
HUMANITARIAN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (HIP)

ALGERIA

1. CONTEXT

Soon after the International Court of Justice declared that the people of Western Sahara had the right to self-determination in October 1975, Spain agreed to hand over the territory to Morocco and Mauritania. On 26 February 1976, Spain ended up its pulling out. The day after, the Polisario Front proclaimed the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (RASD). A war broke out between the Polisario Front, Morocco and Mauritania, who pulled out in 1979. Hostilities between Morocco and the Polisario Front eventually ended up in 1991, when a ceasefire brokered and monitored by the UN¹ was implemented. In April 1991, Resolution 690 established the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) with the mandate to organise a referendum that should enable the people of Western Sahara to choose between independence and integration with Morocco. In spite of four rounds of official talks in 2007 and 2008 and nine rounds of informal talks between 2009 and 2012, both parties have not yet reached an agreement.

Gathered in 4 main camps spread in the desert, refugees are almost entirely dependent on external humanitarian assistance with little prospect for self-reliance – because income generating activities are scarce and difficult to implement in the desert – or for return, as the peace process has been stalled for years.

The Sahrawi crisis scores 10/11, one of the most severe levels, in the Forgotten crisis Assessment index of the Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (DG ECHO) for 2013.

2. HUMANITARIAN NEEDS

1) Affected people / potential beneficiaries
- Sahrawi refugees

2) Description of most acute humanitarian needs.

Dry and fresh food, nutrition, water in sufficient quantity and adequate quality, and basic medicines remain the basic needs. Ensuring adequate monitoring of distributions in a context where independent needs assessment remain difficult, are essential components of a basic package of assistance to keep refugees afloat.

¹ United Nations

Nutrition, food and food security

The latest nutritional survey of Sahrawi refugees in Algeria carried out in October 2010 by the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) suggests nutritional problems that are persisting (prevalence of anaemia among children under five years of age, pregnant and lactating women by 53%, 56% and 67% respectively) and worrisome (Global Acute Malnutrition prevalence of over 10% in the camp of Dakhla) and considered as of concern. The impact evaluation study that will be carried out in October / November 2012 should help understanding the outcome of nutritional programmes that have been put in place in the last 2 years.

Water and sanitation

Given the arid environment of the Sahrawi refugee camps, water is the top priority for the refugees. It is supplied through boreholes, which are linked through pipelines to distribution points on the outskirts of the camps or for 3 of the 4 camps through a water network. Water is then either transported to the households by water trucks or available through the network at various tap stands. Then, at household level, it is stored in family tanks for about 7 to 15 days depending on the camps. This system faces 2 main problems: the irregularity of water supply and risk of water contamination.

Only the Dakhla and Awserd camps have their own distribution network providing neighbourhoods with piped water. A similar network was introduced in three districts of the Smara camp in 2009 and extended to a further two in 2010 and 2011. The Layoune camp still does not have an operational network and is the only camp to be supplied exclusively by water tankers. Trucks, however, will always be necessary for contingencies and to supply a percentage of households and institutions that cannot be connected to the network.

Access to water remains unequal among the camps; while in Dakhla and Smara, refugees receive 15 to 20 litres / day / person (l/d/p), the camps of Laayoune and Awserd would only receive 9 l/d/p on average. In order to provide the latter camps with 20 l/d/p, a shortfall of 30m³ / hour has to be filled. It still requires important investments and prior coordination with Algerian authorities.

Sanitation used to be a key concern in the past years, particularly in communal facilities such as schools and health centres. The situation was varying from one facility to the other, with some schools and dispensaries having no functioning latrines and others having latrines in need of rehabilitation or maintenance. This problem was identified and addressed by ECHO and its partners in the past years, and the situation of latrines and watering places in the schools and dispensaries was improved.

The recurrent problems common to most facilities are lack of water, low levels of maintenance and the unavailability of hygiene and cleaning products.

There is a vacuum in term of water quality monitoring all along the supply chain until the end of use. This needs to be addressed to enable a better understanding of the potential contamination points.

The evaluation in 2012-2013 by the Spanish Red Cross of the impact of the school hygiene projects funded by DG ECHO since 2008 and its diagnostic on the WASH situation in the health structures will help to better assess the needs to be tackled in this sector.

Health

The health system in the refugee camps suffers from two main weaknesses:

- An ongoing lack of resources and steady dependence on international aid for the supply of consumables, drugs and vaccines;
- Structural problems inherent in the specific context, such as: need for permanent training of health staff (engaged on a voluntary basis) as the sector has to face mass departure of its doctors and nurses (88 doctors in 2006, 32 in 2007, 18 in 2008, and 14 in 2012); weak public health policy (absence of protocols for major diseases, lack of epidemiological surveillance, insufficient training); insufficient coordination of efforts by donors and humanitarian agencies.

