



Humanitarian Aid Decision
F9 (FED9)

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

Location of operation: LIBERIA

Amount of decision: EUR 2,700,000

Decision reference number: ECHO/LBR/EDF/2005/01000

Explanatory Memorandum

1 - Rationale, needs and target population:

1.1. - Rationale:

A National Transition Government was installed in October 2003 pursuant to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed in Accra on 18 August, ending officially fourteen years of civil conflict. The Transitional Government's mandate is to prepare the ground for democratic elections 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, even if corruption practices and lack of transparency in the management of public funds raise serious concerns among the International Community.

In September 2003, UNMIL, a UN peacekeeping force of 15.000 troops, started deploying across the country in order to ensure the protection of civilians and to implement the disarmament and demobilization process. In October 2004, more than 100.000 ex-combatants were disarmed and demobilized, but progress has to be made on the rehabilitation and reintegration part of the programme.

Liberia will hold presidential and parliamentary elections on 11 October 2005. Voter registration will commence on 25 of April and end on 21 of May, but only people living inside Liberia will be eligible to cast a ballot on polling day. Even if Internally Displaced People (IDPs) can register in the camps, they will have to vote in their county of origin.

The security situation has significantly improved even if some areas have experienced incidents of lawlessness. By January 2005, 13 out of the 15 counties were declared safe for return and displaced people, and both refugees and IDPs started returning home. Out of the official 600.000 displaced people, it is estimated that some 150.000 people went back between 2004 and the beginning of 2005¹ either spontaneously or assisted by the international community.

As the context of the return is marked by clear benchmarks, the end of the planting season, the beginning of the rainy season and the registration process for the elections in May-June, the return process has entered into a critical momentum and all efforts have to be put together in order to accelerate. Moreover, a massive return will contribute to the reconstruction of Liberia up-country and a significant participation in the elections in October. The UN agencies and the majority of the INGO's have now deployed upcountry and started rehabilitation and reintegration projects

ECHO has been fully engaged in the Liberian crisis. Pursuing ECHO's engagement in Liberia is a prime necessity, as the current allocations are not sufficient to address all of the humanitarian needs, particularly because financial assistance by other main humanitarian donors decreased considerably between 2004 and 2005².

1.2. - Identified needs:

Despite some economic activity returning to parts of Monrovia and some assistance being delivered in areas of return but not in the entire country, 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 still not functioning.

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. Liberia is no longer ranked on the Human Development Index due to lack of current data.

Many displaced people are reluctant to return home where basic social services and infrastructures are missing, while they are provided free of charge in the camps. Local communities are currently assisted to provide for the reintegration and rehabilitation of these people and the reconstruction of their areas.

Rapid start-up and impact projects should be available in the short term to help restart the economy and ease the return process. At the same time, the link with projects having long-term goals must be prepared at the county level. Good governance and capacity building, both at governmental and civil society levels, is also of the utmost priority in rebuilding affected areas.

The major areas in need of humanitarian support are:

¹ Surveys realised by UNHCR, ICRC, DRC in different areas of return.

² The financial support from OFDA to Liberia humanitarian crisis decreased from USD 24,5 million in 2004 to USD 9 million in 2005.

- **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 with seeds & tools and return packages (including food rations as necessary);
- **Distribution of relief items:** Provide resettling families with basic non food items essential for thousands of people returning to areas totally abandoned or devastated by years of destruction, looting (essential relief items like blankets, mats, plastic sheeting, cooking sets etc.).
- **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 of 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 support to agricultural activities; monitor the nutritional status of the vulnerable population;
- **Protection:** Protect the vulnerable, such as single household women and children affected by armed conflict giving them targeted assistance and, in the case of the children, training them before their return to their communities.

Humanitarian aid cannot provide all of 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 continue to 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** mainly in Guinea, Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone and Ghana. As at March 2005, 10.566 refugees have returned home with UNHCR assistance since the agency started its voluntary repatriation programme in October 2004. Many more have returned spontaneously, without assistance, or are going back and forth across the border;
- 2) An estimated 261.000³ **displaced people** benefiting from assistance in the camps in and around Monrovia are expected to return up-country. By end of March 2004, close to 100.000 IDPs have returned to their area of origin;
- 3) The **resident communities** who were completely isolated during the conflict. At this stage the number of which will receive the returning population is not known with any precision

³ Operations plan for sustainable return and reintegration of returnee population in Liberia – A 4Rs Transitional Approach – UNHCR Monrovia July 2004.

- 4) An estimated 8.000 **children affected by armed forces** who went through the disarmament and demobilization programme, and for whom reintegration continues to raise issues. It is again a period of intensive recruitment in Côte d'Ivoire, and even Liberian children who had not previously fought in any war have been recruited and recently crossed into Côte d'Ivoire to fight. There is an unknown number of victims of gender based violence.

