Congolese Government in March 2003. The security and political situation in the Republic of Congo have been stable since the signing of a peace agreement. Prisoners of war from each side were exchanged to prove the will of making peace. Furthermore,

some of the rebels who surrendered have been integrated in the national Congolese army FAC. Pasteur Ntoumi is expected to come to Brazzaville from his military base in the Pool. The UN system and some NGOs are providing basic humanitarian assistance to displaced persons in the Pool area.

In his speech during the Independence Day ceremony on August 15, President Nguesso officially announced the end of the civil war in the Republic of the Congo and invited Bernard Kolelas, the former Prime Minister, to come home from exile and face the Congolese judicial system for his actions. Mr Bernard Kolélas took this challenge and announced his intention to return to Brazzaville on 13/14 September, expressing his willingness to stand trial for any charges that might be levied against him. The government responded by cancelling all international flights on those dates. The political situation in the Republic of Congo has yet to be completely resolved.

Meanwhile, the government of Nguesso enjoys good relationships with its neighbours, indicating that there are strong chances that the country will not fall prey to war again.

The National Committee of Assistance to Refugees (CNAR), with the support of HCR, continues handling individual protection cases in Brazzaville, Pointe-Noire and other field locations. HCR and its partners will implement humanitarian assistance to support DRC refugees settled in the north; the local integration of urban refugees in Brazzaville and the Angolans refugees (from Cabinda) in Pointe-Noire. Joint missions to identify Quick Impact Projects in areas of return will be undertaken, as well as preparations for the return of Congolese refugees from Gabon.

The 2004 UN Country Team will extend co-operation to UNHCR by providing assistance to refugees according to their mandate and capacity.

Regional strategic orientation, and the management of different beneficiary groups living in the RoC will be done in co-ordination with other HCR offices, for example in the DRC, Gabon, CAR and Angola, to ensure an integrated approach for the refugees living in Congo.

OVERVIEW OF THE BENEFICIARY IN RoC

Country of origin	Refugees number in 2003	Themes being addressed
Angola	1 173	Local settlement
CAR	1 308	Care and maintenance
DRC	77 490	Care and maintenance
Urban refugees	1 830	Local settlement, Repatriation
Total	81 801	

b) Selected Programme Goals and Objectives

Name of Beneficiary population: Angolans from Cabinda province.	
Main goal(s): Continue to assist Angolan refugees from Cabinda in Kondi-Mbaka and Komi sites to become self-reliant and integrate locally, through socio-economic empowerment.	
Principal objectives	Related outputs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Promote economic and social refugee rights in accordance with OAU and 1951 Conventions. ➤ Support Angolan refugee efforts to look for durable solutions. ➤ Implement the Tripartite Agreement between HCR, the Congolese and the Angolan governments by repatriating those willing to return. ➤ Prevent sexual exploitation and abuse of refugees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Access to arable land and facilities to undertake economic activities in localities of Kondi-Mbaka, Komi and Pointe-Noire. ➤ Angolans unwilling to return can continue to enjoy safe asylum and protection against refoulement. ➤ Local settlement facilities offered and implemented by a partner. ➤ Resettlement opportunities to those who meet criteria will be offered. ➤ Repatriation movements to Angolans who express their wish to return to their country of origin. ➤ Awareness and sensitization activities on the prevention of and response to SGBV in refugee areas.

Name of Beneficiary population/Theme : Refugees from DRC and CAR	
Main goal(s): Provide multi-sectoral assistance oriented towards self-reliance and community participation.	
Principal objectives	Related outputs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Promote economic and social refugee rights in accordance with OAU and 1951 Conventions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Access of DRC and CAR refugees to arable land and facilities to undertake economic activities in localities of Loukolela, Impfondo and Betou. ➤ DRC and CAR refugees unable to return to continue benefiting from safe asylum and

