



Humanitarian Aid Decision

23 02 01

Title: Support to humanitarian operations in the West Africa Coastal region.

Location of operation: Coastal West Africa (Sierra Leone, Guinea, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire)

Amount of Decision: EUR 900.000

Decision reference number: ECHO/-WF/BUD/2006/02000

Explanatory Memorandum

1 - Rationale, needs and target population.

1.1. - Rationale:

Internal conflict and consequent spill-over of destabilisation has seriously affected many countries in Coastal West Africa in the past years. More than 3 million people have been displaced both internally and as refugees and the damage to infrastructures including roads and basic services has been massive. Human rights abuses have been rampant and civilians have been at the mercy of brutal Warlords and rebel movements with high incidence of exploitation and rape: gender based violence, widespread use of child soldiers and separation of thousands of children from their families have been particularly nasty components of the West African crises.

After much effort by the international community some hope of a return to peace and stability now exists for part of the region. Of the countries most affected so far, Sierra Leone is now hopefully in a post-conflict consolidation phase after 11 years of civil war ended in 2002. Liberia is about to start its post-conflict reconstruction phase with the recent successful presidential elections 2 years after the signature of the peace agreements in 2003. However Cote d'Ivoire remains in a volatile and fragile state since 2002 with the split of the country in two parts, and with no durable solution for stability so far. Guinea also remains of concern with continued internal political and

social tensions and with the consequences of having hosted several hundreds of thousands of refugees from Sierra Leone, Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire.

An aftermath of the conflicts is the breakdown of law and order with the exposure of civilians to harassment and abuse. The situation is even worse along uncontrolled borders between the countries, where the lack of control is leading to trafficking of weapons, natural resources and combatants. Children are highly vulnerable to ongoing recruitment and to separation from their families, while girls and women are victims of sexual abuses. None of the fragile states in the region are in a position to provide proper access to basic services and protection to their populations without strong support of the International Community. Several protection operations are being implemented by humanitarian organizations in each country, but when it comes to children reunification and prevention of recruitments, a regional approach is compulsory.

In 2006, the large scale return operation will continue to assist Liberian refugees and IDPs to go back and reinstall to their places of origin. All areas of return have been severely devastated by the conflict, and returnees are facing very difficult conditions to restart their lives. However the terrible state of the roads and the lack of air transport options are limiting access to the most affected areas, hindering the rehabilitation and reconstruction work of the humanitarian agencies, especially during the long rainy season. An air service is therefore still much needed to support the humanitarian organizations operating in the region, providing them with safe, timely and cost effective transport.

For 2006 DG ECHO has prepared country decisions for Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea, but the issue of children protection and of air transport need to be integrated in a regional approach.

1.2. - Identified needs:

Years of internal conflicts and instability have left serious humanitarian issues to be addressed in the sub-region for a large number of people including refugees, IDPs and resident population: minimum access to basic services like health, water and sanitation, shelter, and agricultural assets, has either to be restored like in Liberia, or to be prevented from further degradation like in Côte d'Ivoire; protection of the most vulnerable like children and women is an essential goal. This is impeded by the very bad conditions of the road network which severely limits access to many regions of Liberia and is an obstacle to the return of refugees and IDPs, to rehabilitation and reconstruction operations, and to the restart of the local economy.

The humanitarian needs will be partially addressed by DG ECHO with specific country allocations in 2006. These include a 16.4 M EUR global plan decision for Liberia to assist the return and reinstallation of 191.000 refugees and 70.000 IDPs¹; a 1.5 M EUR ad hoc decision for Guinea to assist the remaining 51.000 caseload of refugees in Guinée forestière; and a 5.2 M EUR ad hoc decision for Cote d'Ivoire for protection and general assistance mainly focused in the western area of the country.

¹ November 2005 figures

On a regional level, two main humanitarian issues have still to be addressed:

Regional child protection: The protection needs for former child soldiers and those associated with the armed forces, and other children traumatized by years of devastating conflicts in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire are enormous. The issue of these former child soldiers and those associated with the armed forces, and of children separated from their families has to be addressed at the national level as well as the regional level because of the cross-border nature of the problem.

Significant numbers² of children were separated from their families, forcefully recruited into various fighting forces, and their basic human rights grossly violated, amongst others. High levels of poverty pushed other children to engage in high-risk behaviour including delinquency, prostitution and living in the streets. Rehabilitation, reintegration and provision of life skills are major challenges for the targeted population. Prominent human rights organisations, notably Human Rights Watch have warned of the dangers of ongoing recruitment of child soldiers for Côte d'Ivoire. Child soldiers are considered by rebel groups to be useful combatants as by separating them from their families/communities, they can be alienated from community values and dehumanised to carry out atrocities.

In Sierra Leone, 6.845 child ex-combatants³ have been registered in for the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration – DDR process since 2002. In Liberia 11.780 children have been disarmed and demobilized. According to UNHCR, before the repatriation process of Liberian started, more than 100,000 Liberian children less than 18 years of age were refugees. Some 1.990 out of the 4.300 separated or unaccompanied children still need to be reunified with their families.

