



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid - ECHO

Humanitarian Aid Decision
F9 (FED9)

Title: Humanitarian aid operations to facilitate the return of vulnerable people to their place of origin in Liberia.

Location of operation: LIBERIA

Amount of decision: 4.300.000 euro

Decision reference number: ECHO/LBR/EDF/2004/01000

Explanatory Memorandum

1 - Rationale, needs and target population:

1.1. - Rationale:

A National Transition Government with Chairman Gyude Bryant was installed in October 2003 pursuant to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed in Accra on 18 August ending officially fourteen years of civil war. The Transitional Government's mandate is to prepare the ground for democratic legislative and presidential elections in October 2005 and to bring Liberia back to a normally functioning state. The three parties in conflict – Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) and representatives of Charles Taylor's former government – the political parties and civil society are represented in the Transitional Government. This constitutes an opportunity for the pacification of Liberia and therefore of the West African region and it is vital to maintain the political, financial and military commitment of the international community.

On September 2003 the creation of UNMIL, a UN peacekeeping force of 15.000 troops, was approved and started deploying across the country in order to ensure the protection of civilians and the implementation of the disarmament and demobilization process. The improvement of the security situation leads to a spontaneous return process of people to their place of origin where at the same time humanitarian organizations are getting gradual access. It is expected that a massive return of displaced and refugees will start at the end of the rainy season (October) to last for a least one year. The level of destruction and abandoned infrastructures in most of the country is appalling because of so many years of fighting's and looting and it is imperative to restore access to basic services up-country in order to achieve the return and rehabilitation process.

ECHO has been fully engaged in the Liberian crisis and thanks to a strong network of professional partners has been able to respond to the first immediate humanitarian needs, to contribute actively to the stabilisation process and to pave the way for sustainable recovery. Pursuing ECHO's engagement in Liberia is a prime necessity as the humanitarian needs are entering in a new phase with the resettlement of returnees and displaced people.

1.2. - Identified needs:

Despite a somewhat improved security situation and some economic activity returning to parts of Monrovia, the humanitarian situation remains appalling with large parts of the population having very low to no access to basic services such as health care, clean water, sanitation and education, and with Governmental structures that are not functioning. In country the scope of the humanitarian needs remains partly unknown due to the isolation of the communities but is expected to be very high.

The lack of food security is of major concern and more than 350.000 displaced people are still benefiting from the food distribution. The food production has been much reduced for the last two crop seasons and even in the territories still producing there has been little commercial traffic towards markets with the consequence of a persisting vulnerability and possibility of an increase of malnutrition of the population as a whole.

The World Health Organization analysis 2002 reported that 76% of the population lived below the poverty line (US\$ 1/day) and furthermore 52% of the total 3 million population lives in extreme poverty (earning less than US\$ 0.5/day). Life expectancy is 47 years and Liberia Human Development Index is ranked 174 out of 175 countries. This situation has worsened since the war of 2003.

The safe and sustainable return of the refugees and other displaced persons to their place of origin, as well as the successful reintegration of the ex-combatants is of critical importance in consolidating the peace process in Liberia. But the local communities are currently enabled to provide for the reintegration and rehabilitation of these people and the reconstruction of their areas.

The major areas in need of humanitarian support are:

- **Repatriation and return support:** Prepare the authorities in communities of origin to receive a massive caseload of returnees, transport the returnees to these communities and provide the resettling families as necessary with seeds & tools and kits with essential relief items (blankets, cooking sets, food etc) ;
- **Distribution of relief items:** Provide resettling families with basic non food items is essential for thousand of people returning in areas totally abandoned or devastated by years of destruction, looting.
- **Access to basic services:** Restore access to water distribution, sanitation systems and shelter to allow the return and resettlement process. Restore the healthcare system which has virtually broken down, with a support strategy in the supplying with drugs and technical assistance and in the development of capacities to respond to potential outbreaks;
- **Food security:** Reduce the vulnerability regarding access to food with a support to agricultural activities; monitor the nutritional status of vulnerable population;

- **Protection of the children:** Protect the children affected by armed conflict, giving them assistance and training before their go back to their communities.