In order to maximize the impact of the aid being provided, ECHO has identified areas of priority for intervention in 2005, taking into consideration the level of expected returns, the level of destruction of basic infrastructures and the concentration of the population (including the IDPs in camps). The counties of first priority are the Lofa, Nimba, Montserrado, Bong and Bomi; as second priority we find Grand Cape Mount and Maryland counties; and as third priority we have Gbarpolu and Gran Gedeh counties.

1.4. - Risk assessment and possible constraints:

An important pre-condition to the return is that the security situation is maintained. The major destabilization factors such as the movement of heavy weapons and of ex-combatants in the sub-region must therefore be controlled, and the reintegration of ex-combatants must be effective.

Another assumption is that the implementation of the Peace Agreement is ongoing, with the development of the national political process (including the coming elections), and with the improvement of public finances and macro-economic management.

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 in this field can be successful only if there is a strong coordination between all of the parties involved: the humanitarian actors, the Government, the donors, the civil society and the local communities.

2- Objectives and components of the humanitarian intervention proposed:

2.1. – Objectives:

Principal objective:

The suffering of the Liberian people affected by civil conflict is alleviated by means of support for return, rehabilitation and restoration of basic living conditions within the country.

Specific objective(s):

- The movement of displaced people going back to their place of origin is reinforced through the provision of integrated humanitarian assistance.

2.2. - Components:

- Repatriation and return support;

- Distributions of essential relief items;
- Restoration and improvement of basic services;
- Support to the food security situation ;
- Protection of the vulnerable;

The repatriation and return support

This support includes the preparation of the communities of origin to receive the returnees, and is implemented through the registration of people, transportation assistance, provision of medical care and food during the movement, implementation of more drop-off points if necessary.

Key indicators will be the number of returnees going back to their place of origin, and the moment of their return.

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 are provided to targeted families with appropriate skills (amongst returnees, IDPs or resident) while the rest of the kits are distributed to the targeted population without distinction.

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

The restoration and improvement of basic services

The restoration of access to basic services such as health, safe water, sanitation and shelter in the areas of priority for ECHO, where the returnees are creating a burden on the already weak structures. 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 situations; 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. Whenever possible, beneficiaries are taking part in the implementation of these activities.

In general terms, key indicators of success include an increase in access to the basic services, and a reduction in the incidence of outbreaks related to poor sanitation and 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 return 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 the reduction in dependence on humanitarian aid, and the quantity of food being harvested by the beneficiaries.

Protection of the vulnerable

Support to specific assistance and services to vulnerable people, such as single household women, victims of gender based violence, and children affected by the

conflict: emergency centres, family tracing, community outreach and sensitization, non formal education and training, specific protection and advocacy;

Indicators of success will include the number of children affected by the conflict reintegrated in a community, the decrease in cases of gender based violence, the number of follow-up victims.

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

The duration for the implementation of this 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 01/05/2005 as this decision complements the Global Plan currently being implemented.

Start Date : 01/05/2005

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.

Depending on 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. In this respect the procedure established in the general conditions of the specific agreement 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				
Decision number	Decision type	2003 EUR	2004 EUR	2005 EUR
ECHO/TPS/210/2003/01000	Global Plan	4,400,000		
ECHO/TPS/2003/14000	Emergency decision	8,000,000		
ECHO/_WF/BUD/2004/01000	Global Plan		8,526,000	
ECHO/LBR/EDF/2004/01000	Non Emergency		4,300,000	
ECHO/_WF/BUD/2005/01000	Global Plan			16,150,000
	Subtotal	12,400,000	12,826,000	16,150,000
	Total (y-2)+(y-1)+(y)		41,376,000	

Dated : 05/04/2005
Source : HOPE

(*) For 2004 and 2005: ECHO EUR 8.526.000 and EUR 16.150.000 responses in Liberia are respectively coming from the EUR 18 million and EUR 25 million Global Plans for West Africa.

5 - Other donors and donor co-ordination mechanisms

During the International Conference for reconstruction in Liberia in February 2004, donors pledged US\$ 520 million to finance the reconstruction over the next two years. The overall national reconstruction effort is designed around the RFTF (Results Focused Transition Framework), a consensus document including the humanitarian appeal.

Since the departure of UNOCHA (United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) from Liberia at the end of November 2004, the coordination of humanitarian assistance is led by the HCS, Humanitarian Coordination Section of UNMIL. This coordination also involves the LRRRC (Liberian Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission) from the Liberian Transitional Government side.

Besides the EUR 41 million from ECHO, the European Commission has allocated EUR 98.5 million to Liberia between 2003 and 2005: EUR 25 million DV/AIDCO Post Emergency funds to support refugees and returnees, EUR 8 million support to ECOWAS, EUR 46.5 million post conflict rehabilitation and institution building, EUR 7 million Food aid in 2003, EUR 7 million Food aid in 2004, and EUR 5 million Food aid in 2005.