The absence of law and order, the cross border mobility of these children and the economic and political power of the recruiters require the child protection organizations to strengthen their institutional network on a regional level. They need to gather more information, to train the staff of humanitarian organizations and community leaders about child protection issues and to formalize inter-institutional regional collaboration.

In 2005, DG ECHO funded UNICEF for a regional protection operation, paving the way for a better coordination in terms of tracing, code of good conduct and institutional training. This operation provided information on 1.990 separated and unaccompanied children, 14.620 children associated with armed groups and 2.200 girl's survivor of sexual abuse that have been identified and followed up by different organizations in the region.

Regional air services: Humanitarian workers in the sub-region need to have access to their areas of work, but a large part of the road network is in terrible condition, and there are no safe and reliable commercial companies with domestic flights or with international connections linking the capitals in the region.

² Estimated at 30% of the fighting forces - Unicef

³ NCDDR Sierra Leone June 98 – January 2002

Since 2004, DG ECHO has funded a special humanitarian air service in order to guarantee humanitarian access in the sub-region. In 2005, this air service which is managed by WFP transported around 800 persons a month from UN agencies, international NGOs and donors.

Given the fact that 2006 will remain an important year in terms of humanitarian operations in Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire with many actors present in the field, the appalling infrastructures situation particularly in Liberia, and the rising number of air crashes in the region, a regional air transport service needs to be maintained.

1.3. - Target population and regions concerned:

Children protection: The direct beneficiaries are the agencies working within the geographical scope of the proposal, which will benefit from improved information exchange, training and institutional strengthening: UNICEF, UNHCR, Save the Children Alliance (SCA), Christian Children's Fund (CCF), International Rescue Committee (IRC) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The decision will also benefit other agencies including national NGOs, particularly those working in border areas.

The indirect beneficiaries are around 19.000 children⁴ and their communities who will benefit from improved protection activities and follow-up at regional level. This number include 1.990 separated and unaccompanied children (1.340 children in Guinea (including 200 Sierra Leonean children in need of durable solutions), 350 children in Sierra Leone and 300 in Cote d'Ivoire); 14.620 children associated with armed groups (11.780 in Liberia, 2.400 in Sierra Leone (remaining caseload in reintegration programs), 40 in Guinea and 400 in Côte d'Ivoire); 2.200 girl survivors of sexual violence and abuse from Sierra Leone.

Air services: At least 9.600 humanitarian actors will benefit from the air services. Emergency evacuation will be assured as well as urgent and essential freight for the humanitarian community.

1.4. – Risk assessment and possible constraints:

There is hope that the peace process and reconstruction in Sierra Leone and Liberia will continue to make progress and that Guinea will manage to deal with its internal tensions. However there is concern that the situation in Cote d'Ivoire could deteriorate in the next months. This would have limited impact on the proposed project and indeed render the humanitarian air service even more important. The risk of the mass movement of people caused by a deterioration of the Cote d'Ivoire crisis would increase the caseload of separated and war affected children. Child protection issues are very depending on the security and political situation and require a stable environment. .

⁴ UNICEF, November 2005

2 - Objectives and components of the humanitarian intervention proposed⁵.

2.1. - Objectives:

Principal objective: Provide support to regional aspects of humanitarian aid as required in the aftermath of the conflict that affected Coastal West Africa.

Specific objectives:

1. Improve the effectiveness of protection activities for child victims of conflict through better regional coordination and information exchange.
2. Facilitate humanitarian access through a regional air service.

2.2. - Components:

Children protection:

- Inter-institutional strengthening in regional child protection through inter-agency memorandum of understanding and a regional steering committee;
- A better understanding of the child protection issues in the sub-region through surveys, assessments, mapping, unified database and border monitoring;
- Training of child protection organization's staff, and communities on children protection issues.

Air services:

- Two air planes will serve at least 10 destinations in the sub-region (Liberia, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone) for humanitarian staff;
- Participation in emergency evacuation and emergency airfreight will be insured.

3 - Duration expected for actions in the proposed Decision.

The duration for the implementation of the decision shall be **12 months** from the 01 January 2006.

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

Expenditure under this Decision shall be eligible from **01 January 2006**.

⁵ Grants for implementing humanitarian aid as defined by Council Regulation (EC) No 1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid are attributed in accordance with the financial Regulation, especially Article 110, and with its implementing rules, particularly Article 168 (Council Regulation (EC Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002, OJ L 248 of 16 September 2002 and Commission Regulation (EC Euratom) No 2342/2002 of 23 December 2002, OJ L 357 of 31 December 2002). Level of financing: under 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 financed by the Commission are implemented by NGOs and by Red Cross organisations on the basis of a Framework Partnership Contract (in accordance with Article 163 of the implementing rules for the Financial Regulation) and by UN agencies on the basis of a Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement (FAFA). Standards and criteria established in the standard ECHO Framework Partnership Contract, which must be met by international organisations, and the procedures and criteria necessary for becoming a partner, can be consulted at: http://europa.eu.int/comm/echo/partners/index_en.htm.

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 crisis.

