



Humanitarian Aid Decision

F9 (FED9)

Title: Humanitarian aid to facilitate the repatriation to Angola of Angolan refugees in Zambia

Location of operation: ZAMBIA

Amount of decision: EUR 3.500.000

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

Explanatory Memorandum

1 - Rationale, needs and target population:

1.1. - Rationale:

The April 2002 ceasefire in Angola, after 27 years of civil war, laid the building blocks for a lasting peace in Angola. It also lifted the curtain which had hidden the true extent of the humanitarian crisis in the country, and triggered movements on an unprecedented scale of the most vulnerable population groups, IDPs and spontaneously returning refugees. It is estimated that nearly 4.000.000 people have moved in Angola since the ceasefire, including 96.000 (UNHCR) refugees who have been repatriated in an organised manner and up to 185.000 who have returned spontaneously from neighbouring countries. Humanitarian partners in Angola have estimated that 70% of the early returns had taken place without any form of assistance from local authorities or humanitarian organisations to areas where the minimum conditions for resettlement were not in place. Tackling this situation has been the major challenge for humanitarian partners since mid-2003, when the nutritional crisis in the country was generally judged to be over, and the post-conflict transition phase to have begun. Though residual humanitarian needs still exist, and Angola's transitional context continues to be characterized by high levels of vulnerability of the population, the humanitarian situation has now stabilized to such an extent that organisations working in the country have been able to shift their focus from urgent, life-saving interventions to longer-term development and transitional programmes for post-conflict reconstruction.

According to the UN¹, with the remarkable return of nearly four million people, the bulk of the IDP return process was completed and the organised return of Angolan refugees two-thirds completed by the end of 2004. UNHCR intends to complete the repatriation of the

¹ Angola 2005 – Humanitarian Framework, United Nations, December 2004

53.000 refugees still in camps in Zambia, Democratic Republic of Congo and Namibia by the end of 2005².

Many thousands of refugees began to repatriate spontaneously as soon as the ceasefire was declared, primarily to Cuando Cubango, Moxico, Uige and Zaire Provinces, and these spontaneous returns have continued steadily ever since. Those who managed to reach areas already accessed by humanitarian partners received the same assistance as other vulnerable groups in those areas. Many more, though, were unable to reach their areas of origin further inland, and remained blocked in precarious conditions in border areas whilst trying to organise their onward journey. At the same time, the first organised repatriations of refugees began in June 2003, following the signature in November and December 2002 of tripartite agreements between the UNHCR, the Government of Angola, and the Governments of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Namibia, the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville), and Zambia respectively. As most of the interior of the country (Angola is the fourth biggest in Africa) was then still inaccessible due to the presence of mines and other UXO and badly damaged or destroyed road and bridge infrastructure, and due to the complete absence of any minimum conditions in 70% of designated resettlement areas, it was decided to repatriate first of all only those refugees who wished to return to accessible sites near the borders³. By November 2003, when the official convoys were suspended due to the onset of the rainy season, compounded by the overcrowding of these areas, 45.000 had been brought back to Angola by UNHCR and its partners.

The second phase of the official repatriation exercise, carried out between July and early December 2004, brought almost 51.000 refugees back from Zambia (27.525), DRC (19.082) and Namibia (4.189) by land and, for many of those from Zambia and Namibia, by air to areas further inland, such as the Central Highlands. A significant number of refugees, mainly currently in Zambia and Namibia, still wish to return to the Planalto provinces of Huambo, Huila, Bie, Kwanza Sul and Benguela. However, apart from the fact that the distances are great (Mungo/Zambia – Huambo about 1200 km), it is currently still very difficult to access these areas overland, which would anyway be extremely onerous in terms of setting up transit centres, food, fuel, time etc., and would cause extreme discomfort to, and risk increasing the vulnerability of the returnees. This situation has been avoided by using a combination of air and land transport for returns from Namibia and Zambia⁴, implemented by ECHO partner, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) in cooperation with UNHCR. The availability of such a possibility in 2004 has also probably contributed to a decrease in the level of spontaneous repatriations (about 12.000 in 2004), which is to be welcomed in view of the fact that returning spontaneously carries the risk of increased vulnerability, particularly for the elderly, women and children, and depletes the already minimal economic assets, which would need to be used for the journey home.

The repatriation of refugees is a prime and fundamental consideration from a humanitarian standpoint, as well as being driven by political imperatives. The fact that three years have passed since the end of the war in Angola, and that the peace is holding, is the most compelling political imperative. The repatriation of those refugees who wish to return to Angola must be completed in the shortest possible time, not only for their own well-being, but also to relieve the burden on the host countries who have provided them with hospitality for many years. By the same token, the fact that three and a half years will have passed

² UNHCR press release, December 2004.

³ Mainly Luau and Cazombo in Moxico, M'Banza Congo in Zaire, Maquela do Zombo in Uige and Caiundo in Cuando Cubango

⁴ According to IOM figures, 51% of the refugees returning from Zambia in 2004 were transported by air

since the end of the war probably means that any refugees who do not choose to repatriate in an organised manner or spontaneously by the end of 2005 will be unlikely to do so thereafter. It is therefore highly improbable that ECHO will provide further funding for the repatriation of Angolan refugees after the lifetime of this decision.

1.2. - Identified needs:

The single greatest obstacle to repatriation as identified by the refugees themselves, and therefore their greatest need, is transport. Obtaining recognised identity documents is also of concern to most. The fact that conditions in their home areas of Angola may not be very good seems to be of secondary importance when compared with the desire to go home.