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Support DRC and CAR refugees' efforts to look for durable solutions. ➤ Prevent sexual exploitation and abuse of refugees. 	<p>protection from refoulement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Care and maintenance facilities offered and implemented by partners with a strong social orientation to local integration. ➤ Resettlement opportunities to those who meet criteria will be provided. ➤ Awareness and sensitization activities on the prevention and response to SGBV in refugee areas.
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<p>Name of Beneficiary population/Theme : Urban refugees (Brazzaville and Pointe Noire)</p>	
<p>Main goal(s): Provide education and training assistance to refugee students in urban areas; support the Congolese authorities in the implementation of national refugee legislation, through the National Committee for Refugee Assistance. Ensure the respect of children's rights and provide social orientation.</p>	
<p>Principal objectives</p>	<p>Related outputs</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Promote economic and social rights in accordance with OAU and 1951 Conventions for refugees. ➤ Support urban refugees' efforts to look for durable solutions. ➤ Ensure RSD to asylum seekers in Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire. ➤ Prevent exploitation and abuse of refugees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Facilitate urban refugee access to schools and professional training centres. ➤ Urban refugees can enjoy continuity of safe asylum and protection against refoulement. ➤ Education assistance and social development offered and implemented by partners. ➤ Resettlement opportunities to those who meet criteria will be offered. ➤ Monitoring of Refugee Determination Statute procedures with UNHCR playing consultative role. ➤ Facilitation of repatriation for urban refugees who express their wish to return home in safety and dignity. ➤ Include urban refugees in existing SGBV awareness and sensitization activities in urban areas.

Part II: Beneficiary population and themes

Section A: Goals, Objectives, Realisations and Indicators of the Programme

Beneficiary populations/Themes : Angolan refugees from Cabinda		FMIS Project Code 04/AB/COB/LS/410
But(s): Local settlement of Angolans in Kondi-Mbaka and Komi sites.		
Objectives	Outputs	Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Incountry transport ➤ Water system development ➤ Human waste control ➤ General health services ➤ Social work services ➤ General primary education ➤ Crop production 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Transport and delivery of agricultural products to markets each week. ➤ Regular water treatments of both drillings of Kondi-Mbaka and Komi ➤ Construction of communal and durable latrines in both sites ➤ Participation of the refugee community, taking into account primary health care. ➤ Awareness campaign undertaken against sexual exploitation and abuse of refugees. ➤ Teachers' allowance and school material provided. ➤ Selection of candidates for scholarships. ➤ Access to arable land in refugee sites ➤ Seeds, tools distributed to households. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 364 tons of agricultural products transferred from the sites to Pointe-Noire for selling. ➤ 10 litres of potable water per refugee per day. ➤ 80 latrines constructed, bringing the ratio to 1 latrine for 5 families. ➤ Health centres cost recovering to support refugee care. An amount of CFA 600,000 recovered in 2002. ➤ 4 meetings to organise during the year. Mechanism reports in refugee sites ➤ 15 teachers supported. ➤ 65 scholarships granted ➤ 2.5 ha for farmer refugee family ➤ Distribution to 120 households.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Rehabilitation of environment ➤ Improvement of refugee households by raising animals for sale in the market ➤ Improvement of household income by income-generating activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Training of farmers on agriculture skills ➤ Production of fruit plants to prevent and stop deforestation ➤ Reproduction of animals ➤ Selection of beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Improvement of agriculture production ➤ 2,500 fruit saplings planted ➤ Deforested land restored during the year ➤ Amount of cash income (to be determined) from animal products (milk, meat...) and selling animals. ➤ 30 beneficiary refugees of micro-projects for an amount of CFA 3,800,000
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Section B: Demographic and statistic data of the beneficiary population

Beneficiary population		Angolan refugees				
Age brackets	Men (In absolute figures)	(en %)	Women (In absolute figures)	(In %)	Total (In absolute figures)	(In %)
0-4					293	25
5-17	132		161		411	35
18-59	185		226		446	38
60 et >	201		245		23	2
	10		13			
Total :	528		645		1 173	100%
Main places :		Kondi-Mbaka, Komi				

Section C: Summary Topics for Angolan Refugees

Assumptions:

- Local authorities in Pointe Noire will further cooperate and avail sufficient land for cultivation for refugees in Kondi-Mbaka and Komi.
- The situation in Cabinda is expected to stabilise.
- The logistical and means of transport will be available

- Seeds and agricultural tools will be distributed in time, in sufficient quantities
- Essential drugs will be made available
- The security conditions will be conducive

Constraints:

- Continued hostilities in Cabinda between Government and FLEC rebel forces, possibly resulting in renewed outflows.
- Insufficient availability of land.
- Belated arrival of items
- Logistical constraints
- Erratic rainy season
- Budgetary cuts

Strategy for achieving goal(s).

