



Humanitarian Aid Decision

23 02 01

Title: Humanitarian aid for people displaced by the conflict in Sri Lanka

Location of operation: SRI LANKA

Amount of Decision: EUR 7,000,000

Decision reference number: ECHO/LKA/BUD/2006/01000

Explanatory Memorandum

1 - Rationale, needs and target population.

1.1. - Rationale :

The security situation in Sri Lanka has been deteriorating rapidly since the end of 2005. Many actors had believed that the unprecedented tsunami tragedy would lead to a revival of the peace process but this has not been the case. Instead there have been renewed hostilities, culminating in the suicide bomb attack in Colombo on 24th April 2006 and the resulting bombing of LTTE positions in Muttur East (Trincomalee district). At the end of April the total number of deaths for 2006 was 227, including 78 civilians. An indication of the escalation is clear in the fact that 330 people, including 153 civilians and 90 soldiers, died in the whole of 2005, while in 2004 the fatalities totalled 'only' 108.

The Norwegian Peace Mediator had been able to draw the parties back to the negotiating table in February 2006 but it is not clear whether the talks will continue despite the renewed commitment of both parties towards the peace process as confirmed by the international monitoring mission¹ at the end of April. Particularly worrying is the number of new displacements. During April 2006 alone, over 21,000 people were reported to have left their homes in areas of Trincomalee district². This escalation of violence and the consequent high level of displacement highlights the unpredictable and uncertain future for Sri Lanka.

¹ The international monitoring mission (SLMM) chaired by a Swedish representative and composed of members of Nordic countries continues to supervise the respect of the ceasefire by both parties.

² UNOCHA consolidated report on Trincomalee Displacement, 29 April 2006

The conflict, waged by Tamil separatists³ in the north and east of the country, has been ongoing since 1983 and has claimed over 65,000 human lives. Up to 800,000 people have been internally displaced during the 20 years of civil war. Initially, the population was displaced within the Jaffna peninsula and south towards the Vanni region⁴. In subsequent years however the conflict has moved steadily further south, leading to massive new displacements of people within the northern and eastern provinces.

The conflict also led to the exodus of over 100,000 Sri Lankan Tamils to Tamil Nadu in the south eastern part of India. According to the latest United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) figures⁵ 68,000 Tamil refugees remain in Tamil Nadu, both inside and outside camps.

The ceasefire agreement (CFA) of 22 February 2002 allowed the northern and eastern districts of the country to experience the longest period without fighting since 1983. Many Internally Displaced People (IDPs) have taken advantage of the ceasefire and returned to their land. Of an estimated 740,000 IDPs living inside and outside so called "welfare centres"⁶ before the ceasefire, over 407,000 returned to their areas of origin between January 2002 and December 2005⁷. The statistics show that the majority of these returned between June and October 2002 and since then the flow of IDPs able and willing to return and resettle has slowly been reducing (from 268,000 in 2002 to 27,000 in 2005).

For the 68,000 IDPs living in "welfare centres" conditions are deplorable: no income, lack of hygiene, lack of safe drinking water and sanitation, alcohol dependency, marginalisation of single-women headed households, violence against women, lack of opportunities for young people. In addition, many of those in the camps are extremely vulnerable: old and disabled people, landless people and women-headed households. UNHCR report that most of the IDPs still residing in "welfare centres" are eager to return if a permanent peace and political settlement can be achieved. However, some are unwilling to return to their places of origin because of their ethnic background or vulnerability, for others resettlement prospects are extremely limited.⁸ In any case this population receives much less attention than returning IDPs.

In India the number of refugees living in camps is now around 60,000. Over 18,000 have returned since the ceasefire, 75% of them spontaneously and others through the facilitation of UNHCR and governments. A massive return of the Tamil refugees living in camps in Tamil Nadu is unlikely before a bilateral agreement is reached between the government of India and the government of Sri Lanka. In fact, the recent escalation in violence has led to the arrival of 600 new refugees from Sri Lanka between January and April 2006⁹. Although some voluntary return of refugees on an individual basis could continue in 2006, the exact figures will depend on the security situation. According to UNHCR surveys at least 70% of the refugees (around 45,000 people) would like to return to Sri Lanka one day.

³ Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

⁴ The "Vanni" is an area covering partially Mullaitivu, Kilinochchi, Mannar and Vavuniya districts in Northern Sri Lanka.

⁵ UNHCR statistics 31 December 2005

⁶ Welfare centres: 318 IDP camps in the conflict-affected areas and their bordering districts. They are managed by the Government with some support from UNHCR and other humanitarian actors.

⁷ UNHCR and Ministry of Rehabilitation, resettlement and refugees, December 2005.

⁸ The IDPs living in the welfare centers in Jaffna have their home located in the high security zones.

⁹ UNHCR, Sri Lanka Situation Update No. 13 Week 17-2006 (28 April 2006)

It is impossible to accurately predict the total levels of IDP resettlement and relocation in 2006, especially given the escalation in violence over the past few months. However the level is likely to be at least the same as in 2005 and possibly more depending on the security situation. All major agencies working in the north east have resettlement (return to the original birth ground) or relocation (return to a Government allocated new piece of land) as their main focus in 2006 and 2007. Despite the current security concerns, there are several reasons why, in principle, the situation is now more favourable for return:

- As a spin-off from the major tsunami recovery effort implemented for tsunami IDPs, the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) has now given more priority to assisting conflict IDPs. As a result the GoSL has started to intensify land allocation and provision of land deeds, enabling more IDPs to return.
- The continued clearance of mines has made more land available for habitation. Before the CFA, an estimated 600,000 to 1,000,000 mines and Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) were placed in the north east¹⁰. The GoSL reports that, largely through DG ECHO¹¹ funding¹², 50% of the 202 km² of contaminated areas have been cleared of landmines. This translates into 423 of the 730 contaminated villages being cleared of landmines. The balance of 307 villages will be partially cleared in 2006 with EuropeAid funding through UNDP and its implementing partners. This is an excellent example of LRRD in practice.
- The additional determining factor for return in 2006 and 2007 will be progress in the peace process. Despite the current impasse, the parties had resumed direct peace talks in February 2006 after a three and a half year break. If these talks continue more IDPs and refugees are likely to return to the north east even if some occasional clashes or selective violence in the eastern districts lead to new short term displacement as recently witnessed in Trincomalee district.

On top of the destruction caused by 20 years of civil war, Sri Lanka has faced the devastating effect of the tsunami of 26 December 2004, which badly hit the north and east adding further to the disadvantages in that part of the country. Almost 31,000 people died and 6,000 people were reported missing¹³, mainly women and children. Over 457,000 people lost their houses and became displaced¹⁴. As a result, the total number of displaced people in Sri Lanka is now at the same level as before the ceasefire agreement in 2002. The number of remaining IDPs as a result of the war is around 325,000 and the number of new IDPs as a result of the tsunami is over 457,000, bringing the total number of IDPs in Sri Lanka to over 782,000. A separate DG ECHO funding decision¹⁵ totalling EUR 20 million (EUR 8 million of which is allocated to Sri Lanka), covers the needs of tsunami IDPs from January 2006 to June 2007.

DG ECHO is currently phasing out support to both tsunami and conflict displaced population in Sri Lanka. The current tsunami decision will be the last for this crisis and will end in June 2007. Support to conflict IDPs will continue with this decision with a view to phasing out in

¹⁰ Ministry of Nation Building and Development's Achievement report on the Mine Action Sector, February 2006.

¹¹ Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid- ECHO

¹² DG ECHO's contribution to mine action to date amounts to EUR 6.3 million since April 2002. The last decision (ECHO/LKA/BUD/2004/01000) for mine surveys, mapping and humanitarian de-mining was approved in December 2004 and the operation which covered mainly Jaffna, finished in January 2006.