High levels of anaemia among children under five years of age, pregnant and lactating women, with worrisome levels of global acute malnutrition in some camps are considered as the key public health issues.

Shelter

Because of extreme weather conditions, particularly sandstorms, tents have a limited lifespan of approximately five years (if they are of good quality), and must therefore be regularly replaced. There is also a need for new tents for newly formed families. Although DG ECHO and other donors support or have supported the provision of tents, demand is greater than supply. The Sahrawi Red Crescent estimates that it would take 5,600 tents per year to meet needs.

Experience also indicates that there has been a need to develop and disseminate construction techniques adapted to local needs to improve resistance to flash floods and sandstorms. These last 5 years, DG ECHO funded the promotion of appropriate construction techniques improving, significantly and at a reasonable cost, the quality of the buildings

Logistics

The remoteness of the Sahrawi refugee camps and the heavy dependence on food and non-food aid, and the need to bring water to the refugees, implies a substantial logistical effort in terms of transport. A fleet of trucks for the transport of humanitarian, food and non-food aid exists but it is largely made up of old trucks that constantly need repair and spare parts.

Protection

Protection is also a concern to DG ECHO, who is still assessing the situation in the camps.

Security

Security is also paramount in such a remote location and unstable environment: recent threats from the deterioration of security in the Sahel are creating additional constraints to the smooth delivery of humanitarian assistance to the Sahrawi refugees. Between 2001 and 2011, terrorist attacks by al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and other militant groups were multiplied by five in this part of the world. Algeria alone concentrates 85% of these attacks. Gaps in regional security coordination, reported arm proliferation from the Libya and Mali conflicts, and resource shortages for border control and for stronger security measures expose humanitarian workers to increased risks.

Coordination

There is no Consolidated Appeal Process for this crisis. Coordination is ensured *de facto* by the UNHCR, who published a Global appeal 2012 for Algeria. The appeal with a budget of USD 25.5 million outlined the main objectives and targets that the UN agency intended to reach during the year to respond to identified needs, the bulk of it being for refugees from Western Sahara stranded in Tindouf camps.

3. HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

1) National / local response and involvement

Algeria provides a substantive assistance to the refugees such as free access to electricity, scholarship for secondary and high school education, grants in kind given by the Algerian population and distributed by the Algerian Red Crescent.

2) International Humanitarian Response

The major part of the funding provided by the main official donors (Spain, Sweden, European Commission/DG ECHO, United States) is spent in WFP and UNHCR operations, the rest being used to finance a limited number of international Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs). In addition to this official aid, the civil society of Spain and Italy also provides a significant amount of relief to the Sahrawi refugees, though decreasing due to the effects of the crisis in Europe.

3) Constraints and DG ECHO's response capacity

The local Sahrawi organisations and structures, which act as the local counterparts of the international agencies and NGOs involved in humanitarian aid, are self-managed.

This is a positive factor in the success of the projects (ownership, lower cost of

humanitarian operations due to the participation of beneficiary communities) but can also be a constraint (insufficient local capacity) and a risk, particularly as regards monitoring and independent needs assessments. Therefore, the efforts made by DG ECHO and its partners to ensure the appropriate use of public funds these last years need to be maintained and consolidated.

Each project financed is supervised by the Commission through the frequent monitoring of operations in the field by DG ECHO experts. Partners receiving funds are also obliged to supervise their activities on the basis of criteria laid down by DG ECHO. Our partners are audited frequently either in the field or at head offices by external auditors to ensure that DG ECHO's financial contributions have been spent according to the rules laid down and have actually reached the beneficiaries identified.

Moreover, the climatic conditions and the hostile natural environment may have a negative effect on the expected results. Delays in getting aid to the refugees may be caused by the length of the supply chain.

At last, security is a major risk in the remote and unstable Sahara region. As underlined above, recent threats from the deterioration of security in the Sahel are creating additional constraints to the smooth delivery of humanitarian assistance to the Sahrawi refugees.

DG ECHO attaches fundamental importance to ensuring **aid effectiveness, sound financial management** and **respect of humanitarian principles**, which implies monitoring of the action during the lifetime of the project by DG ECHO's representatives. DG ECHO also considers that assessment and monitoring of projects by its Partners are keys for the quality of its humanitarian interventions and expects to avail itself of the first-hand security assessment made by its Partners prior to carrying out its own monitoring mission. In light of this, and taking into account the present circumstances and conditions currently prevailing in southwest Algeria, DG ECHO does not consider full remote control as a sound option for projects it finances in the country.

