

**INTER -AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE WORKING GROUP  
XLI MEETING**

**Geneva - 18/19 May 2000**

**Background Paper on the Democratic Republic of Congo**

**A - Main outcome of Ross Mountain's mission**

- Highlighted the perception from government and rebel representatives alike of UN-led humanitarian operations as a special, **respectable** and **all-winning** component of international community's involvement in the DRC crisis. Cross-line operations have incidentally resumed (after a three-month interruption). In the immediate aftermath of the denial for facilitator Masire to travel to Kisangani (both by Kinshasa and Goma), Ross Mountain's mission, provided added value by reminding all parties of humanitarian imperatives.
- Enhanced humanitarian coordination arrangements: unified MONUC-OCHA: structure, appointment of HC a.i, centralised OCHA humanitarian coordination structure for eastern DRC.
- Received reaffirmation from the Government and the RCD Goma regarding compliance with the "Principles of engagement for emergency humanitarian assistance in the DRC".

**B - Progress in the humanitarian strategy**

**1. INTERVENTIONS**

- Access authorizations from the Government improved and steps have been taken by the UN towards the setting up of a joint Government-UN WG to facilitate the issuance of clearances. NGOs have marked their support to the initiative and are identifying their representatives.
- Emergency Humanitarian Intervention (EHI) missions to Durba, Mbandaka, Gemena and Gbadolite, Mbuji-Mai have taken place :
  - Durba (Oriental province): distribution of epidemiologist and protection materials to help identify and address the second largest outbreak of Marburg haemorrhagic fever in history (three nurses among the dead in March only).
  - Mbandaka (Equateur): Agreement in principle from local authorities for humanitarian operations on the Ikela-Boende axis, the most concerning area on the frontline)
  - Gemena-Gbadolite: Transportation of examination materials enabling more than half of DRC's secondary school students to take the examination. 10 tons of medical kits (MEMISA) and routine vaccination materials have been distributed. Direct contact was established with MLC and support received for humanitarian operations as well as acceptance of "Principles of Engagement".
  - Mbuji-Mayi: large participation (Belgian Government delegation, DFID, Holland, Italy, France, Minister of Health, UN and NGOs). Activities by

Catholic Relief Services, MEMISA, Handicap International, Médecins Du Monde have been strongly supported. Food distribution by WFP-CRS to IDPs in Cabinda has been launched.

- OCHA will establish timetable for regular flights Kinshasa- Goma-Kinshasa.

## **2. COORDINATION**

- Establishment of joint UN offices and OCHA coordination platforms in Mbandaka (with MONUC-HLO) and Bunia. Plans to establish an office in Mbuji-Mayi are underway (with MONUC-HLO)
- OCHA coordination platforms in Bukavu, Bunia, Kisangani and Mbandaka are leading to an improved information network and new possibilities to increase access. Radio network has been extended.
- Humanitarian Framework :
  - Steering Committees have been established in eastern DRC. Workshops to be held in May-June are aimed at promoting humanitarian space and principles with local authorities and civil society.
  - In western DRC, both EHI and workshops will open the way to functional rather than institutional committees, focusing on empowerment of civil society in crisis situation, as well as on access, humanitarian space and strategy. Working sessions between UN and Ministers to be held once a critical mass of humanitarian achievements is acquired on the ground.

## **3. ADVOCACY AND SPECIAL INITIATIVES**

- A joint mission of heads of agencies to the East is planned to develop a joint strategy (basis for mid-term review of CAP), undertake active advocacy for NIDs, collect data for a countrywide emergency need prioritisation in view of enabling full implementation of the E.H.I. mechanism. Other initiatives under preparation ( see under D.).
- A series of disaster management and prevention workshops are planned for June in Kinshasa (UNDP) focusing on action oriented aspects such as floods, epidemics, erosion, major accidents.
  - The workshop on epidemiological prevention to which 11 provincial health inspectors have been invited is expected to serve the “cross-line humanitarian spirit”.
  - Another workshop on conflict resolution and internally displaced, using the Ituri conflict as a case study, is planned for June to be held in Bunia.
- A series of surveys on the humanitarian impact of the economic crisis are underway (Kinshasa, Mbuji-Mayi and Lubumbashi already done, Kananga, Equateur, eastern DRC to be undertaken). These studies will support advocacy activities:
  - UN discussions with Government on monetary policy;
  - Promotion of an economic response to the humanitarian disaster (cross line operations aimed at resuming traditional business flows, improved access and legal environment to food trade).

- A comprehensive brochure on humanitarian issues, interventions and strategies since August 1998 is being prepared to take stock of past experiences and set benchmarks for future activities (access, protection of civilians, comparison between social, economic and humanitarian responses).

### **C - Development and change of environment since Ross Mountain's mission**

- Deterioration of security situation in the East;
- Developments in Kisangani ;
- Security Council mission to the DRC (signing of SOFA by Government ; implementation of phase II of MONUC);
- Deteriorating situation in Zimbabwe and in Sierra Leone with possible implications for DRC;

### **Recommendations for IASC action :**

#### **a) Joint resource mobilization efforts :**

- IASC to actively support a donor meeting in the context of the CAP mid-term review launch around in Geneva on 26 July. Agencies should use their public information/relation offices to advocate for the CAP and advertise the importance of the meeting
- Support by the IASC members to improve financial tracking of CAP contributions (SC mission highlighted the need to show clear coverage rates and distinction between country and regional requests).
- Support the HC in a "donor tour" to key capitals following the IASC-WG meeting and discuss the idea of a joint agency-donor mission to the DRC.

#### **b) Support to the NIDs**

- Written support has been obtained from all rebel movements. Assistance is expected from UN Secretariat, particularly the SG's office.

#### **c) Enhance security arrangements**

- Follow-up to ECHA recommendation to deploy joint UNSECOORD/UN agency security mission to DRC
- Discuss creative and flexible means to fund security arrangements