

COMMISSION DECISION
of
on the financing of humanitarian operations from the general budget of the European Communities in
Liberia

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 ¹, and in particular Articles 2 e) and 15.2 thereof:

Whereas:

- (1) Fourteen years of armed conflict in Liberia has resulted in 250,000 people being killed, almost the entire infrastructure being destroyed, and large-scale displacement both internally and to neighbouring countries and further afield.
- (2) The majority of displaced returned to their areas of origin by mid 2007 and the organised voluntary repatriation operation was officially declared as completed by June 2007.
- (3) However, the United Nations High Committee for Refugees will continue assisting the repatriation of the refugees who registered before June 2007. It is estimated that there is a residual caseload of 71,766 refugees in Liberia's neighbouring countries.
- (4) Basic services such as health, water/sanitation and shelter have been depleted by years of fighting and looting in the whole country. Less than 10% of households are considered to be food secure. The capacity of Liberia to provide those services is not large enough to deal with the continuing movement of returnees.
- (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 14 months.
- (6) It is estimated that an amount of EUR 1,600,000 from budget line 23 02 01 of the general budget of the European Communities is necessary to provide humanitarian assistance to over 75,000 returnees, IDP, and locals, taking into account the available budget, other donors' contributions and other factors.
- (7) The present Decision constitutes a financing Decision within the meaning of Article 75 of the Financial Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002², Article 90 of the detailed rules for the implementation of the Financial Regulation determined by Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2342/2002³, and Article 15 of the internal rules on the implementation of the general budget of the European Communities⁴.

¹ OJ L 163, 2.7.1996, p. 1-6

² OJ L 248, 16.9.2002, p.1. Regulation as last amended by Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1995/2006, OJ L 390, 30.12.2006, p.1

³ OJ L 357, 31.12.2002, , p.1 Regulation as last amended by Commission Regulation (EC Euratom) No. 478/2007, OJ L 111 of 28.4.2007, P. 13

⁴ Commission Decision of 21.2.2007, C/2007/513

- (8) The present decision not being in excess of EUR 2,000,000, the consultation of the Humanitarian Aid Committee is not required.

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 1,600,000 for assistance to uprooted and local populations in the reintegration process in Liberia by using line 23 02 01 of the 2007 general budget of the European Communities.
2. In accordance with Article 2 e) of Council Regulation No.1257/96, the humanitarian operations shall be implemented in the pursuance of the following specific objectives:

To provide integrated assistance to returnees and local communities.

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 14 months, starting on 1 November 2007.
2. Expenditure under this Decision shall be eligible from 1 November 2007.
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

1. The Commission shall implement the budget by direct centralised management or by joint management with international organisations.
2. The actions supported by this decision will be implemented by humanitarian aid organisations that are signatories to the Framework Partnership Agreements (FPA) or the EC/UN Financial Administrative Framework Agreement (FAFA).
3. Taking account the specificities of humanitarian aid, the nature of the activities to be undertaken, the specific location constraints and the level of urgency, the activities covered by this decision may be financed in full in accordance with Article 253 of the Implementing Rules of the Financial Regulation.

Article 4

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

Done at Brussels,

For the Commission

Member of the Commission



Humanitarian Aid Decision

23 02 01

Title: Assistance to uprooted and local populations in the reintegration process in Liberia

Location of operation: Liberia

Amount of Decision: EUR 1,600,000

Decision reference number: ECHO/LBR/BUD/2007/02000

Explanatory Memorandum

1 - Rationale, needs and target population.

1.1. - Rationale :

Fourteen years of armed conflict in Liberia has resulted in 250,000 people being killed, almost the entire infrastructure being destroyed, and large-scale displacement both internally and to neighbouring countries and further afield.

Following national elections, the government of President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf was installed in early 2006. The overall security situation has largely stabilised, although localised inter-ethnic property and land disputes and tensions in Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire, and Guinea continue to provide some cause for concern. Peace-keeping forces deployed under the leadership of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) for the first time in October 2003 provide security throughout the country and the UNMIL police component continues to support the restructuring and training of the Liberian National Police. On 20 September 2007, the mandate of the 15,000-strong peace force was extended until 30 September 2008. The number of personnel of the military and the police component shall be reduced over the next year.

At the height of the conflict, a total of 233,264 Liberian refugees were registered with UNHCR, primarily in Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Guinea. By August 2003, when the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed in Accra, there were estimated to be some 500,000 to 600,000 IDP throughout the country. By September 2007, 111,466 of refugees

had returned to Liberia with UNHCR assistance⁵ and a further 51,000 are believed to have returned spontaneously. The organised voluntary repatriation operation was officially declared as completed by June 2007. However, UNHCR will continue assisting the repatriation of the refugees who registered before June 2007. It is estimated that there is a residual caseload of 71 766 refugees in Liberia's neighbouring countries. As the next step, efforts have to be concentrated towards the reintegration of these returnees, bringing the displacement chapter in Liberia to a successful closure.