Regional protection: The 2004 regional Global Plan for Coastal West Africa ECHO-WF/BUD/2004/01000, granted UNICEF with 398.000 EUR for the first phase of a 11 months regional child protection operation covering ending in June 2005.

Regional air service: The West Africa Global Plans ECHO-WF/BUD/2004/01000 and ECHO-WF/BUD/2005/01000 successively allocated WPF with 100.000 EUR for 3 months and 500.000 EUR for 12 months contributing to an air passengers service in the coastal west Africa region.

5 - Other donors and donor co-ordination mechanisms.

Contributions to regional protection and air services in 2005 have been the following:

Donors in the sub-region in the last 12 months					
1. EU Members States (*)		2. European Commission		3. Others	
	EUR		EUR		EUR
Austria		ECHO	898.000	OFDA	680.000
Belgium		Other services		Switzerland	333.000
Denmark	2.500			Norway	9.000
Finland				Multilateral	295.000
France					
Germany					
Greece					
Ireland					
Italy					
Luxembourg					
Netherlands					
Portugal					
Spain					
Sweden					
United Kingdom	458.000				
Subtotal	460.500	Subtotal	898.000	Subtotal	1.317.000
		Grand total	2.675.500		

Dated :

(*) 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 of funding by specific objectives:

6.1. - Total amount of the Decision: **900.000 EUR**

6.2. - Budget breakdown by specific objectives

Principal objective: <i>Provide support to regional aspects of humanitarian aid as required in the aftermath of the conflict that affected Coastal West Africa</i>				
Specific objectives	Allocated amount by specific objective (EUR)	Geographical area of operation	Activities	Potential partners⁶
<p>Specific objective 1:</p> <p>Improve the effectiveness of protection activities for child victims of conflict through better regional coordination and information exchange.</p>	400.000	Sierra Leone, Guinea Conakry, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inter-institutional strengthening ; - surveys, assessments, mapping, unified database and border monitoring; - Training of child protection staff and communities; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SAVE THE CHILDREN - UK - UN - UNICEF - BEL
<p>Specific objective 2:</p> <p>Facilitate humanitarian access through a regional air service.</p>	500.000	Sierra Leone, Guinea Conakry, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two air planes service for humanitarian staff; - Participation in emergency evacuation & emergency airfreight. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UN - WFP-B
TOTAL:	900.000			

⁶ THE SAVE THE CHILDREN FUND (GBR), UN - WORLD FOOD PROGRAM - LIAISON OFFICE, UNICEF

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://europa.eu.int/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	-
Total Available Credits	-
Available remaining	470.429.000
Total amount of the Decision	900.000

COMMISSION DECISION
of
on the financing of humanitarian operations from the general budget of the
European Union in
COASTAL WEST AFRICA

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 aid¹, and in particular Article 14 thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) The Coastal West Africa region including Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone and Guinea, has been suffering from violent internal conflicts for the past decade and continues to experience insecurity whilst some parts of the region are slowly emerging from these long lasting conflicts.
- (2) The years of fighting and its aftermath have seriously affected more than 20.000 children who are in need of immediate protection.
- (3) The war and conflicts have led to massive damage of all the infrastructures including the road network nearly collapsing, which impedes humanitarian access to large parts of the region.
- (4) An assessment of the humanitarian situation leads to the conclusion that regional humanitarian aid operations should be financed by the Community for a period of 12 months.
- (5) It is estimated that an amount of **EUR 900.000** from budget line **23 02 01** of the general budget of the European Union is necessary to provide support to regional aspects of humanitarian aid, taking into account the available budget, other donors-contributions and other factors.

¹ OJ L 163, 2.7.1996, p. 1-6

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 900.000 for regional humanitarian aid operations in Coastal West Africa by using line 23 02 01 of the 2006 general budget of the European Union.

2. In accordance with Article 2 (a) and 4 of Council Regulation No.1257/96, the humanitarian operations shall be implemented in the pursuance of the following specific objectives:

- Improve the effectiveness of protection activities for child victims of conflict through better regional coordination and information exchange;

- Facilitate humanitarian access through a regional air service.

The amounts allocated to each of these specific objectives are listed in the annex to this decision.

Article 2

The Commission may, where this is justified by the humanitarian situation, re-allocate the funding levels established for one of the specific objectives set out in Article 1(2) to another objective mentioned therein, provided that the re-allocated amount represents less than 20% of the global amount covered by this Decision.

Article 3

1. The duration for the implementation of this decision shall be for a maximum period of 12 months, starting on 01 January 2006.

2. Expenditure under this Decision shall be eligible from 01 January 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 4

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

Done at Brussels,

For the Commission

Member of the Commission

Annex: Breakdown of allocations by specific objectives

Principal objective: Provide support to regional aspects of humanitarian aid as required in the aftermath of the conflict that affected Coastal West Africa.	
Specific objectives	Amount per specific objective (EUR)
Improve the effectiveness of protection activities for child victims of conflict through better regional coordination and information exchange.	400.000
Facilitate humanitarian access through a regional air service.	500.000
TOTAL	900.000