

**INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE WORKING GROUP
52nd MEETING**

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IDPs: Summary of the Inter-Agency Mission to DRC

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An inter agency mission, composed of representatives of OCHA, WFP, UNDP, UNICEF, UNHCR, WHO, UNHCHR, FAO, MONUC and a donor (Italian Cooperation), traveled to the Democratic Republic of Congo from 26 January to 8 February, 2003. The main purpose of the mission was to assist the Country Team in addressing the different internal displacement situations across the country within the context of both reintegration prospects in certain areas and aggravated emergency situations in other areas.

Context

While the peace process formally materialized with the signature of the Pretoria accord on 17 December 2002, the presence of numerous armed groups continues to spread violence and provoke further displacement, particularly in the Eastern provinces of the country. According to OCHA 2.7 million persons were displaced as of the end of January 2003, against 2.5 million in September 2002. In the last 6 months, 500,000 people have been displaced in North Kivu and province Orientale, fleeing fighting and human rights abuses. The majority of the displaced seek refuge either in surrounding forests or 'host' communities. Homes as well as public social infrastructures are looted and/or destroyed by armed groups. The displacement of populations also puts an enormous strain on host communities whose coping mechanisms were already fragile, thereby increasing their vulnerability even further.

In terms of immediate response, the main challenge faced by the humanitarian community rests with the issue of protection of civilians (e.g. widespread rape as a "strategy of war"; massive presence of child soldiers; kidnappings; extortion; etc.). Although some specific actions could be immediately implemented, no sustainable impact can be foreseen without a clear commitment and concerted approach of the international community, the financial institutions and the humanitarian actors to confront this issue in a systematic manner.

Currently, humanitarian interventions in the DRC are largely characterised by responding to acute needs as they arise. They are often fragmented and limited to zones that are accessible and/or where implementing partners are present. Although insecurity and emergency humanitarian assistance for the displaced community still prevails in the current DRC context, there are nevertheless areas where stability and security are present and where opportunities for recovery and rehabilitation activities exist. It is crucial to support and expand these pockets of peace and stability, which will contribute to the creation of an enabling environment, build confidence and encourage the return of other war affected populations.

Effective coordination mechanisms both at the central and provincial levels are particularly difficult in a country where the humanitarian presence is very much unbalanced, both geographically and sectorally, due to precarious security situations, logistical constraints, and lack of funding. Absence of OCHA in certain critical areas affects humanitarian coordination,

and the lack of a centralized database or system with reliable and timely indications of numbers and needs, whether in terms of new displacement or returning populations, explain in part insufficient coordination in defining priority needs and resources at the CT level.

Recommendations

Protection:

- Encourage systematic integration of human rights dimension in financial and humanitarian programmes (IASC)
- Organize more frequent UNCT/Donors high level missions to areas characterized by acute violations of human rights (UNCT-IASC))
- Set up monitoring mechanisms to report on human rights violations (OCHA/OHCHR, NGOs)
- Strengthen OHCHR presence (OHCHR, Donors)

Addressing relief and recovery needs

- Organize high level multi-disciplinary mission to review the DRC context and needs in a comprehensive manner (IASC)
- Develop integrated global strategy to respond to continued humanitarian needs and to increased recovery efforts (UNCT)
- Reflect new humanitarian and recovery needs in the CAP (UNCT)
- Increase recovery presence in the provinces (co-location of OCHA and UNDP offices)
- Finalize MOU between MONUC Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs sections and OCHA to clarify roles and responsibilities and secure the cooperation of MONUC with its logistical capacity (MONUC/OCHA)

Coordination

- Set up “committees on movement of population” in all provinces (OCHA)
- Establish centralized information system (OCHA/CT)
- Speed up recruitment of OCHA staff and seek additional funding for OCHA unmet needs (OCHA, Donors)
- Establish systematized channeling of information between Kinshasa UNCT and provinces (UNCT)
- Prioritize geographical and sectoral needs (UNCT)
- Establish coordination mechanisms for recovery and rehabilitation activities (UNCT, IASC)

Proposed Actions/Decision by the IASC-WG:

Endorsement of the above- recommendations stemming from the Inter-Agency mission to DRC.