

COUNTRY OPERATIONS PLAN 2002: BOTSWANA

Part I: Executive Committee Summary

Until the turn of this century, the evolving climatic conditions in the sub-region had never qualified for mention when planning for refugee issues in Botswana. In the last couple of years, however, weather conditions have exhibited extreme patterns that precipitated the forced relocation of thousands of inhabitants from their respective places of habitual residence. The effects thus far have been confined to displacements within countries of nationality but if the pattern is anything to assist in predicting future trends, cross border movements are inevitable. Both the scorching heat or the rampaging floods will bring about difficult humanitarian situations and the possibility is being flagged accordingly.

When the COP for the year 2001 was submitted, the underlying argument in favor of the resources requested for was that a solid foundation would be created upon which appropriate programmes would be launched towards the attainment of durable solutions. The strategy can not take effect in the year 2001 because of the 20% budget cut that has hindered the consolidation of the Education, Water, Community Development, Agriculture and Income Generating Sectors. This implication has to be understood from the onset because in terms of impact, the programme is anticipated to remain stagnated.

a) Context and Beneficiary Populations

Refugees flee particularly to Botswana in search for a country with political stability. Botswana is a steady democracy with well-developed and respected specialized divisions of both power and authority. The Presidential and Parliamentary Elections, which have always been incident free, are scheduled for 2004 and, as such, the favorable political climate is anticipated to continue. Conversely, however, some neighboring countries are showing civil tensions as a result of sharp economic declines, political squabbles, civil unrest and attempts to doctor the constitution in order to prolong legitimate stay in power. These fragile democracies are increasingly becoming a priority preoccupation of the liaison office in Botswana.

The security concerns experiencing refugee-hosting countries have not spared Botswana. The influx of asylum seekers with a military background is a relatively new phenomenon in the contemporary context. The protection challenge that accompanies it is the process of clearing such persons before their respective eligibility claims could be heard. Security screening of some cases is lengthy and occasionally means placing in protective custody such cases until the authorities are satisfied from a security point of view. Other recurring issues which will need the continued intervention of UNHCR include the enactment of new legislation on refugees to ensure that the first country asylum principle does not compromise the legitimacy of asylum claims.

The training of key government officials in refugee law and protection has in the past years yield measurable results. In 2002 the exercise will be broadened so that it benefits such officers at training school level. As at now participants are drawn from serving immigration, police, military and security officers. This approach takes into consideration the complexity of cases of those asylum seekers from distant regions such as the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes Region. In order to provide effective International Protection and material assistance to refugees, the documentation system will be

upgraded into an electronic data- base. This will ensure easy access, monitoring and coordination with all stakeholders. The system will be careful and responsible to ensure that confidentiality is at the same time not compromised.

For all the refugees in Botswana, the persecution they fled from is still claiming even more victims in their respective countries. The prospects therefore for voluntary repatriation are very limited. These refugees are mostly from Namibia (2000) who fled after secessionist attempts ended violently. The second largest group is that of Somalis (600) who trekked legitimately in search of Protection and to some extent in pursuit of resettlement. Other refugees include Angolans (800) and a cluster of twelve different nationalities (500) displaced from different regions of Africa. For the last two groups, schemes under local integration are more relevant and practicable.

Botswana Council for Refugees is envisaged to be the main implementing partner of the refugee programme in Botswana. The efforts of this NGO will be supplemented in the Health Sector by Botswana Red Cross Society. The UN family will provide specialized support in key activities that include HIV/AIDS, Health surveillance and the management of the environment. UNHCR's continued presence in Botswana will ensure that the contributions of other UN agencies are put to practical use consistent with UNHCR policy. Botswana is also host to very sensitive protection cases that require continuous protection guidance. The input of the office for these cases will remain essential.

b) Selected Programme Goals and Objectives

Name of Beneficiary Population: Angolan Refugees

Main goals (s)

- Facilitate documentation towards naturalization
- Provide support to expedite local integration

Principal Objectives	Related Outputs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •to obtain citizenship for Angolan refugees residing 20 years in Botswana •to facilitate the local integration of newly arriving Angolans •to ensure that the civilian character of Dukwi Camp is upheld 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Old Angolans are issued with Botswana citizenship documents – Omang •Divorced Women and Children by principle applicant receive same benefits •Integration process takes into full consideration all environment concerns •asylum seekers with military background are screened appropriately

Name of Beneficiary Population: Namibian Refugees

Main goal (s)

- To promote voluntary repatriation
- Facilitate local integration through selected schemes
- Resettle those refugees who can not repatriate or integrate.

Principal Objectives	Related Outputs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Ensure organized and dignified voluntary return. •Place refugees in appropriate activities, according to skills and background, to ensure accelerated integration. •recommend for resettlement rejected “mandate” refugees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •permanent solution to the problem is obtained •Integration appreciated as fits in ones interests and background. •durable solution is attained for rejected asylum seeker with the family

Name of Beneficiary Population: Somali Refugees

Main goal (s)

- Resettle qualifying rejected asylum seekers
- Sensitize local authorities on the demerits of the strict application of the principle of first country of asylum
- Create an enabling environment for local integration

Principal Objectives	Related Outputs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •To intervene and influence at various political levels on the principle of first country of asylum. •To undertake assessment on how to effectively install Somali refugees in Dukwi. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Reduction in the number of rejected Somali asylum seekers. •Less pressure on the resettlement programme. •Willingness to participate in programmes to which formulation they were party.

Name of Beneficiary Population: Urban Based Refugees

Main goal(s)

- Ensure that the continued educational path will bring about lasting solution
- Promote the exclusive application of the Refugee Act in documentation as opposed to the Immigration Act in certain incidents.
- Wean-off graduating students from material assistance.

Principal Objectives	Related Outputs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Promote better understanding between Refugee and Immigration Acts. •Educational programmes would lead to gainful employment or self sufficiency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Refugees are issued only with Work and not Resident permits. •Educational programmes bring about value of its relevancy to other refugees.