- Tripartite meetings will be held to assess and follow major developments in Angola and in the Cabinda province. Specific attention should be paid to the areas of return of Angolan refugees regarding the questions of landmine zones
- Regular contacts will be established between HCR offices in Angola and RoC
- Increase the level of participation of refugees in agriculture, forestry and animal products activities which can generate income.
- Reinforce refugee capacities and skills to implement their skills in income generation, agriculture and producing animal products through technical training.
- A regular follow-up to monitor protection issues with permanent presence of a protection focal point in Pointe-Noire.

Implementation strategy

GTZ will provide qualified employees to implement the assistance activities on behalf of UNHCR until the end of 2004. GTZ offices in Brazzaville will work closely under UNHCR supervision.

Policy Priorities:

Women/Gender Equality

As mentioned for DRC refugees.

Children and adolescents

As mentioned for DRC refugees.

Environmental concerns

As mentioned for DRC refugees.

Beneficiaries with special needs

As mentioned for DRC refugees.

Campaign against sexual exploitation and abuse

- Creation in the refugee sites of a mechanism of prevention

- Awareness and sensitisation campaign against abuse and sexual exploitation and its damage (HIV/Aids, STD...).
- Reinforce refugee medical structures to care for victims of SGBV in collaboration with IRC and FNUAP. Psychological, medical, social and legal aspects should particularly be prioritised.
- UNHCR Code of Conduct concerning HCR and IP staff working with refugees will be shared with refugee committees in each site.

Registration/Documentation

CNAR will continue to issue ID cards to registered refugees.

Potential for Solutions and UNHCR Phase-Out

A joint evaluation to plan the UNHCR phase-out for this caseload will be conducted in the course of the second semester of 2004.

Beneficiary populations/Themes : Care and maintenance of DRC and CAR refugees		FMIS Project Code 04/AB/COB/CM/271
Goal(s): Care and maintenance of DRC and CAR refugees in the sites of Loukolela, Impfondo and Betou, in the North.		
Objectives	Realisations	Indicators
➤ Incountry transport	➤ Transfer of non-food items, fuel, materials and equipment on refugee sites and field offices.	➤ 400 tons transferred
➤ Water system development	➤ Water treatment and construction/ rehabilitation of wells	➤ 10 wells constructed/ rehabilitated to the ratio of 10 litres per refugee per day on the sites
➤ Household fuel/ domestic needs	➤ Non-food item distribution on refugee sites ➤ Hygiene kits distribution to women	➤ 70,000 beneficiaries ➤ 15,000 women beneficiaries, 20% of the refugee population
➤ Human waste control	➤ Training session and campaign on construction of latrines	➤ 400 family latrines built.
➤ General health services	➤ Preventive and curative primary health services delivered in health	➤ Drugs supply and medical

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ General education primary ➤ Crop production ➤ Identification of refugees ➤ Legal assistance to refugee 	<p>centres.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Implementation of Bamako initiative to increase refugee participation in health care. ➤ Reinforce refugee health centres with adequate equipment and services to treat SGBV victims ➤ Support teachers and provide school materials ➤ Improvement of the quality of teaching ➤ Distribution of tools and seeds ➤ Facilitation of refugee local integration ➤ Monitoring the printing of refugee ID cards and follow-up of the issuance. ➤ Training on SGBV issues to security men in refugee areas. ➤ Support legal action of SGBV victims against perpetrators. 	<p>services in refugee health centres.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Amount of refugee participation to be determined. ➤ 10 health centres in refugee sites equipped and qualified to treat SGBV cases. Multisectoral approach will be prioritised, in particular medical, psychological, social and economic aspects. ➤ 334 teachers supported for approximately 13,000 pupils of primary school. ➤ Teachers training organised ➤ 6,000 heads of families benefited from agriculture kits. ➤ Area cultivated and production to be determined. ➤ Resolution of conflict related to arable land access. ➤ 15,000 refugees granted ID cards. ➤ Number of security men trained to be determined. ➤ Numbers of complaints from victims to be determined.
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Section B: Demographic and statistic data of the beneficiary population