DG ECHO⁶ has been fully engaged in improving the humanitarian situation erected by the Liberian crisis and the subsequent repatriation and reintegration process. A continuation of this engagement in Liberia is necessary for the successful reintegration of both IDP and refugee returnees.

1.2. - Identified needs :

The vast majority of IDP and refugee returnees have returned to rural areas in the north-west of the country, with more than 200,000 IDP returning to Bomi and Lofa counties alone. There, in common with other members of the communities to which they return, they face major gaps in the provision of basic services and widespread shelter destruction.

According to a study conducted in August 2006, just 20% of communities in rural areas have functioning health facilities and 32% of households have access to safe drinking water. Some 70% of health facilities are supported by NGOs some of whom have already begun to withdraw as the emergency phase draws to an end.

Rural poverty is acute, reflecting the widespread devastation of the agricultural sector during the war. In the rural areas, 64% of the population is estimated to be living in extreme poverty whilst in Monrovia, the percentage is 22%.

Communities of return are amongst the most vulnerable as they have to revitalize their livelihoods with returnees coming back with little or no assets and sometime having arrived too late for the main agricultural season in early 2007. Support for reintegration by restoring livelihoods in communities of return both for refugees and IDP is therefore of primarily importance.

Returnees and their communities also face significant protection problems. One report estimates that more than 90% of Liberian women have experienced sexual or gender-based violence.⁷ Other protection problems faced by returnees and other Liberians include domestic violence, personal security, access to justice, and land and property issues.

One of the main hampering hurdles is the very poor quality level of the road network in the country which renders intra country communication very difficult. This situation is getting even more complicated during the rainy season where it is not rare to see the cut off of large parts of rural Liberia. The most affected counties are Lofa and Gbarpolu Counties (in the northwest) and Grand Kru, Rivercess, River Gee and Sinoe Counties (in the south/east). As a main consequence, many communities in Liberia are underserved. This issue has been

⁵ Out of this number, 25,555 have been assisted between 01/01/07 and 06/09/07.

⁶ Directorate-General for Humanitarian aid - ECHO

⁷ These figures are cited in the National Plan of Action for the Prevention and Management of Gender-Based Violence in Liberia prepared by the Task Force on Gender-Based Violence led by the Ministry of Gender, and are based on a study by WHO carried out in 2005.

highlighted in several reports and rehabilitation of infrastructure is forming the core of development donors' strategy in Liberia.

1.3. - Target population and regions concerned :

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

- 1) 160,000 **assisted and spontaneous returnees** out of which 25,555 returned in 2007. Priority should be given to families headed by women, who have been identified as most vulnerable in terms of access to safe water and sanitation, health, shelter, and in terms of food security.
- 2) 320,000 **displaced people** in need of support for reintegration, giving emphasis to the support of specific vulnerable groups including single women.
- 3) The **resident communities** who were completely isolated and marginalised during the conflict and particularly those who have to cope with the influx of returnees.

1.4. - Risk assessment and possible constraints :

A stable political and economic setting is an essential pre-condition for a steady and effective reintegration of the returnees into their community of origin. In this context, the follow up of the completed demobilisation process and the reintegration of the ex-combatants into their communities will be of the utmost importance for maintaining a stable environment in the country.

Developments in neighbouring Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Côte d'Ivoire represent a risk to Liberia's stability: Although the elections in Sierra Leone have been considered to be a success, the gloomy economic outlook requires close monitoring since further deterioration could trigger once more social unrest. The situation in Guinea has to be seen along the same lines, as persistently weak economic performance poses a large destabilising factor. The power struggle leading up to the long awaited presidential election in Côte d'Ivoire constitutes another destabilising factor for the entire region.

Problems of reintegration of IDP and returnees are only one part of the bigger picture of the overall recovery process in Liberia. However, the challenge posed by reinstalling more than 600,000 uprooted Liberians is immense and is still ongoing. The restoration of livelihoods is the backbone of a successful reintegration process and the key to the rehabilitation of the socio-economic fabric.

Finally, concerted and determined engagement of development donors with appropriate financial and human resources will determine the success of the LRRD process which is still at an embryonic stage. Any failure to secure activities for development could fuel further economic deterioration and civil discontent.

2 - Objectives and components of the humanitarian intervention proposed:

2.1. - Objectives :

Principal objective: To assist uprooted and local populations in the reintegration process in Liberia

Specific objective:

To provide integrated assistance to returnees and local communities

2.2. - Components :

The identified components will complement the operations already implemented within both the 2006 and 2007 Global Plan for Liberia. Supporting the reintegration of returnees through restoration of livelihoods should be perceived as a priority:

- **Food security:** improve access to food with support to agricultural and livelihood activities (including activities improving pre- and post-harvest agricultural techniques and marketing). Large needs remain in the restoration of livelihoods in the country, especially in the areas of return. Within this context, addressing the issue of food insecurity continues to be a priority in numerous counties. Areas to be prioritized for food security activities are Lofa, Gbarpolu, River Gee, Bomi, Grand Kru, Nimba, Bong, Sinoe and Maryland.

