

COUNTRY OPERATIONS PLAN

Country: Ethiopia

Planning Year: 2002

Executive Summary

Context (Beneficiary Population and Themes)

The continuing political and civil unrest in the Region of the East and the Horn of Africa, repeated cycles of drought and other natural disasters, as well as the aftermath of the Ogaden war of 1977/78 with Somalia and the recent war with Eritrea in 1998-2000, are responsible for the various refugee and IDP situations in Ethiopia.

Similarly, the ongoing insecurity in some parts of southern Sudan is not only responsible for the steady flow of Sudanese refugees to Western Ethiopia, but poses a major obstacle to voluntary repatriation as a durable solution for this protracted caseload. Consequently, UNHCR Ethiopia is left with no other choice but to provide international protection and material assistance to the Sudanese caseload sheltered in the five camps of Bonga, Dimma, Fugnido, Yarenja and Sherkole in 2002. Most of these refugees have been in Ethiopia for almost three decades.

The assisted refugee population in Ethiopia at the end of March 2001 was 198,370 composed, predominantly, of Somalis (120,906) and Sudanese (73,169) as well as a small number of Eritreans (3,871), Djiboutians, (1,560) and 424 urban refugees from some 16 different nationalities. In 2002, UNHCR Ethiopia and the Government of Ethiopia will co-ordinate protection and assistance to these refugees.

Refugee and asylum policies are the responsibility of the Security, Immigration and Refugee Affairs Authority (SIRAA), under the Ministry of Internal Affairs. SIRAA reports directly to the office of the Prime Minister. Within SIRAA, the Administration for Refugees and Returnee Affairs (ARRA) has been established as a semi-autonomous body, responsible for the implementation of all policies relating to refugees and returnees.

Although refugee policy is the prerogative of the Federal Government, the regional states also have significant responsibilities, such as the provision of security, protection, land and water. This often presents challenges in relationships, as agreement must be sought through protracted negotiations from the latter prior to the implementation of projects.

Ethiopia has acceded to all the relevant international and regional refugee instruments, however, the country expressed reservations with respect to the right of employment of refugees, thus limiting any prospects for the local integration of refugees. In general, Ethiopia has maintained a generous and open asylum policy, which is expected to be sustained in 2002. Consistent to Ethiopia's accession to the relevant refugee instruments, Sudanese refugees are granted refugee status on a prima facie basis under the OAU Convention, after a screening procedure to determine their identity and nationality.

Somali asylum seekers also undergo a screening process. However, except for very few individuals, no influx of Somali refugees has taken place in recent years. In spite of the prevailing conditions in South and Central Somalia, no major influx is anticipated in 2002. All other asylum seekers undergo individual status determination process, in which UNHCR participates as an observer. It is anticipated that these developments will continue in 2002.

UNHCR will capitalise on the relative peace in NW Somalia to continue the repatriation of Somali refugees from five Eastern camps; disperse Ethiopians (of Somali origin, who returned from Somalia in previous years and settled in the camps); close three of the five camps from which refugees will repatriate and thereafter, embark on consolidation,

rehabilitation and hand-over of select infrastructure/other facilities in refugee affected areas to the government in order to improve local reintegration prospects and capacities.

In 2002, linkages between UNHCR Ethiopia and UNHCR Somalia, Djibouti and the Sudan will be further reinforced through the sharing of countries of origin information in order to implement activities in a situational context. UNHCR Ethiopia will also co-ordinate and monitor the implementation of assistance programmes in collaboration with government agencies, international and national NGOs with a view to outsourcing some of the traditionally managed sectoral activities to self funded Implementing Partners. Co-ordination meetings will continue to be conducted at all levels to review progress in the implementation of planned activities in order to ensure better delivery of services to refugees and other persons of concern.

UNHCR Ethiopia actively participates in all the fora and mechanisms set up by the UN Country Team to ensure that development and humanitarian issues of concern to refugees and host populations are carefully examined, and included in relevant agenda for follow up. UNHCR Ethiopia works closely with WFP on all food related issues including general food distribution, selective feeding programmes, distribution of repatriation food packages and introduction of the family-head food distribution system. This co-operation, which enhances the timely delivery of food to the camps, will continue to be adopted in 2002.