Humanitarian aid cannot provide all the answers, but there are a number of coordinated actions that can be taken to alleviate the immediate suffering and provide the initial impetus for a resumption of economic and other normal activities. The present decision will focus on the preparation of the conditions for the return of the population.

1.3. - Target population and regions concerned:

Four main beneficiary profiles in need of significant and sustained assistance can be distinguished:

- 1) UNHCR registered 354.230¹ **Liberian refugees** in Guinea, Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone Ghana and Senegal. From December 2003 to June 2004 an estimated 50.000 Liberian Refugees have returned spontaneously back home or are on transit to their place of origin. By the end of 2004 beginning of 2005, UNHCR hopes that the repatriation process will reach a routine level;
- 2) An estimated 261.000¹ **displaced people** benefiting from assistance in the camps in and around Monrovia who are expected to return up-country;
- 3) The **resident communities** who lived completely isolated during the conflict, which number is not known with any precision at this stage and who will receive the returning population.
- 4) An estimated 10.000 to 15.000 **children affected by armed forces** to be disarmed, and which reintegration raises serious issue;

Considering these different categories of beneficiaries the country can be divided as follows:

- The central corridor from Monrovia to Totota where all the official camps with displaced people can be found;
- The Northern region, mainly the Lofa County, being the bases of the LURD movement and isolated because of the conflict since the end of the nineties. About 35%² of the refugees (mainly from Guinea and Sierra Leone) and 36% of the displaced people want to return to Lofa where social infrastructures are totally devastated;
- The Bomi and Gbarpolu counties mostly affected during the 2003 outcomes will receive 43% of the displaced people registered in the camps;

¹ Operations plan for sustainable return and reintegration of returnee population in Liberia – A 4Rs Transitional Approach – UNHCR Monrovia July 2004.

² OCHA/UNHCH –IDP Return survey of Official Camps - Liberia - Preliminary Report May 2004

- The sensitive zone of Nimba at the border of Guinea under control of former President Taylor's partisans during the fighting's, and where 12% of the refugees want to return. Few humanitarian actors can be found there;
- The Rivercess, Grand Gedeh and Maryland Counties affected by fighting's between the former Government of Liberia troops and the MODEL faction and totally lacking social infrastructures. 27% of the returnees mainly from Ivory Coast are expected to go back to Grand Gedeh and Maryland.

1.4. - Risk assessment and possible constraints:

The first important assumption is that the implementation of the Peace Agreement is ongoing with the disarmament and demobilization process, the development of the national political process and the improvement of public finance and macro-economic management. The second assumption is that the major destabilization factors such as the movement of heavy weapons and of ex-combatants in the sub-region is under control as security situation is the precondition for the return of population.

The problems of return and resettlement of IDPs and returnees are only a part of the bigger picture of relief and recovery in Liberia, but the challenge posed by resettling more than 600.000 uprooted Liberians is immense. The restoration of livelihood will be one of the pulling factors for the return process but the humanitarian aid on this field can be successful only with a strong coordination between all the parties involved: the humanitarian actors, the Government, the donors, the civil society and the local communities.

Another challenge in this shift in focus from emergency interventions in camp situation to repatriation and return support is to continue to respond to the immediate needs of the displaced people in the camps who are awaiting repatriation to their place of origin.

2- Objectives and components of the humanitarian intervention proposed:

2.1. - Objectives:

Principal objective:

Stabilization of Liberia is consolidated with the assistance of people returning and resettling to their place of origin, once security and basic living conditions are restored.

Specific Objective:

Displaced people, returnees, children affected by armed forces and resident communities are provided with integrated assistance promoting return and resettlement in their place of origin.

2.2. - Components:

- Repatriation and return support;
- Distributions of essential relief items;
- Restoration and improvement of basic services;
- Support to the food security situation ;
- Support to children affected by armed conflict;

The repatriation and return support

This support will start with the preparation of the communities of origin to receive the returnees, and will be implemented through registration of people, transportation assistance, provision of medical care and food during the movement, implementation of transit camps and way stations.

Key indicators will be the number of returnees and when they will go back to their place of origin.

The distribution of essential relief items

The resettlement kits are composed of food and non food relief items (jerry cans, blankets, mats, kitchen utensils...), shelter kits (plastic sheeting...), seeds and tools, essential in areas where nothing is available. The seeds and tools will be provided to targeted families with appropriate skills (amongst returnees, IDPs or resident) while the rest of the kit will be distributed to the targeted population without distinction.

