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## HUMANITARIAN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (HIP) NORTH AFRICA

AMOUNT: EUR 16 000 000

### 0. MAJOR CHANGES SINCE PREVIOUS VERSION OF THE HIP

#### July 2015 – Modification No. 2

With the internal conflict in Libya affecting the country since July 2014, and economic resources being depleted and coping capacities reaching a limit, people are increasingly vulnerable and in need of assistance. This situation has an even more dramatic impact on migrants and asylum-seekers, who are among the most vulnerable. According to UNHCR there are 455 671 people of concern in Libya, including 418 803 internally displaced people (IDPs), 27 964 registered refugees and 8 904 asylum seekers.

Libya has been a traditional transit country for migrants and asylum seekers looking for better economic opportunities, or fleeing war or lack of freedom in their own countries and attempting to cross over to Europe. As the ongoing conflict drastically impacts their already vulnerable situation, an increasing number of migrants and asylum seekers are stranded in Libya or risking their lives to reach Europe by sea. By the end of May 2015, UNHCR had estimated that 47 463 migrants and asylum seekers had reached Italy. At the same time, Libya's Department for Combatting Illegal Migration estimated that more than 4 600 were held in detention centers in the country as of 11 June.

The preliminary findings of the Humanitarian Needs Assessment (June 2015) shows that access to basic services remains limited, particularly in the health sector. While private health facilities are functioning in Eastern and Western Libya, most public facilities are not fully operational as a consequence of the unavailability of medicines or lack of staff. Water networks face some level of disruption and water testing has not been conducted in the past few months, increasing the risk of outbreaks of water-borne diseases.

Access to food has become an increasing concern as prices continue to rise, while salaries are not paid on a regular basis and the disruption of the banking system exacerbates the lack of cash. The coping strategies of the displaced population are being exhausted as people progressively rely on savings and host communities' hospitality to cover basic needs.

Protection of the displaced and other vulnerable groups, in particular migrants and asylum seekers, is a major concern. While the main reasons for displacement are lack of security and access to basic services, community and family networks also play a role. Lost personal identification documents and physical aggressions, kidnappings, abductions and undermined freedom of movement have been reported by all population groups.

In view of the deteriorating humanitarian situation prompted by the conflict and irregular migratory flows, the European Commission has decided to increase by EUR 3 000 000 the

allocation under the North Africa HIP 2015 to respond to the Libya Crisis. This additional funding will be used to respond to the humanitarian needs of the most vulnerable groups affected by the conflict inside Libya including stranded migrants. The funding allocation will be informed by the Humanitarian Needs Overview findings, the UN Strategic Response Plan and needs analysis conducted by humanitarian partners.

#### May 2015 – Modification No. 1

While the political dialogue between the Libyan parties is still to bear fruit, the deterioration of the humanitarian situation is a growing concern as those affected are progressively exhausting their coping mechanisms. Renewed fighting increases the risk for further displacements. For the time being, there are over 500 000 IDPs in Libya according to the Libyan Red Crescent Society (LRCS). Yet, this figure is difficult to ascertain considering that at least 60% of the internally displaced people are not registered.

The lack of access to health services and the unavailability of essential medicines are generally considered as the top humanitarian priorities in Libya at the moment, while the picture in other sectors is more fragmented and contrasted, with needs emerging as fighting spreads across new areas. Funds to purchase drugs, medicines and medical supplies have become scarce as budgets of health facilities are not replenished, thus drying up delivery chains and creating severe shortages at local level. Failure to support the health system would further deteriorate the situation on the ground and could possibly bring more people to seek refuge abroad.

Access to food is deteriorating as prices have doubled since the beginning of the crisis and basic staple items such as flour, oil, pasta are no longer subsidized and factories have stopped working as utility bills are not paid. The irregularity of the central bank transferring payments for salaries also affects Libyans purchasing power. Rough calculations show that the available reserves will last for approximately 18 months.

Migration from Libya also raises serious concern as more migrants will risk their lives at sea in an attempt to reach Europe this summer. The continued lack of rule of law and of control of borders certainly plays a key role in this phenomenon giving a free hand to smuggling networks to act in the region, while the capacity of local actors to deal with the issue is extremely limited.

According to UNHCR, 4 057 people are currently detained in 8 Department for Combating Illegal Migration (DCIM) detention centres in Western Libya accessible to the organization, including 429 women and 51 children. Over 2 700 of them have been intercepted or rescued at sea by Libyan coast guards since 14 April. UNHCR is currently seeking access to other centres in central and south Libya. Living conditions in these centers are very poor and detainees are in dire need of protection assistance as well as, access to health, WASH, and other relief items.