Against the foregoing background, UNHCR Ethiopia's main objectives for 2002 will be the following:

a)

Name of Beneficiary/Theme: Somali Refugees	
Main Goals	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promotion of voluntary repatriation to NW Somalia 2. Provision of international protection, ensuring that refugees receive quality asylum and enjoy standard humanitarian assistance in exile while awaiting durable solutions to the causes that led them to flee their country 	
Principal Objectives	Related Outputs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the voluntary repatriation of Somali refugees to Northwest Somalia and facilitate dispersal from the camps of Ethiopian nationals (of Somali origin) to their communities of origin in Ethiopia. • Provide adequate protection and assistance to all refugees with special attention to women, children and other vulnerable groups • Mitigate environmental degradation and rehabilitate areas in and around refugee camps/settlements • Conduct a revalidation exercise in the eastern camps to identify genuine refugees to be consolidated in camps with subsequent camp closure of Kamaboker, Rabasso and Aisha. • Promote public awareness, mobilise support and strengthen co-operation among UNHCR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refugees are repatriated in dignity and safety and Ethiopians are dispersed and reintegrated in their communities of origin • Basic needs of Somali refugees that meet minimum humanitarian standards are met. • The refugee and returnee impacted areas are restored or rehabilitated to the extent possible • Have accurate and credible refugee statistics to facilitate planning and programme delivery to the remaining refugees • Achieve a better understanding and appreciation of UNHCR operations in

partners and refugees	Ethiopia for all concerned as well as the public.
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b)

Name of Beneficiary Population: Sudanese, Eritreans and Urban Refugees	
Main Goals	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provision of international protection, ensuring that refugees receive quality asylum and enjoy standard humanitarian assistance in exile while awaiting durable solutions to the causes that led them to flee their country. 2. Refugees attain partial self-sufficiency. 	
Principal Objectives	Related Outputs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The rights of refugees are well protected. • Resettle victims/at risk refugees and others who are eligible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host government and its officials are made aware of the refugee law and are trained. • Raised awareness of refugee communities on the existing laws of the host country. • Victims of insecurity and others meeting the selection criteria are resettled in third countries
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide basic services such as health, water, education, etc. that will afford refugees a minimum acceptable standard of life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The basic needs of Sudanese, Eritrean and urban refugees are met through the implementation of activities geared towards sustaining their life and partial self-sufficiency.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and update contingency preparedness and response plans • Increase the capacity of refugee and host communities, especially women, girls adolescents and the elderly to become self-supporting and responsible for themselves in order to avert the dependency syndrome 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficient and effective response to refugee influxes, if any. • Refugee women, girls, adolescents, elderly and members of the host communities participate more actively in community life. • Refugees and host communities have opportunities for skills training and income generating activities • Peaceful coexistence of refugees and nationals in refugee hosting areas improved.

Selected Programme Goals and Objectives

The various caseloads below, based on the planning figures for January 2002, will be the principal beneficiaries of protection and assistance programmes of UNHCR Ethiopia.

1. 50,906 **Somali refugees** in the Eastern camps (ensuring asylum, care and maintenance assistance and voluntary repatriation of 35,000 in 2002 including some 5,000 **Ethiopian nationals (of Somali origin)** living in the eastern refugee camps will be dispersed and reintegrated into their local communities of origin in Ethiopia.
2. 93,500 **Sudanese refugees** in Gambella and Beneshangul Gumuz regions (ensuring asylum, care and maintenance assistance, partial self-sufficiency for the old caseload of 73,169 and for an anticipated influx of 10,300 new arrivals in 2001 and a further 10,000 in 2002)

3. 3,871 **Eritrean Kunamas** in Grat Reda in the Tigray National Regional State (ensuring asylum, basic care and maintenance assistance)
4. 460 **Urban refugees** and asylum seekers will receive basic assistance, counselling and post primary education, where applicable, while resettlement opportunities will be pursued for those who are eligible, in particular, for women at risk

Recent developments in Sudan already generated an influx of over 8,000 new arrivals by April 2001. They are reportedly fleeing from intensified fighting between the Sudanese government and SPLA. It is anticipated that the planning figures of 10,300 may easily be overtaken depending on the real situation on the ground. If that becomes the case, UNHCR Ethiopia will have to switch to an emergency response mode for the Sudanese situation.

UNHCR will strive to streamline its operations in Ethiopia in response to the ongoing repatriation in the eastern camps. Substantial savings are expected to be realised from the gradual phasing-out of sectors such as water, education and health, which can be undertaken by others within national programs.