Key indicators of success will include the enhancement of agricultural and other economic activities, the number of families supported with essential relief items.

The restoration and improvement of basic services

The restoration of immediate access to basic services such health, safe water, sanitation and shelter in the areas where the returning people will create a burden on the already weak structures and in the areas with high level of destruction and where little support is still given. This will be achieved through the improvements of the abandoned infrastructures; the provision of inputs required to run the health and outreach activities and to respond to emergency situation; the provision of clean water through temporary or permanent structures; the construction of communal hygiene facilities in accordance with local customs; the implementation of solid waste collection and garbage collection.

In general terms key indicators of success include an increase in access to these basic services, a reduction in the incidence of outbreaks related to poor sanitation, lack of safe water.

The support to the food security situation

Distribution of seeds & tools and other activities related to the agricultural production and circulation in resettlement areas. Monitor the nutritional status and address the nutritional needs corresponding to the hunger gap and its consequences in a vulnerable context and areas;

Indicators of success will be related to reduction in dependence to humanitarian aid, the quantity of food being harvested by the beneficiaries.

The support to the children affected by armed conflict

Support to specific assistance and services to Children affected by the conflict, like emergency centres, family tracing, community outreach and sensitization, non formal education and training;

Indicators of success will include the number of children resettled in a community.

2.3. – Expected results:

- The massive return of refugees and displaced people to their place of origin has been successfully launched and facilitated;
- The people returning to their place of origin and the receiving communities in the targeted areas are benefiting from essential food and non food items to improve their livelihood;
- The people returning to their place of origin and the receiving communities in the targeted areas are benefiting from improved access to basic services (health care, shelter, clean water, sanitation);
- Staple food production has been increased in the areas of return and self-sufficiency of the targeted population has been enhanced, preparing the base for longer term food security projects;
- The link between the targeted children affected by the armed conflict and the armed forces is broken.

3 - Duration foreseen for actions within the framework of the proposed decision:

The duration for the implementation of the decision will be 12 months.

Humanitarian operations funded by this decision must be implemented within this period.

Expenditure under this decision shall be eligible from 01/09/2004.

Start date: 01/09/2004.

If the implementation of the actions envisaged in this decision is suspended due to *force majeure* or any comparable circumstance, the period of suspension will not be taken into account for the calculation of the duration of the decision.

In view of the evolution of the situation in the field, the Commission reserves the right to terminate the agreements signed with the implementing humanitarian organisations where the suspension of activities is for a period of more than one third of the total planned duration of the action. The procedure established in the ECHO Framework Partnership Agreement in this respect will be applied.

4 –Previous interventions/decisions of the Commission within the context of the crisis concerned herewith

List of previous ECHO operations in Liberia				
		2003	2004	
Decision number	Decision type	EUR	EUR	EUR
ECHO/TPS/210/2003/01000	Global Plan	4.400.000		
ECHO/TPS/210/2003/14000	Emergency Decision	8.000.000		
ECHO-WF/BUD/2004/01000	Global Plan		8.500.000	
	Subtotal	12.400.000	8.500.000	0
	Total	20.900.000		

Dated: 15/06/04
Source: HOPE / ECHOSTAT

5 - Other donors and donor co-ordination mechanisms

In the past, donors were reluctant to provide funding for Liberia due to political motivations. This has changed in 2003 with one of the largest United Nation peace keeping operation and increasing amounts of institutional and private donations being available. During the International Conference for reconstruction in Liberia held in New-York in February 2004, donors have pledged US\$ 520 million, out of which 200 million from the US and 160 million from the EC, to finance the reconstruction of Liberia over the next two years.

The Coordination of the humanitarian assistance in the field is mainly led by the UN system, among which UNOCHA (United Nation Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) has been taking an active role and involves the LRRRC (Liberian Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission). The overall national reconstruction effort is designed around the RFTF (Results Focused Transition Framework), a consensus document prepared in February 2004 for the International Conference for Reconstruction of Liberia, and that spells out the objectives of the transition and recovery.