¹³ Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

¹⁴ UNHCR GIS Unit, December 2005

¹⁵ ECHO/-AS/BUD/2005/07000

early 2008. Should the present escalation in the conflict continue however, DG ECHO will review the situation.

1.2. - Identified needs :

For those IDPs returning to their place of origin the outlook is bleak. Villages have been badly affected by the war - houses, schools, health centres, latrines, wells and irrigation systems have been damaged or destroyed, particularly in LTTE-controlled areas. The needs identified are for food and non-food items, shelters, food security, water and sanitation, protection, health and psycho-social activities.

While the present decision will focus primarily on the needs of IDPs returning to their place of origin or relocating to new land, the needs of IDPs remaining in welfare centers, IDPs newly displaced by the conflict and host communities will also be included.

Shelter and non food relief items

Basic shelter is considered one of the main needs among the returning IDPs and refugees¹⁶. Given the low availability of permanent housing programmes for conflict IDPs (around 15% of the needs) the beneficiaries rely on the provision of basic structures as a first step towards a durable solution. For the sake of equity, it is essential that the standards provided in basic shelter match those used for tsunami IDPs. Basic shelter may also be necessary for communities displaced as a result of the current violent clashes between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan Army (SLA) or communal violence triggered by the action of either party. The provision of essential non food relief items is linked to the provision of shelter.

Water and sanitation

Access to safe drinking water and proper sanitation facilities is particularly poor and impacts upon the health status of those living in the area. The destruction of both wells and latrines during the war created a situation of deplorable hygiene conditions and practices. The lack of water facilities can even be a deterrent to the resettlement of displaced villagers.

Food security

The need for food security assistance and livelihood support should not be underestimated for both the returning and displaced communities. One of the main reasons for IDPs to remain in the welfare camps is that they are not able to generate an income in their new locations. As a result they remain complacent and dependant on food aid. The phase out of food aid by WFP will mean that this is no longer possible. The solution is to assist the returnees and displaced with small scale food security input, either agricultural packages, fishing tools or small business assistance. However, punctual distributions of food aid for newly displaced communities should not be discarded under the light of the events which occurred in Trincomalee in April 2006.

Protection

Many displaced people and refugees face protection concerns, such as the lack of identity cards, birth certificates, marriage documents and land title deeds. The latter is especially a problem for second generation IDPs and those who have their property within restricted areas such as the High Security Zones. Another major protection issue remains the problem of underage recruitment by the LTTE. UNICEF reported¹⁷ that while child recruitment has gone down in 2005 to an average of 43 a month, still only 79 children were released by the LTTE and reunited with their families. Since January 2002 a total of 5,368 cases of reported child

¹⁶ The IDPs in Sri Lanka – Discussion paper on Equity (1 Nov 2005), CARE International et al

¹⁷ UNICEF press release on “Action Plan for Children Affected by War”; February 2006

recruitment have taken place in the north east of Sri Lanka. This figure actually only represents the tip of the iceberg since most cases are not reported.

Psycho-social

Many of the IDP communities in the north and east have faced several displacements over the last 15 years leading to highly vulnerable and fragmented groups. The stress created by the lack of proper documentation, a secure environment and the prospect of a peaceful future undermines the strength of the individuals and the overall community. Although interventions in other sectors such as shelter and food security contribute to psychosocial well being, it will be necessary to assist some IDPs with more specific psycho-social activities.

Health

The peripheral health structure of Sri Lanka has been undoubtedly damaged by the protracted conflict especially in the rural areas of the north east, which are the main areas of return for IDPs and refugees. From a preventive health point of view, DG ECHO could play a significant role supporting hygiene promotion, preventative health education and health promotion by community based groups. Emergency health support may be necessary in case the violence of the first months of 2006 explodes with casualties, displacement and injuries.

1.3. - Target population and regions concerned :

The regions targeted are the northern and eastern parts of Sri Lanka. The present decision will primarily benefit IDPs returning to their places of origin or relocating to new land, however, IDPs in "welfare centres", population newly displaced by an escalation in violence and host communities will also be included.