Beneficiary population : DRC and CAR refugees						
Age brackets	Men (In absolute figures)	(In %)	Women (In absolute figures)	(In %)	Total (In absolute figures)	(In %)
0-4	7 655		8 183		15 838	20.1
5-17	15 833		15 844		31 677	40.2
18-59	14 853		14 775		29 628	37.6
60 et >	568		1 087		1 655	2
Total :	38 909		39 889		78798	100%
Main places : Loukolela, Impfondo and Betou						

Section C: Summary topics for Congolese (DRC) and CAR refugees

Assumptions:

- The ongoing peace process in DRC has an uncertain outcome and the Inter-Congolese Dialogue is turning round, the situation in the Equator Province (DRC) will take longer to stabilise ; this province is the main zone of origin of DRC refugees in RoC and will probably continue to be unstable during 2004.
- Refugees will not return in big numbers as the situation remains unchanged.
- Access will be possible to all refugees-hosting areas along the Oubangui River.

Constraints:

- Access could remain difficult should hostilities resume.
- The political, economic and social situation in Equator Province may not improve and may negatively affect prospects for repatriation.
- The proximity of refugee sites to the borders is a major protection concern because of rape and other abuses perpetrated by rebels and regular forces.
- Dense forests and rivers covering 60% of the territory are major natural constraints which demand an important logistical capacity.
- Budget reduction and resource shortfalls.

Strategy for achieving goal(s)

UNHCR will continue to encourage involvement and full participation in project implementation of DRC refugees through sectoral management committees.

Implementation strategy

- UNHCR Field offices in Betou and Impfondo are covering the Northern river zone while the office in Loukolela is covering the Southern river zone. The Representation Office in Brazzaville will support this operation and will have close contact with the central authorities in Brazzaville.
- CEMIR, a national NGO, is implementing the assistance programme in Impfondo and Loukolela.
- IRC is covering the assistance activities in Betou.

Policy priorities:

Women/gender equality

Through concrete actions, assistance programmes will enhance gender-sensitive planning and intervention in all sectors of activity. Particular attention will be given to:

- women's self-reliance and affirmative self-determination in order to ensure equal enjoyment of all economic, social and cultural rights.
- improving protection for women and girls by encouraging reporting of gender violence; ensuring adequate follow-up action; advising the victims on the legal, medical and social support they could benefit from; ensuring appropriate action with regard to the treatment of the perpetrators.
- providing equal chances to women and girls by ensuring the acquisition of basic French language skills required to facilitate the understanding of awareness and education campaigns and allow better access to employment.
- Promoting/reinforcing gender mainstreaming in all policies and development planning process.

Children and adolescents

The programme will ensure that:

- Informal education will be transformed to formal education progressively.
- The children maintain the link with their country of origin through promotion of cultural activities, combined with stimulation of their creative, artistic and sportive talents.
- Life skill topics are developed through drama groups, poetry to heighten awareness and change attitudes v/s HIV/Aids, STDs, and environment.
- Efforts are made to ensure close monitoring of girls attending school to provide them with the adequate support needed to avoid early school dropout
- In coordination with other UN Agencies' and NGOs' national programmes, immunisation and nutritional follow-up of all under-age children is ensured.
- Peace initiative and conflict resolution will be introduced in the educational programme at a different level.

Environmental concerns

- Introduction, as soon as possible, of an environment protection programme in work plans and budgets, to be implemented by a structure that will work in close collaboration with UNHCR, IPs and camp-based focal points on environment.