Beside its 20.9 M€ ECHO contribution, the European Commission has allocated 89 M€ to Liberia in 2003-2004: 25M Post Emergency funds (art.255) remaining from 7th EDF, 50 M€ remaining from 8th EDF, 7 M€ Food aid in 2003 and 4 M€ Food aid planned for 2004.

The main other humanitarian donors are OFDA and US State/PRM with respective financial contribution of 21 M€ and 22 M€³.

Liberia received the following amounts in 2003 and 2004 (in million €):

³ USAID/OFDA Liberia, Fiscal Year 2004 Report – May,21 2004
OTI Office for Transitional Initiatives

Donors in Liberia in 2003/2004					
1. EU Member States ^(*)		2. European Commission		3. Others	
	EUR		EUR		EUR
Austria		ECHO	20.900.000	USAID/OFDA	21.000.000
Belgium		Other services	89.000.000	US/BPRM	22.000.000
Denmark	4.668.000			USAID/FFP	27.300.000
Finland	2.230.000			UNHCR	p.m.
France	1.223.000			ICRC	p.m.
Germany	6.308.000			Japan/WFP	1.500.000
Greece				OTI/USAID	800.000
Ireland	3.105.000				
Italy					
Luxembourg					
Netherlands	2.857.000				
Portugal					
Spain					
Sweden	8.173.000				
United Kingdom	15.480.000				
Subtotal	44.044.000	Subtotal	109.900.000	Subtotal	72.600.000
		Grand total	226.544.000		

Dated 22/07/04
^(*) Source: ECHO 14 Points reporting system for Member States. <https://hac.cec.eu.int>
 Empty cells means either no information is available or no contribution.

6 –Amount of decision and distribution by specific objectives:

6.1. - Total amount of the decision: 4.300.000 euro

6.2. - Budget breakdown by specific objectives

Principal objective: Stabilization of Liberia is consolidated with the assistance of people returning and resettling to their place of origin, once security and basic living conditions are restored.				
Specific objectives	Allocated amount by specific objective (Euro)	Possible geographical area of operation	Activities	Potential partners⁴
Displaced people, returnees, children affected by armed forces and resident communities are provided with integrated assistance promoting return and resettlement in their place of origin.	4,300,000	Liberia	Repatriation and return support; Distribution of essential relief items; Restoration and improvement of basic services; Support to the food security situation; Support to the children affected by armed conflict.	ACF - FRA CROIX- ROUGE - CICR- ICRC- CH DRC GERMAN AGRO ACTION IOM IRC – UK MDM – FRA MERLIN MOVIMUNDO MSF – BEL MSF – CHE MSF – FRA MSF – NLD PREMIERE URGENCE SAVE THE CHILDREN – UK SOLIDARITES UN – FAO – I UN – UNHCR – CHE UN – UNICEF - BE
TOTAL	4,300,000			

⁴ ACTION CONTRE LA FAIM(FR)-COMITE INTERNATIONAL DE LA CROIX ROUGE(CICR)-DANSK FLYGTNINGEHAELP-DEUTSCHE WELTHUNGERHILFE /GERMAN AGRO ACTION,(DEU)-INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION(INT)-INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE UK -MEDECINS DU MONDE -MEDICAL EMERGENCY RELIEF INTERNATIONAL(GBR)-MOVIMUNDO(ITA)-MEDECINS SANS FRONTIERES BELGIQUE /ARTSEN ZONDER GRENZEN BELGIE(BEL)-MEDECINS SANS FRONTIERES(CHE)-MEDECINS SANS FRONTIERES(F)-ARTSEN ZONDER GRENZEN(NLD)-PREMIERE URGENCE(FR)-THE SAVE THE CHILDREN FUND(GBR)-SOLIDARITES(FR)-UNITED NATIONS/FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION -UNITED NATIONS /HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES-UNICEF

7 - Evaluation

Under article 18 of the Regulation the Commission is required to "regularly assess humanitarian aid operations financed by the Community in order to establish whether they have achieved their objectives and to produce guidelines for improving the effectiveness of subsequent operations." These evaluations are structured and organised in overarching and cross cutting issues forming part of ECHO's Annual Strategy such as child-related issues, the security of relief workers, respect for human rights, gender. Each year, an indicative Evaluation Programme is established after a consultative process. This programme is flexible and can be adapted to include evaluations not foreseen in the initial programme, in response to particular events or changing circumstances. More information can be obtained at: http://europa.eu.int/comm/echo/evaluation/index_en.htm.