1.4. - Risk assessment and possible constraints :

The political situation remains very fragile with regular and serious cease-fire violations. The risk that the conflict restarts remains high.

The political and ethnic configurations of the eastern districts (Trincomalee, Batticaloa, Ampara) as well as LTTE's rigid control over areas of resettlement and new displacement in the north and east may have a negative impact on the implementation of humanitarian aid projects in terms of access.

There are some constraints specific to working in Sri Lanka and particularly in the north and east of the country including problems in coordination, shortages of materials and labour and subsequent distortion of the market.

2 - Objectives and components of the humanitarian intervention proposed:¹⁸

2.1. - Objectives :

Principal objective:

To provide assistance to people displaced by the conflict, those returning to their places of origin or relocating to new land and IDPs living in "welfare centres".

Specific objectives:

To provide multi-sectoral humanitarian support to around 300,000 IDPs, returnees and resident population in order to meet their immediate needs.

2.2. - Components :

The operational conclusion of the needs analysis undertaken by the partners and the DG ECHO Technical Assistants is that humanitarian interventions should continue to focus on an integrated approach for the benefit of the returnees.

DG ECHO intends to work with established partners able to propose multi-sectoral schemes or packages for returnees in mine-cleared areas in the northern and eastern regions of Sri Lanka, as in the previous funding decisions. In order for the returnees to re-start their livelihood, food security kits will be distributed. As a first step towards durable solutions for returnees, basic shelter, non food relief items and water and sanitation facilities – with a particular focus on maintenance - will be provided. These sectors will be complemented with protection (including legal assistance), preventive health and psycho-social assistance in order to establish effective programmes tackling the complexity of the reintegration process.

DG ECHO also intends to provide some assistance to IDPs in "welfare centres" by supporting maintenance of the shelters and the rehabilitation and construction of drinking water wells and latrines to ensure that their minimum living standards are met, especially where inadequate government maintenance might result in creating a push factor amongst IDPs forcing them to return to areas that may be unsafe. Training and tool kits for self-help activities will also be provided in some "welfare centres".

Finally, for those IDPs newly displaced by the conflict, relief assistance needs to be foreseen. Food aid, emergency shelter, water and sanitation, protection, medical and psychosocial needs might arise during the months to come in Sri Lanka. These needs could be met by the current partners involved in resettlement and relocation and they should be supported in this effort through this decision.

¹⁸ Grants for the implementation of humanitarian aid within the meaning of Council Regulation (EC) No.1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid are awarded in accordance with the Financial Regulation, in particular Article 110 thereof, and its Implementing Rules in particular Article 168 thereof (Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002, OJ L248 of 16 September 2002 and No 2342/2002 of 23 December 2002, OJ L 357 of 31 December 2002).

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 DG 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://ec.europa.eu/comm/echo/partners/index_en.htm

3 - Duration expected for actions in the proposed Decision:

The duration for the implementation of this Decision shall be 16 months

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

Expenditure under this Decision shall be eligible from 01 May 2006 .

Start Date : 01 May 2006

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 humanitarian aid operations.

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 current crises (conflict and tsunami)

List of previous DG ECHO operations in SRI LANKA				
Decision Number	Decision Type	2004 EUR	2005 EUR	2006 EUR
ECHO/-AS/BUD/2005/07000	Ad hoc (tsunami)		8.000.000	
ECHO/-AS/BUD/2005/02000	Ad hoc (tsunami)		25.000.000	
ECHO/-SA/BUD/2005/02000	Ad hoc (conflict)		4.000.000	
ECHO/-SA/BUD/2005/01000	Emergency (tsunami)		8.300.000	
ECHO/LKA/BUD/2004/01000	Ad hoc (conflict)	1.000,000		
ECHO/-SA/BUD/2004/01000	Ad hoc (conflict)	5.500.000		
Subtotal		6.500,000	45.300.000	
Grand Total		51,800,000		

Dated : 02/05/2006
Source : DG ECHO

5 - Other donors and donor co-ordination mechanisms.