4) Envisaged DG ECHO response and expected results of humanitarian aid interventions

The proposed humanitarian response includes the following activities :

Food and Nutrition: Support to the general food distribution of the World Food Program through its Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PPRO) is planned, as well as the funding of fresh food distributions. Studies which will provide a detailed picture of the food and nutrition needs at household level will also be considered, more particularly in the camps showing high levels of acute malnutrition.

Health: The continued supply of health inputs, such as basic drugs, is planned. Other activities, such as possible support to a health information system will be given due attention.

Shelter: Provision of tents to vulnerable families whose tent has not been replaced in the last five or more years will be considered.

Wash: The continued supply of water through the extension of the piped distribution network and through improved water trucks. Local capacity building to improve operation and maintenance of the water supply systems to guarantee required quantities and quality will be a component of the response. The support of school hygiene projects (sanitation/water and/or hygiene promotion) will be considered. Extending support to the rehabilitation of latrines and water supply in dispensaries can be considered. Attention will be paid to water quality monitoring through one of our implementing partners.

Protection: Different options of intervention in this sector will be envisaged, according to the needs identified.

Expected results of humanitarian aid interventions

The principal objective is to alleviate the suffering of the vulnerable Sahrawi refugees living in the refugee camps in south-west Algeria through the provision of humanitarian and food aid in a coordinated way. The expected result is the improvement of humanitarian situation of vulnerable Sahrawi refugees, including their nutritional and dietary status.

4. LRRD (LINKING RELIEF, REHABILITATION AND DEVELOPMENT), COORDINATION AND TRANSITION

1) Other DG ECHO interventions

In case of natural disasters or epidemics, according to the needs, other humanitarian actions could be financed either through the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) or under the HIP for small-scale humanitarian response or the HIP for epidemics.

2) Other services/donors availability (such as for LRRD and transition)

As the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) is not recognised as a sovereign state by the European Union, no development cooperation programme has been negotiated between the Sahrawi authorities and the Commission. Therefore, it is hard to envisage an LRRD approach.

3) Exit scenarios

As long as a political solution to the Sahrawi crisis is not achieved, Sahrawi refugees in Algeria will not have the means to sustain their livelihoods and it will be necessary to support them with humanitarian aid. Therefore, for the time being, it is not possible to foresee an exit strategy.

5. OPERATIONAL AND FINANCIAL DETAILS

The provisions of the financing decision ECHO/WWD/BUD/2013/01000 and the general conditions of the Partnership Agreement with the European Commission shall take precedence over the provisions in this document.

5.1. Contacts²

Operational Unit in charge : ECHO/B4

Contact persons at HQ : Catherine LIBERT (catherine.libert@ec.europa.eu)
in the field : Hervé CAIVEAU (herve.caiveau@echofield.eu)

5.2. Financial info

Indicative Allocation: EUR 10 million

Man-made crises: Hum. Aid: EUR 10 million

5.3. Proposal Assessment

Assessment round 1

- a) Description of the humanitarian aid interventions relating to this assessment round: All interventions as described in section 3.4 of this HIP
- b) Indicative amount to be allocated in this round of proposals: Humanitarian aid EUR 10 million.
- c) Costs will be eligible from 01/01/2013³
- d) The expected initial duration for the Action is up to 12 months
- e) Potential partners: All DG ECHO Partners
- f) Information to be provided: Letter of intent⁴, based on the Single form format and including at least: area of intervention, sector, duration, beneficiaries, context/needs assessment, proposed response (results, activities), estimated costs, requested contribution, contact details. Alternatively, the Letter of

² Letters of intent should be submitted using APPEL. Instructions on how to submit Letters of intent using APPEL are available at:

http://www.dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/preparing_an_action/financing_decision/intention_letter

³ The eligibility date of the action is not linked to the date of receipt of the single form. It is either the eligibility date set in the single form or the eligibility date of the HIP, whatever occurs latest.

⁴ In case letters of intent are requested an initial analysis will be done on the basis of the information received, Single Forms and other sources, such as humanitarian programmes and appeals (CAPs or CHAPs). For the retained letters of intent, partners will be requested to submit a Single Form, which will be the subject of a more detailed assessment. Only accepted Single Forms can lead to the signature of an agreement.

intent can be submitted in free format (max 5 pages), including the same information.

- g) Indicative date for receipt of the above requested information: by 01/12/2012⁵
- h) Commonly used principles will be applied for the assessment of proposals, such as quality of needs assessment, relevance of intervention sectors, and knowledge of the Sahrawi crisis

⁵ The Commission reserves the right to consider letters of intent/Single Forms transmitted after this date, especially in case certain needs/priorities are not covered by the received letters of intent/Single Forms.