- Active collaboration between the environmental structure and the local authorities and NGO specialists in order to jointly prepare and implement Environmental Management Plans in the affected areas.
- The participation of an environmental expert and specialised organisations in the planning of emergency and repatriation operations.
- UNHCR should assume the leading role and serve as a catalyst to ensure the prioritisation of environmental issues in post-war Government and international community-funded plans, with special emphasis on environmental education and sensitisation.
- The implementation of an Environmental Plan of Action based on the foregoing recommendations, in conformity with the responsibilities and within the proposed time frame.
- Refugees will be made aware of environmental concerns and encouraged to take active part to its protection.
- Reforestation activities including tree nurseries and environmental education programme will be promoted.

Beneficiaries with special needs

- Special attention will be given to disabled refugees through a community-based rehabilitation programme and provision of household support.
- For active elderly, the formation of groups will be promoted and their participation as skills trainers for micro-development projects and advisers for younger people in need.
- Appropriate consideration will be given to the integration and rehabilitation of other vulnerable individuals with special needs.

Potential for Solutions and UNHCR Phase-Out

No phase out planned for 2004 for the DRC caseload, but if positive changes occur, particularly stability and security in the Equator province with a central and transitional government, DRC refugees will repatriate.

Beneficiary population/Themes : Urban refugees		FMIS Project Code 04/AB/COB/LS/400 04/AB/COB/RP/300
Goal(s): Local settlement of urban refugees in Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire. Facilitation of voluntary repatriation		
Objectives	Realisations	Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General primary, secondary education and scholarship (Post secondary vocational) ➤ Individual family support ➤ General health services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Selection of beneficiaries. ➤ Rental and subsistence allowance provided. ➤ Referred to appropriate medical care services. ➤ Medical centres for primary health care in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 311 pupils/students beneficiaries. ➤ 350 beneficiaries in Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire. ➤ 5,000 cases of

	Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire for urban refugees availed.	consultation in urban areas.
➤ Special services (Unaccompanied minors)	➤ Followed up and monitored unaccompanied minors in urban areas	➤ 82 ENAs are followed up (20 in CEMIR transit centre and 60 in foster families/ Brazzaville and 2 in Pointe-Noire)
➤ Social services (orientation)	➤ Qualified staff working for refugee social orientation	➤ 7 social workers employed by CEMIR and GTZ in Pointe-Noire and Brazzaville.
➤ Facilitation to return home	➤ Community development activities undertaken.	➤ 8 sessions to develop refugees' abilities and skills organised by partners (4 in PN and 4 in Brazzaville).
➤ Refugee Status Determination	➤ Repatriation arrangements undertaken.	➤ 1,100 refugees return home.
	➤ Regular eligibility sessions to grant asylum seekers refugee status.	➤ 1,668 refugee status granted by the National Eligibility Commission

Section B: Statistical and demographic information on the target population

Beneficiary population						
Age brackets	Men		Women		Total	
	(In absolute figures)	(in %)	(In absolute figures)	(en %)	(In absolute figures)	(In %)
0-4	62		59		121	6.6
5-17	229		223		452	24.7
18-59	882		328		1 210	66.1
60 et >	32		15		47	2.7
Total :	1 205		625		1 830	100%
Main places :	Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire					

Section C: Summary topics for urban refugees

Assumptions:

- Some 1,500 new cases will approach UNHCR in the course of 2004.
- 150 urban refugees will be repatriated in 2004.

Constraints:

- The social and economic situation in RoC can compromise the integration of urban refugees.

Strategy for achieving goal(s)

Reinforce activities promoting self-sufficiency for urban refugees such as vocational training activities, increase the level of refugees working in Brazzaville.

Implementation strategy

UNHCR will continue to provide protection services to urban refugees through the government counterpart CNAR in Brazzaville and Pointe Noire. CEMIR and GTZ respectively will continue to implement the local integration assistance in Brazzaville and Pointe Noire.

Policy priorities:

Women/gender equality

- The programme will ensure that adequate accommodation is provided to the women and their families in order to prevent potential exploitation.
- Regular home visits will be undertaken and counselling and guidance will be provided.
- Medical support will be ensured through the city's existing health facilities.
- Particular attention will be paid to female heads of households with regard to resettlement needs (woman-at-risk).