In the framework of EC policy guidelines on Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD)¹⁹, regular meetings are held between DG ECHO and DG RELEX/ EuropeAid at both field and HQ level. A timetable was established with DG RELEX/EuropeAid to gradually transfer DG ECHO support in mine action between the end of 2004 and early 2006 in order to achieve a smooth transition. The final step in this process, the taking over of the DG ECHO Halo Trust project in Jaffna (which ended January 2006) by the UNDP Mine Action Programme financed by the EC, has now been realised.

The Tsunami Indicative Programme 2005-2006 foresees EUR 50 million of reconstruction aid for the north and east. Although all the tsunami affected districts will indirectly benefit from this support, the district of focus for this programme will be Ampara. Due to political reasons, the Trust Fund (P-TOMS) through which the Commission was intending to implement this aid has collapsed. Instead the funding will be implemented through two components:

- a. Community development programme with two sub-components:
 - Community livelihood support (EUR 10 million)
 - Community access roads (EUR 30 million)
- b. Environmental remediation project focusing on solid waste management and environmental restoration (EUR10 million).

Funds will be committed in summer 2006 and projects will be implemented between 2006 – 2010.

Other EC funding includes the North East Housing Reconstruction Programme (NEHRP), a EUR 15 million EC contribution to a EUR 83.5 million WB project, which provides housing for conflict affected IDPs in the north and east and three projects selected from the Aid to Uprooted People BL (AUP) call for proposals 2004 with NGOs, which will support permanent housing access to safe water and sanitation and livelihood assistance. These actions will be implemented up to end 2007, and, in the case of two of the NGOs, will build on activities previously financed by ECHO. This is an excellent illustration of LRRD in practice.

Regular meetings on aid are held between member states as well as between all donors and the government via the consultative groups system. Thematic and district-wise coordination mechanisms are also taking place regularly between NGOs and UN agencies. These co-ordination efforts have expanded significantly with the arrival of new funds and large number of new donors following the tsunami disaster. Co-ordination is undertaken bilaterally by the EC but also through government structures (notably Task Force for Rebuilding the Nation-TAFREN) established for co-ordination of donors tsunami funding.

¹⁹ See EC communication “Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development-An Assessment”. COM (2001) 153 final, 23.04.2001.

Donors in SRI LANKA the last 12 months

1. EU Members States (*)		2. European Commission		3. Others	
	EUR		EUR		EUR
Austria		DG ECHO	45,300,000		
Belgium	1,326,825	Other services	53,500,000		
Cyprus					
Czech republic					
Denmark	3,252,830				
Estonia					
Finland	1,280,000				
France	254,000				
Germany	3,600,000				
Greece					
Hungary					
Ireland	100,000				
Italy	1,764,334				
Latvia					
Lithuania					
Luxemburg					
Malta					
Netherlands					
Poland					
Portugal					
Slovakia					
Slovenia					
Spain	500,000				
Sweden	5,903,573				
United kingdom					
Subtotal	17,981,562	Subtotal	98,800,000	Subtotal	0
		Grand total	116,781,562		

Dated : 02/05/2006

(*) Source : DG 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 7,000,000

6.2. - Budget breakdown by specific objectives

Principal objective: <i>To provide assistance to people displaced by the conflict, those returning to their places of origin or relocating to new land and IDPs living in "welfare centres".</i>				
Specific objectives	Allocated amount by specific objective (EUR)	Geographical area of operation	Activities	Potential partners²⁰
Specific objective 1: To provide multi-sectoral humanitarian support to around 300.000 IDPs, returnees and resident population in order to meet their immediate needs.	7,000,000	Northern and north-eastern districts of Sri Lanka	-Provision of shelters and upgrading of existing shelters to meet SPHERE standards -Distribution of food and non food relief items -Provision of safe water supply and sanitation -Actions aimed at the restoration of livelihoods and income generation at household level -Provision of emergency health care and psycho-social activities -Protection activities such as legal aid assistance and child protection	- ACF - FRA - ACTED - CAM - CARE - DEU - CROIX-ROUGE - CICR- ICRC-CH - DRC - DCA - GERMAN AGRO ACTION - HANDICAP (FR) - IOM - NORWEGIAN REFUGEE COUNCIL - OXFAM - UK - UN - UNHCR - BEL - UN - UNICEF - BEL - ZOA
TOTAL:	7,000,000			