This conflict is characterized by a growing disregard for International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and very limited humanitarian access. At this point in time, international organizations work in cooperation with local partners to deliver basic assistance and services to the population. Though this increases access to the population affected, the very limited number of local partners able to operate in the country raises the question on their ability to scale up to reach higher numbers of

people affected. Thus, there is a clear need to build and foster their capacities as well as to put in place mechanisms to ensure accountability in the delivery of humanitarian assistance and instill full understanding of humanitarian principles and standards among actors, in a context where remote management is the rule.

In view of the deteriorating humanitarian situation and the number of people internally displaced, the European Commission decided to increase by EUR 3 000 000 the budget of the HIP 2015 for the Libya Crisis. This additional funding will be mainly used to respond to the priority needs of the displaced population and most vulnerable groups affected by the ongoing conflict. The funding allocation will be informed by the outcomes of the UN Agencies Joint Needs Assessment that is taking place in May, and by need analysis conducted by other Partners and ECHO experts.

## 1. CONTEXT

This Humanitarian Implementation Plan (HIP) focuses mostly on the Sahrawi crisis. ECHO's Integrated Analysis Framework for 2014-15 identified extreme humanitarian needs in the Sahrawi refugee camps. The vulnerability of the population affected by the crisis is assessed to be very high. The Sahrawi crisis scored 11, the most severe level, in the **Forgotten Crisis** Assessment index of the European Union's Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO) in 2014.

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 following day, the Polisario Front, founded in 1973 by the opponents to the Spanish occupation, proclaimed the **Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic** (SADR). 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 United Nations (UN) was implemented. In April 1991, UN Security Council 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, nine rounds of informal talks between 2009 and 2012, and “shuttle diplomacy” since November 2012, neither parties have reached yet an agreement.

Gathered in 5 main camps (Ausserd, Boujdour, Dakhla, Laayoune, and Smara) spread in the desert, **refugees are largely 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.

At the same time the North Africa region is facing serious political and security issues with potential humanitarian fall outs. In Libya, as a result of the government weakness, security has become a major issue and humanitarian access has been hampered since the intensification of clashes in July 2014. Since Qaddafi's fall, no central government has been able to impose itself. Libya's three distinctive regions (Tripolitana in the west, Cyrenaica in the east and Fezzan in the South) are under the control of militias and factions as well as of many splinter cells and other terrorist groups that found refuge in the country.

The intensified conflict has considerably impacted the lives of civilians, causing shortages of medical supplies, displacement, destruction of homes and infrastructure, disruption of basic services and communications and difficulties on obtaining food and fuel supplies. Current armed

clashes directly affect the lives of refugees and asylum seekers in Tripoli and Benghazi, as many stay in areas heavily affected by fighting, and are unable to leave.

In addition, Libya is facing a major challenge in addressing mixed migration, now considered as a national security matter. The deteriorating security conditions in Libya negatively affect refugees and asylum seekers, putting them at risk of great harm. They continue to be detained on account of irregular entry to the country and thus forcing them to seek recourse elsewhere, often such as the perilous journey by sea to Europe. Many of them are in extremely vulnerable conditions having suffered either trauma or torture in their country of origin or during the journey to Libya.

The Libya Humanitarian Appeal launched by the UN on 19 September 2014 sets out the groundwork for a humanitarian response until mid 2015 on USD 35.25 million, mainly focusing on food aid, health assistance and protection. Should the conflict continue, such needs will remain, and could become even more acute. The need for protection of sub-Saharan migrants, particularly those in detention centres and those making irregular crossings to Europe, as well as of other people of concern should equally be considered. A number of agencies have also started to provide structured psychosocial assistance to IDPs as well as recreational activities for children. Such activities should be continued.

In the 4th year of its transition towards democracy, Tunisia still faces significant political, security and economic challenges. The adoption of a new Constitution in January 2014 has opened a new phase. However, risks entailed by regional instability and a still precarious domestic environment translate into a fragile growth and still high unemployment rates, particularly among the youth. In this context, and also as a consequence of the destabilization of the Maghreb region in 2011, migration has become a central issue in the country. While Tunisia is, along with its Algerian neighbour, affected by sub-Saharan migration, instability in Libya is also of great concern to the Tunisian authorities: indeed, the 490 km long border with its eastern neighbour makes the country vulnerable to a possible destabilisation. As in 2011, it is likely that Tunisia will bear the brunt of a continued chaos in Libya.