Children and adolescents

- Urban refugee children will be integrated into Government-managed schools wherever possible and be provided with scholarships.
- Medical care will be provided through the existing national facilities.
- The participation in national sporting activities will be encouraged.
- Close follow-up will be provided through home/school visits.
- AIDS awareness is a high priority in the urban context.
- Tracing of family members of the separated children is a priority and reunification activities will be conducted accordingly.

Beneficiaries with special needs

- The disabled and other persons with special needs will be cared for through the existing national structures and individual support is provided to reduce their dependency level.

Registration/Documentation

CNAR will provide ID cards to newly recognised refugees.

Potential for solutions and UNHCR phase-out

In the near future no phase out is envisaged with regard to assistance to urban refugees although a considerable reduction of the numbers in need of assistance is possible through implementation of self-reliance activities. Voluntary repatriation and resettlement will be considered as durable solutions on a case by case basis.

Part III: Country / Management Issues

UNHCR's role and operational environment

The Representation in Brazzaville is responsible for the whole country programme and will endeavour to ensure protection of refugees and others persons of concern. To play this role, the office will continue to implement activities related to:

Protection

- Advocate for the implementation of the National Refugee legislation adopted by the RoC Government in late 2001 and support the functioning of the CNAR and the Eligibility Commission.
- Organise training activities for Government officials, Security Forces, Implementing Partners and refugees.
- Ensure that refugee rights under 1951 and OAU Conventions are respected in RoC.
- Ensure the implementation of awareness and sensitisation campaign on sexual exploitation and abuse.

Repatriation

- Due to the prevailing instability and security conditions in the Equator province in DRC, voluntary repatriation of DRC refugees from RoC will not be promoted or facilitated during 2004.
- Continue to facilitate voluntary repatriation for urban caseloads when and where possible.
- Voluntary repatriation of Congolese (RoC) refugees from Gabon will be completed in 2004; 2,400 Congolese are expected to return. Other durable solutions such as local integration, if agreed by Gabonese Government, or resettlement in third countries will be implemented for residual caseloads in Gabon.

Care and maintenance, Local integration

- Continue in the northern part and in Pointe Noire, the minimum care and maintenance and local integration activities in favour of residual caseloads of Angolan, Congolese (DRC) and CAR refugees in RoC aiming at self-reliance through a community-based approach.
- Aim at maintaining primary, secondary and vocational education assistance to refugees.
- Undertake activities to maximise the participation of refugee women in all refugee-related activities be they in sites or in urban environments; reflect practical mainstreaming of gender-based activities and implementation. Pay special attention to all vulnerable groups.
- Ensure timely, effective and efficient administrative and logistical support to the operations in all areas through periodic meetings with the staff at all levels, frequent visits to the field, adequate staff development opportunities.

External relations

- Continue working in the context of the Framework Agreement with the RoC Government for the protection and assistance to refugees, especially the Angolan caseload, which continue to

face their national armed forces in RoC and the 'droit de poursuite' provided to the Angola government by Congolese authorities.

- Maintaining the dialogue with key government officials, ensuring the support and building of government capacity and other officials dealing with refugee issues through CNAR.
- Develop information strategy explaining UNHCR's policies, activities, achievements and constraints targeting Government and local counterparts, UN sister agencies, donor missions and NGOs.

Security of refugee/returnee areas and camps

No comprehensive or complete account of the security of refugees living in Northern RoC outside of UNHCR established sites has been possible so far. Additional efforts will be made to visit and assess the situation. Although both governments (DRC/RoC) have developed joint military patrols on the river and meetings have been held to solve some incidents which occurred, the security situation on the river is still volatile especially after the recent coup d'état in Bangui.

NGOs, PARinAC and capacity-building

In the spirit of PARinAC, UNHCR will give, whenever possible, preference to competent local NGOs such as CEMIR for the implementation of its projects. Further emphasis will be given to the development of a sustainable and adequate capacity of local NGOs in encouraging partnership between organisations and particularly in developing direct relationships between donors and implementing partners of UNHCR especially in the North of RoC. Particular attention will be given to sharing experience between IRC and CEMIR on SGBV issues and programmes.