²⁰

ACTION CONTRE LA FAIM, (FR), AGENCE D'AIDE A LA COOPERATION TECHNIQUE ET AU DEVELOPPEMENT, (FR), CARE INTERNATIONAL DEUTSCHLAND E.V. (DEU), COMITE D'AIDE MEDICALE, COMITE INTERNATIONAL DE LA CROIX-ROUGE (CICR), DANSK FLYGTNINGEHAELP, DANCHURCH AID – DNK, DEUTSCHE WELTHUNGERHILFE / GERMAN AGRO ACTION, (DEU), HANDICAP INTERNATIONAL (FR), INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION (INT), NORWEGIAN REFUGEE COUNCIL (NOR), OXFAM (GB), UNICEF, UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES - BELGIUM, ZOA-Vluchtelingen zorg

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 organised in overarching and cross cutting issues forming part of DG 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://ec.europa.eu/comm/echo/evaluation/index_en.htm.

8 - Budget Impact article 23 02 01

-	CE (EUR)
Initial Available Appropriations for 2006	470,429,000
Supplementary Budgets	-
Transfers Commission	-
Total Available Appropriations	470,429,000
Total executed to date (02/05/2006)	307,550,000
Available remaining	162,879,000
Total amount of the Decision	7,000,000

COMMISSION DECISION
of
on the financing of humanitarian operations from the general budget of the European
Union in
SRI LANKA

THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community,
Having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No.1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid ²¹, and in particular Article 15(2) thereof:

Whereas:

1. The conflict between Tamil separatists and Government forces in the northern and north-eastern region of Sri Lanka since 1983 has exacted a heavy toll on the economy, claiming about 65,000 human lives.
2. Since the truce agreement of February 2002, it is estimated that 400,000 internally displaced people have spontaneously returned to their areas of origin.
3. It is estimated that this movement will continue in 2006 albeit on a reduced scale, thus necessitating quick support to allow these returnees to resettle in the best and safest conditions.
4. 325,000 persons remain displaced to date as a result of the conflict, including 68,000 people living in "welfare centres", and 60,000 Tamil refugees living in Tamil Nadu, India.
5. During the first months of 2006 the north and east of Sri Lanka has experienced an escalation in the conflict leading to the displacement of new communities.
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 16 months.
7. It is estimated that an amount of EUR 7,000,000 from budget line 23 02 01 of the general budget of the European Union is necessary to provide humanitarian assistance to over 300,000 displaced persons and residents in Sri Lanka, taking into account the available budget, other donors' interventions and other factors.
8. In accordance with Article 17 (3) of Regulation (EC) No.1257/96, the Humanitarian Aid Committee gave a favourable opinion on 22 June 2006.

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 7,000,000 for humanitarian aid operations to assist people displaced by the conflict in Sri Lanka by using line 23 02 01 of the 2006 general budget of the European Union.
2. In accordance with Article 2 (a) (e) of Council Regulation No.1257/96, the humanitarian operations shall be implemented in the pursuance of the following specific objectives:
 - To provide multi-sectoral humanitarian support to around 300.000 IDPs, returnees and resident population in order to meet their immediate needs.

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

Article 2

1. The duration for the implementation of this decision shall be for a maximum period of 16 months, starting on 01 May 2006.
2. Expenditure under this Decision shall be eligible from 01 May 2006.
3. If the operations envisaged in this Decision are suspended owing to *force majeure* or comparable circumstances, the period of suspension shall 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