

## **Part I: Country Level**

### *(a) Executive Summary*

In the implementation of UNHCR's primary mandate, the office will continue to assist the Government of Rwanda in providing protection and assistance to refugees from neighboring African countries and elsewhere. This includes ensuring protection and providing appropriate care and maintenance for Congolese refugees and Burundian refugees in camps and the mixed urban caseload in Kigali. Government counterparts and institutions will be trained to establish and extend protection of refugees pursuant to national legislation and rights based status determination procedures and modalities for assistance.

The Office will also provide assistance to the Government in a second mandated activity: the voluntary repatriation of Rwandan refugees. Over 25,000 are expected to return and the Branch Office will, through its partners, provide material and logistical assistance to and within communities of origin and will – as well - monitor their successful reintegration. As a corollary to this, the Branch Office will strengthen local human rights organisations undertaking returnee monitoring, human rights training and reporting. UNHCR in Rwanda will also work closely on a variety of reconciliation and co-existence initiatives with national institutions such as the National Commission on Unity and Reconciliation, the National Human Rights Commission and the Center for the Prevention of Conflict at the National University of Rwanda. The end objective to these activities will be to build local capacity in understanding the root causes of refugee problems and developing fruitful mechanisms that will foster durable solutions.

The programmes/themes highlighted under these objectives are as follows:

- (1) assist government to establish and develop an operational legal framework and mechanisms for refugee protection and status determination,
- (2) identify durable solutions for refugees,
- (3) facilitate voluntary repatriation and monitoring of returnees and,
- (4) train line Ministries and local partners on the protection of refugees and returnees.

Considering the new parameters set and the reduced financial resources at its disposal, BO Rwanda will be severely constrained in the number and scale of the projects addressing these themes and programs. Therefore the office will need to work closely with other institutions, such as UNDP, to assist in these areas.

### **(b) Overview**

Rwanda, which neighbors countries engaged in conflict is a signatory of the Peace agreement with the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) on the withdrawal of troops and dismantling of armed forces. As well, Rwanda contends with low level insurgency.

Internally, Rwanda must contend with the aftermath of the genocide that in its wake bred a multiplicity of problems. One of the tasks facing the Government is the ongoing attempt to durably relocate old caseload returnees who had spontaneously settled in public domain areas. Alternative arrangements will have to be made for others who are illegally occupying private and public property. In 2001 the Government of Tanzania began to return locally integrated Rwandans who had not regularized their stay, including those who settled in Tanzania in the wake of the

pogroms of the 1950s and 1970s. If this continues, an estimated 45,000 people may be affected based on information received from Tanzania. Uganda may relocate previously integrated refugees into camps or settlements. Many of these Rwandans may choose to return to Rwanda rather than face this alternative. As many as 4,000 families could be involved, based on the number and location of Rwandans in Uganda most directly affected. Repatriation from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Tanzania and other African countries is likely to continue. These will all place an enormous demand on limited land and other resources and infrastructure. Returnee expectations will naturally be high, and if not met, can have a serious destabilizing effect on national security.

The Office will maintain a very basic care and maintenance project for Congolese and Burundi refugees who are living in unsatisfactory conditions vis a vis shelter, health, sanitation in the three camps. If resources are available, BO will also continue the repatriation program that consists of material and logistical assistance to returnees and monitoring of returnees in their communes of origin. The overall emphasis in 2003 is on protection related activities, requiring a human presence. Continuing emphasis will also be placed on building the capacity of MINALOC and possibly a non-governmental organization (counseling and material assistance to the urban caseload) in the management of refugee matters, essential for the eventual phase out strategy of UNHCR's presence. It would be difficult, in fact, for the Office to further reduce its operational budget or its staffing after the considerable reductions made in 2001 and 2002 - leaving it operating at a skeletal level.