COMMISSION DECISION

of

on the financing of humanitarian operations from the 9th European Development Fund in Liberia

THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community,

Having regard to the ACP-EC Partnership Agreement signed in Cotonou on 23 June 2000, in particular Article 72 thereof⁵,

Having regard to the Internal Agreement of 15 December 2000 on the Financing and Administration of the Community Aid under the Financial Protocol to the Partnership Agreement between the African, Caribbean and Pacific States and the European Community and its Member States signed in Cotonou (Benin) on 23 June 2000, in particular Article 24(3)(a) thereof⁶.

Whereas:

- 1) Liberia has been seriously affected by a protracted internal conflict that erupted in the late eighties and last for 14 years. As a consequence, at some stage half of the Liberian population was either displaced or refugee in neighboring countries.
- 2) The upsurge in fighting in 2003 has left hundreds of people killed and injured and 200.000 more people displaced and gathered near Monrovia.
- 3) The majority of the refugees and the internally displaced people plan to return to their areas of origin.
- 4) Basic services such as health, water/sanitation, shelter and protection have been depleted by years of fighting and looting in whole the country.
- 5) The capacity of Liberia to provide those basic services is not large enough to deal with the continuing movement of returnees.
- 6) An assessment of the humanitarian situation leads to the conclusion that humanitarian aid operations should be financed by the Community for a period of 12 months,
- 7) In accordance with the objectives set out in Article 72 of the ACP-EC Partnership Agreement, it is estimated that an amount of 4.300.000 Euro from the 9th European Development Fund is necessary to provide humanitarian assistance to returnees and resident communities, taking into account the available budget, other donors' interventions and other factors.
- 8) The amount represents less than 25% of the indicative programme ;
- 9) The EDF Committee has been duly informed in accordance with Article 24(3) of the 9th EDF.

⁵ OJ L317 of 15.12.2000, p.3

⁶ OJ L317 of 15.12.2000, p.354

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1

1. In accordance with the objectives and general principles of humanitarian aid, the Commission hereby approves a total amount of 4.300.000 euro from the 9th European Development Fund for humanitarian aid operations to facilitate the return of people to their place of origin in Liberia.
2. In accordance with Article 72(3)(d) of the ACP-EC Partnership Agreement, the humanitarian operations shall be implemented in the pursuance of the following specific objective:

Displaced people, returnees, children affected by armed forces and resident communities are provided with integrated assistance promoting return and resettlement in their place of origin.

The full amount of this decision is allocated to this objective.

Article 2

1. The implementation of the humanitarian aid operation(s) funded by this decision shall have a maximum duration 12 months, starting from 01/09/2004. Expenditure under this Decision is eligible from that date.
2. If the operations envisaged in this Decision are suspended due to *force majeure* or comparable circumstances, the period of suspension will not be taken into account for the calculation of the duration of the implementation of this Decision

Article 3

This Decision shall take effect on the date of its adoption.

Done at Brussels,

For the Commission

Member of the Commission

Grants for the implementation of humanitarian aid within the meaning of Regulation No.1257/96 are awarded in accordance with the Financial Regulation, in particular Article 110 thereof, and its Implementing Rules in particular Article 168 thereof.⁷

Rate of financing: In accordance with Article 169 of the Financial Regulation, grants for the implementation of this Decision may finance 100% of the costs of an action.

Humanitarian aid operations funded by the Commission are implemented by NGOs and the Red Cross organisations on the basis of Framework Partnership Agreements (FPA) (in conformity with Article 163 of the Implementing Rules of the Financial Regulation) and by United Nations agencies based on the Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement (FAFA). The standards and criteria established in Echo's standard Framework Partnership Agreement to which NGO's and International organisations have to adhere and the procedures and criteria needed to become a partner may be found at http://europa.eu.int/comm/echo/partners/index_en.htm

⁷ Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) n° 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002, OJ L 248, 16/09/2002 and n° 2342/2002 of 23 December 2002, OJ L 357 of 31/12/2002.