Donors in LIBERIA the last 12 months					
1. EU Members States (*)		2. European Commission		3. Others	
	EUR		EUR		EUR
Austria	0	ECHO	28,976,000	USAID/OFDA	16,000,000
Belgium	0	Other services	p.m.	US/PRM	17,000,000
Denmark	2,569,323			USAID/FFP	21,000,000
Finland	150,000			UNHCR	p.m.
France	100,000			ICRC	p.m.
Germany	2,425,344			JAPAN/WFP	p.m.
Greece	0				
Ireland	1,230,933				
Italy	0				
Luxembourg	0				
Netherlands	6,802,142				
Portugal	0				
Spain	0				
Sweden	4,174,000				
United Kingdom	7,760,635				
Subtotal	25,212,377	Subtotal	13,033,333	Subtotal	54,000,000
		Grand total	92,245,710		

Dated : 05/04/2005

(*) Source : ECHO 14 Points reporting for Members 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: EUR 2,700,000

6.2. - Budget breakdown by specific objectives

Principal objective: The suffering of the Liberian people affected by civil conflict is alleviated by means of support for return, rehabilitation and restoration of basic living conditions within the country..				
Specific objectives	Allocated amount by specific objective (EUR)	Possible geographical area of operation	Activities	Potential partners⁴
<p>Specific objective 1: The movement of displaced people going back to their place of origin is reinforced through the provision of integrated humanitarian assistance.</p>	2,700,000	Liberia	<p>Repatriation and return support;</p> <p>Distributions of essential relief items;</p> <p>Restoration and improvement of basic services;</p> <p>Support to the food security situation ;</p> <p>Protection of the vulnerable;</p>	<p>- ACF - FRA - ADRA - DK - CROIX-ROUGE - CICR- ICRC - CH - DRC - GERMAN AGRO ACTION - CONCERN WORLDWIDE - IOM - IRC - UK - MDM - FRA - MSF - BEL - MSF - CHE - MSF - ESP - MSF - FRA - MSF - NLD - NORWEGIAN REFUGEE COUNCIL - OXFAM - UK - SAVE THE CHILDREN - UK - SOLIDARITES - UN – FAO-I - UN - UNHCR - BEL - UN - UNICEF - BEL - UN - UNOCHA - WHO - OMS</p>
TOTAL	2,700,000			

⁴ ACTION CONTRE LA FAIM, (FR), ADVENTIST DEVELOPMENT AND RELIEF AGENCY - DENMARK, ARTSEN ZONDER GRENZEN (NLD), COMITE INTERNATIONAL DE LA CROIX-ROUGE (CICR), DANSK FLYGTNINGEHAELP, DEUTSCHE WELTHUNGERHILFE / GERMAN AGRO ACTION, (DEU), CONCERN WORLDWIDE, INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION (INT), INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE UK, MEDECINS DU MONDE, MEDECINS SANS FRONTIERES (CHE), MEDECINS SANS FRONTIERES (F), MEDECINS SANS FRONTIERES BELGIQUE/ARTSEN ZONDER GRENZEN BELGIE(BEL), MEDICOS SIN FRONTERAS, (E), NORWEGIAN REFUGEE COUNCIL (NOR), OXFAM (GB), SOLIDARITES, (FR), THE SAVE THE CHILDREN FUND (GBR), UNITED NATIONS FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION, UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND-BELGIUM, UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES - BELGIUM, UNITED NATIONS, OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS, WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION - ORGANISATION MONDIALE DE LA SANTE

7 –Evaluation

Under article 18 of Council Regulation (EC) No.1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid 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 organized 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 72⁵,

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 Members States signed in Cotonou (Benin) on 23 June 2000, in particular Articles 24(3) and 25 thereof⁶.

Whereas:

- 1) Liberia has been seriously affected by a protracted internal conflict that erupted in the late eighties and lasted 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 are returning 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) It is estimated that an amount of EUR 2,700,000 from the 9th European Development Fund is necessary to provide humanitarian assistance to populations directly affected by the conflict.
- 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 EUR 2,700,000 from the 9th European Development Fund for humanitarian aid operations to assist vulnerable people directly affected by the armed conflict in LIBERIA.
2. In accordance with Article 72 of the ACP-EC Partnership Agreement and Article 25 of the Internal Agreement, the humanitarian operations shall be implemented in the pursuance of the following specific objective(s):
 - The movement of displaced people going back to their place of origin is reinforced through the provision of integrated humanitarian assistance.

Article 2

1. The implementation of humanitarian aid operations funded by this decision shall have a maximum duration of 12 months, starting from 01/05/2005.
2. Expenditure under this decision is eligible from 01/05/2005.
3. 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