Indicators of success will be related to the reduction in dependence on humanitarian aid, an increase of the share of self-produced food among the total food-basket of a family, a reduction in pre- and post-harvest losses and thus a shortened hunger gap.

- **Access to basic services:** Continue restoring access to clean water and sanitation systems to consolidate the reinstallation process. Continue restoring the healthcare system within a larger strategy including development actors.

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

Humanitarian aid can provide some of the answers, though an imperative for 2008 should be the invigoration of the LRRD process. These efforts should be anchored in the various national strategies developed by the Government of Liberia. Their translations into both national work plans and LRRD plans should enable better prioritization and programming of the scarce financial resources to be made available in a foreseeable future. Boosting development efforts and reinforcing coordination mechanisms will be paramount for a successful transition process.

3 - Duration expected for actions in the proposed Decision:

The duration for the implementation of this Decision shall be 14 months.

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

Expenditure under this Decision shall be eligible from 1 November 2007 as this Decision complements the current Global Plan for Liberia.

Start Date : 1 November 2007.

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

List of previous DG ECHO operations in Liberia				
Decision Number	Decision Type	2005 EUR	2006 EUR	2007 EUR
ECHO/LBR/EDF/2005/01000	Non Emergency	2,700,000		
ECHO/LBR/BUD/2006/01000	Global Plan		16,400,000	
ECHO/LBR/EDF/2006/01000	Non Emergency		1,400,000	
ECHO/LBR/BUD/2007/01000	Global Plan			12,000,000
	Subtotal	2,700,000	17,800,000	12,000,000
	Grand Total	32,500,000		

Dated : 18 October 2007

Source : HOPE

5 - Overview of donors' contributions

Donors in Liberia the last 12 months					
1. EU Members States (*)		2. European Commission		3. Others	
	EUR		EUR		EUR
Austria		DG ECHO	16,600,000	OFDA	p.m.
Belgium		Other services	p.m.	US/PRM	p.m.
Bulgaria				USAID/FFP	p.m.
Cyprus				Switzerland	p.m.
Czech republic				GFATM	p.m.
Denmark	3,337,132			WB	p.m.
Estonia					
Finland					
France	41,812				
Germany	5,050,462				
Greece	50,000				
Hungary					
Ireland	3,809,816				
Italy					
Latvia					
Lithuania					
Luxemburg					
Malta					
Netherlands	1,149,537				
Poland					
Portugal					
Romania					
Slovakia					
Slovenie					
Spain					
Sweden	6,494,444				
United kingdom					
Subtotal	19,933,203	Subtotal	16,600,000	Subtotal	0
		Grand total	36,533,203		

Dated : 18 October 2007

(*) Source : DG ECHO 14 Points reporting for Members States. <https://hac.ec.europa.eu>

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 1,600,000

6.2. - Budget breakdown by specific objectives

Principal objective: <i>To assist uprooted and local populations in the reintegration process in Liberia</i>				
Specific objectives	Allocated amount by specific objective (EUR)	Geographical area of operation	Activities	Potential partners⁸
Specific objective 1: To provide integrated assistance to returnees and local communities	1,600,000	Liberia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support to the food security and nutrition situation; • Restoration and improvement of basic services; • Protection of the vulnerable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ACF - ADRA Denmark - DRC - GERMAN AGRO ACTION - SC(UK) - UNHCR
TOTAL:	1,600,000			

⁸ ACTION CONTRE LA FAIM, (FR), ADVENTIST DEVELOPMENT AND RELIEF AGENCY - DENMARK, DANSK FLYGTNINGEHJÆLP, DEUTSCHE WELTHUNGERHILFE / GERMAN AGRO ACTION, (DEU), THE SAVE THE CHILDREN FUND (GBR), UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES - BELGIUM

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/echo/evaluation/index_en.htm.

8 - Budget Impact article 23 02 01

Budget impact article 23 02 01	
	CE (EUR)
Initial available appropriations for 2007	485,000,000.00
Transfers Commission	-
Total available appropriations	485,000,000.00
Total executed to date (18 October 2007)	462,075,694.95
Available remaining	22,924,305.05
Total amount of the Decision	1,600,000.00

9. Management issues

Humanitarian aid actions funded by the Commission are implemented by NGOs, Specialised Agencies of the Member States, and the Red Cross organisations on the basis of Framework Partnership Agreements (FPA) and by United Nations agencies based on the EC/UN Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement (FAFA) in conformity with Article 163 of the Implementing Rules of the Financial Regulation. These Framework agreements define the criteria for attributing grant agreements and financing agreements in accordance with Article 90 of the Implementing Rules and may be found at http://ec.europa.eu/echo/partners/index_en.htm.

Individual grants are awarded on the basis of the criteria enumerated in Article 7.2 of the Humanitarian Aid Regulation, such as the technical and financial capacity, readiness and experience, and results of previous interventions.