An intervention to address the transport and logistics challenges is therefore judged to be the most effective way to ensure safe and orderly repatriation in accordance with humanitarian principles. The smooth implementation of the repatriation process may be further enhanced by the provision of food rations (generally two months supply) and basic health care in the transit areas, where the huge influx of refugees places a strain on already minimal services. In view also of the risk of the spread of HIV/AIDS, as thousands of people return from countries with high rates of infection to a country with (possibly) lower rates, and where HIV/AIDS awareness is almost totally non-existent, and in view of the levels of mine and UXO infestation in Angola, HIV/AIDS prevention and awareness and mine awareness activities will be an integral component of all interventions financed under this decision.

In view of the larger context of the repatriation, and of the associated activities carried out by UNHCR in accordance with their mandate, it is imperative that all interventions funded from this decision be closely coordinated with UNHCR, and that UNHCR receive regular reports on the progress of the activities.

1.3. - Target population and regions concerned:

This decision will directly address the transport and logistics, food and health care for up to 35.000 Angolan refugees repatriating, both spontaneously and in an organised manner, from and around Mayukwayukwa, Meheba, and Nangweshi camps in Zambia to their first point of registration/transit in Angola.

Though it is obviously difficult at this stage to give a precise breakdown of age and gender of the refugees who will repatriate, an extrapolation may be drawn on the basis of the actual figures of the 2004 organised repatriation from Zambia. Of the more than 27.000 returning refugees, 46% were children under 18, whilst women represented a further 29%. It is, therefore, safe to say that children will be major beneficiaries of interventions funded under this decision.

1.4. - Risk assessment and possible constraints:

The possible constraints to the achievement of the objective are potential difficulties in the registration process and the condition of infrastructure. However, such possible constraints are likely to be more hypothetical than real insofar as the Zambian context is concerned, and the use of air transport in 2004 has mitigated the potential problems posed by the dilapidated road infrastructure in Angola. An added constraint may be the attitude of the Government of Angola in upholding the principles of the voluntary nature of the returns and the free choice of return site.

2- Objectives and components of the humanitarian intervention proposed:

2.1. – Objectives:

Principal and specific objective :

To provide transport, logistics, food and health assistance to Angolan refugees repatriating from Zambia.

2.2. - Components:

- a) Transport, either overland or by air, from and around Mayukwayukwa, Meheba, and Nangweshi camps in Zambia to the first point of registration/transit in Angola.
- b) Logistical support to the repatriation in Zambia.
- c) Provision of food rations (normally two months) to returning refugees
- d) Provision of basic health services in transit areas
- e) HIV/AIDS and mine awareness activities.

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 01/03/2005.

Start Date: 01/03/2005

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 procedures 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

ECHO in 2003 provided funding to the tune of EUR 4.541.811 from various decisions with wider objectives for repatriation-related activities. Furthermore, ECHO has in 2003 and 2004 granted funding directly to humanitarian partners providing primary health care, emergency food security, essential relief items, HIV/AIDS prevention and awareness activities and humanitarian demining and mine awareness activities to returning refugees in Angola.

In 2004, ECHO provided a total of EUR 3 million to IOM for the repatriation of Angolan refugees from Zambia (EUR 2 million) and Namibia (EUR 1 million).

5 - Other donors and donor co-ordination mechanisms

ECHO and the United States are the largest single donors supporting the physical repatriation operation through IOM.

6 –Amount of decision and distribution by specific objectives:

6.1. - Total amount of the decision: EUR 3.500.000

6.2. - Budget breakdown by specific objectives:

Principal objective: To provide transport, logistics, food and health assistance to Angolan refugees repatriating from Zambia				
Specific objectives	Allocated amount by specific objective (EUR)	Possible geographical area of operation	Activities	Potential partners
Specific objective 1: To provide transport, logistics, food and health assistance to Angolan refugees repatriating from Zambia	3,500,000	From refugee camps and settlements for Angolan refugees in Zambia to the first place of transit or registration in Angola	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transport - Logistics - Provision of food rations - Basic health care - HIV/AIDS and mine awareness 	International Organisation for Migration (IOM)
TOTAL	3,500,000			

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 Zambia

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 Articles 24(3) and 25(1) thereof⁶.

Whereas:

1. The peace process in Angola since the April 2002 ceasefire is holding ;
2. The Tripartite Agreements signed in November 2002 between UNHCR, the Government of Angola and the Government of Zambia establish the framework for the voluntary repatriation of Angolan refugees;
3. Approximately 55.000 Angolan refugees still remain in camps in neighbouring host countries, and there is a clear desire from the majority of these refugees to return to their country of origin;
4. It is necessary for political and humanitarian reasons to complete the repatriation process in the shortest possible time;
5. 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;
6. In accordance with the objectives set out in Article 72 of the ACP-EC Partnership Agreement, it is estimated that an amount of EUR 3.500.000 from the 9th European Development Fund is necessary to provide humanitarian assistance to up to 35.000 people, taking into account the available budget, other donors' interventions and other factors.
7. The amount represents less than 25% of the indicative programme ;
8. 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 3.500.000 from the 9th European Development Fund for humanitarian aid operations to refugee populations in Zambia who are repatriating to Angola.
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:
 - To provide transport, logistics, food and health assistance to Angolan refugees repatriating from Zambia.

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 01/03/2005.
2. Expenditure under this Decision is eligible from 01/03/2005.
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