Other countries in the region could be affected as well if the conflict continues in Libya: Algeria, Egypt or Morocco could equally face an increased influx of refugees, migrants seeking their way to Europe or third country nationals escaping the war.

The situation in Libya is extremely volatile and its evolution largely unpredictable, thus making it difficult to anticipate the full humanitarian needs in Libya and neighbouring countries possibly affected. In view of this, sections 2 and 3 only refer to the humanitarian needs and response to the Sahrawi crisis.

## **2. HUMANITARIAN NEEDS**

- 1) Affected people/ potential beneficiaries: Sahrawi refugees
- 2) Description of the most acute humanitarian needs:

Dry and fresh food, water in sufficient quantity and adequate quality as well as sanitation, and essential medicines remain the basic needs. Connected logistics and 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.

### Nutrition, food and food security

The latest nutritional survey of Sahrawi refugees in Algeria carried out in October 2012 by the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) shows a limited improvement of global acute malnutrition from 2010 among children under 5, but levels are still above the regional averages. Anaemia rates among these children are also decreasing (- 46% from 2010), but no changes are reported among pregnant and lactating women. In November 2013, both UN agencies also carried out a Joint Assessment Mission (JAM). Preliminary results state that Sahrawi refugees are not totally dependent on food aid, though some families are doing much better than others. On a monthly basis and on average, 80% of what is consumed by households is coming from assistance and 20% from local market purchase. 50 to 65% of the latter is composed of bread, vegetables and fruits to a lesser extent while meat or milk is generally received as gift from neighbours. 91% of households have an acceptable food consumption score and a majority of them also have an acceptable dietary diversity.

### Water and sanitation

Given the arid environment of the Sahrawi refugee camps, water is the top priority for the refugees. Water is 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 the risk of water contamination.

Only the Dakhla and Ausserd camps have their own distribution networks 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 last two districts are still supplied by water tankers. The camp of Boujdour was connected to the water piping system in 2014, through the reverse osmosis plant in Smara. The Laayoune camp still does not have an operational network and remains the only camp to be supplied exclusively by water tankers. Trucks, however, will always be necessary in all camps 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, Smara and Boujdour, refugees would receive 15 to 20 litres /day / person (l/d/p), the camps of Laayoune and Ausserd would receive less (9 to 11 l/d/p). In order to provide the latter camps with 20 l/d/p, a shortfall of at least 30m<sup>3</sup> / hour has to be filled. It still requires important investments and prior coordination with Algerian authorities.

There is a gap in terms of water quality monitoring all along the supply chain until the end of user. Only the remaining quantity of chlorine is tested regularly. This still has to be addressed. The lack of attention to the existing water infrastructure was addressed in 2014 with the implementation of a preventive plan of maintenance of water infrastructures. However, technical capacity building is still needed to improve the management of the WASH system at large.

Sanitation in public institutions, schools and hospitals in particular, has been identified as a priority by ECHO and its partners and addressed as such in the last few years. While in schools and kindergartens the works have been completed and the responsibility for the maintenance handed over to the Sahrawi Ministry of Education, the lack of sanitation facilities in health institutions remains a major issue. Two hospitals were targeted in 2013 (Laayoune and Smara)

and the first phase of the sanitation works in the central hospital in Laayoune was carried out in 2014, focusing on the rehabilitation of the waste water system. It is foreseen to undertake the second phase of the works in 2015, targeting the water supply network.

### Health

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

- An on-going lack of resources (further aggravated by the sharp decrease of Spanish decentralised cooperation projects since 2012) and steady dependence on international aid for the supply of consumables, drugs and vaccines;
- Structural problems inherent to 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 just 10 in 2013); suboptimal public health policy (absence of protocols for major diseases, lack of epidemiological surveillance, insufficient training); insufficient coordination of efforts by the Sahrawi Ministry of Health, donors and humanitarian agencies.

### 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 ECHO and other donors support 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, irrespective of vulnerability criteria.

### Logistics

The remoteness of the Sahrawi refugee camps and the heavy dependence on food and non-food aid, along with 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. The replacement of the old fleet of water tankers is in process, but experiences delays due to quality issues with the supplier. Works for a new mechanical workshop in charge of maintaining the bulk of the fleet (except the trucks distributing food aid, maintained by the workshop of the Spanish organisation ATTSF on AECID funds) have started in 2014. One new decentralised workshop for the maintenance of the fleet of water trucks was also put in place in Boujdour in 2014, as was done in Laayoune in 2011.