Inter-agency cooperation

- UNHCR Brazzaville is in close contact with Donor representatives, other UN Agencies and NGOs.
- The office continues to be an active participant in all relevant inter-agency and coordination on all management and technical levels in RoC.
- A close cooperation with the FAO and WFP has developed and will be continued. UNICEF and WHO will remain privileged partners in education and health sectors in RoC.

(b) Management Issues

Justification for country post requirements and administrative budgets.

UNHCR presence in RoC has changed since 1st April 2003; the office became an Official Representation of UNHCR in RoC. Further to this change of status and in order to fulfil the mission as described in the COP, in the course of the recent staffing review mission changes have been made to staffing. New posts are proposed for creation, reclassification or discontinuation. A new chart of the UNHCR Representation in RoC for 2004 was adopted and will become effective on 1st January 2004. The Office in Brazzaville will be responsible for overall implementation and management of the country programme which provides justification for the new posts, reclassifications or discontinuations.

Four field offices will be maintained in Betou, Impfondo and Loukolela for the northern RoC operation and in Pointe-Noire to monitor the Angolan caseload and urban refugees as well as the potential for voluntary repatriation from Gabon.

Oversight mechanisms and reports

The Office in Brazzaville will provide administrative and project control support to field offices, as well as training sessions to the benefit of IP's national and international staff in programme management.

Audit certificates will continue to be requested from national and international partners.

Regular reporting is ensured through the consolidated monthly SitReps to UNHCR Headquarters, following the Situation Report Field System. Mission and monitoring reports are systematically prepared and shared with all relevant units. Training of field staff in monitoring and assessment techniques will improve the quality of reporting.

Staff safety, security, health and welfare

While security incidents directly involving or harming staff have been a matter of concern in the past, the recent review of security phases that UNSECOORD commissioned recommended the following:

Brazzaville, Phase 2
Pointe Noire, Phase 1
Elsewhere, Phase 2

If no major incident occurs, Brazzaville will still be a family duty station in 2004. With regard to other field locations, the UN Agencies, including UNHCR, still hold that a high degree of staff awareness and precautionary behaviour will help to avoid security incidents until the social and political situation returns to normal. An increased number of security guards at the Offices and residences appears necessary.

Further steps with regard to coordination within the UN system in Brazzaville and training of staff are being undertaken to allow for effective implementation of security and evacuation plans.

Security and evacuation plans exist for most locations, but will need to be updated, taking into account the SMT plan.

Health risks are considerable and regular checkups are recommended. Stress and insufficient hygiene in field locations in the North has frequently resulted in sickness and considerably affected operations. A review of living conditions improved the situation in 2002. In 2003 there needs to be further reviews in all field locations to upgrade staff support and address the current shortcomings in the field.

Health facilities in most field locations are not equipped and supplied or dependent on the capacity of medical NGOs. The UN dispensary, a range of hospitals and private clinics provide basic health care services in Brazzaville but medical evacuation plans will need to be established for all locations.

Staff development

The UNHCR staff serving in RoC has regularly been participating in regional and national training sessions in the past. Within the CMS process, training in programme and financial management will be enhanced in conjunction with training for implementing partners.

National staff will be further encouraged and exposed to a changing environment through international missions with a view to facilitating either the replacement of international staff with national officers or an opportunity for international assignments. Language training for both international and local staff will be encouraged.

Support requirements

Technical support will increasingly be required from various units at Headquarters with a view to enhancing operational support capacity.

The office will request regular support for training in programme and financial management, emergency response, community services and other themes of direct concern to the country operation.

It can be anticipated that in the event of further massive population movements (repatriation and refugees influx), staff support will be needed through the emergency response mechanism, including other stand-by arrangements such as the UNV, NRC/DRC.

Expertise is also being obtained through close cooperation with other UN agencies or specialised institutions on the local and international level.