### Protection

Protection of the most vulnerable segments of the Sahrawi population remains a concern. However, access to information and to these individuals is still limited.

### 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 concentrated 85% of these attacks. Gaps in regional security coordination, reported arm proliferation from the Libya and Mali conflicts, and limited resources for border control and for stronger security measures expose humanitarian workers to increased risks. The Remote Management modalities, in line with ECHO guidance to Partners, can be used as last resort considering the very volatile security environment.

### Coordination

There is no Consolidated Appeal Process for this crisis. Coordination is ensured *de facto* by the UNHCR, who published a Global appeal 2014-2015 for North Africa. The specific appeal for Algeria with a budget of US\$ 32.74 million for 2015 outlines the main objectives and targets that the UN agency intends to reach during the year to respond to identified needs, the great bulk of it being for refugees from Western Sahara stranded in camps south of Tindouf.

## **3. HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE**

### 1) National / local response and involvement

Algeria provides 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. However, the long-standing request of ECHO for the exemption of VAT on local purchases has still not been granted by Algerian authorities.

### 2) International Humanitarian Response

The major part of the funding provided by the main official donors (Spain, Sweden, European Commission/ECHO, United States of America) is spent in WFP and UNHCR operations, the rest being used to finance a limited number of international Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). Relief assistance from the Spanish and Italian civil society has largely decreased as a consequence of the financial crisis in Europe.

### 3) Constraints and ECHO 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 (as it fosters a sense of ownership and entails 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 ECHO and its partners to ensure the appropriate use of public funds these last years need to be maintained and consolidated.

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

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

The proposed humanitarian response includes the following activities:

**Health:** The continued supply of health inputs, such as basic drugs, is planned. Other activities, such as the continued support to the handicapped population or the elderly, will also be considered.

**Protection:** specific support to women confronted to difficult situations (e.g. rejected by their families because they are pregnant) could be envisaged.

**WASH:** Priority will be given to the operation and maintenance of the existing water infrastructure and to improving and monitoring water quality. Local capacity building to enhance the management as well as operation and maintenance of the systems and, thus, guarantee water minimum quantity and quality standards will be a component of the response. Continuing the rehabilitation of latrines, water supply and waste water disposal in hospitals will also be considered.

**Food and Nutrition:** Support to the general food distribution of the World Food Programme through its Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PPRO) is planned, as well as the funding of fresh food distributions. Particular attention will be paid to preserving the quality of the basic food basket and the distributions of fresh food, and to the best complementarity of dry and fresh food rations in terms of micro-nutrients. Strict monitoring will be encouraged.

**Logistics:** Maintaining a functioning vehicle fleet is essential in such remote location and desert conditions. Further support to the mechanical workshop run by “Triangle Generation Humanitaire” is envisaged as part of a wider fleet management objective. Optimising cost effectiveness, efficiency and appropriateness of WASH-related fleet should be considered. It is also foreseen to envisage the funding of additional trucks for water distribution or waste water disposal, should technical difficulties encountered these last years be overcome.

**Security:** Providing adequate security to humanitarian workers will still be needed in such a volatile environment. Provision is made to support the continued presence of a security liaison officer, the setting-up of a VHF network in the camps, and relevant training to local and international humanitarian staff.

**Shelter:** Provision of tents to the most vulnerable families will be considered, provided that humanitarian criteria prevail for their selection.

#### Expected results of humanitarian aid interventions

The principal objective is to alleviate the lives 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 the humanitarian situation of vulnerable Sahrawi refugees, including their nutritional and dietary status.

Effective coordination is essential. ECHO supports the **Inter-Agency Standing Committee's Transformative Agenda (ITA)** and encourages partners to demonstrate their engagement in implementing its objectives, to take part in coordination mechanisms (e.g. Humanitarian Country Team/Clusters) and to allocate resources to foster the ITA roll-out.

Implementing partner organisations will be expected to ensure full compliance with **visibility** requirements and to acknowledge the funding role of the EU/ECHO, as set out in the applicable contractual agreements.

#### **4. LRRD, COORDINATION AND TRANSITION**

##### 1) Other 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

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 in this context. However, ECHO will review its programme, work closer with UNDP and UNHCR to ensure stronger ownership of longer-term assistance and increase self-reliance, improve articulation with other EU / UN funding instruments and eventually develop innovative approaches with development actors.

##### 3) Exit scenario

Traditional durable solutions, be it repatriation, resettlement or local integration, are hardly foreseeable in the Sahrawi context. 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 in such harsh environment and it will be necessary to support them with humanitarian aid.